

Request for Revision – Comments on Point 1 Raised by the International Center for 9/11 Justice

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To the Board of the International Center for 9/11 Justice,

Greetings. I am writing this in regards to certain points raised by the IC911J – specifically, on the webpage titled “Ten Reasons the Official Account of 9/11 Is Impossible.”¹ While most of the points raised on that webpage appear valid to some extent, and certainly warrant a closer examination of the events of September 11th, I am concerned that some of them are not as valid, and are based on faulty data and poor logic. As such, it is my belief that these specific points should either be modified to reflect more valid concerns in regards to the mainstream account of 9/11, or be removed completely from the site.

To be clear, I hope you will not mistake me for an apologist for the official narrative of the 9/11 attacks. I fully sympathize with the goals laid out by the Center, and wholeheartedly support a new investigation into the attacks. However, it is also my firm belief that if we are to achieve that investigation, it must be based on the soundest evidence we can collect and present to relevant parties. This is especially true given that we are now over 20 years removed from the event, and if there were ever a time for us to weed out the good evidence from the bad, it’s now. I understand that many well-meaning 9/11 researchers have presented this evidence and found it compelling, and my intention is not to denigrate or attack them. Yet as with any scientific endeavor, it is important to explain where colleagues are mistaken, even where our goals are the same. In order to be responsible researchers, sincerely seeking the truth, we must give credit where credit is due, but also criticism where criticism is due.

To save space, I intend to address just one point in this essay; “Point 1: The Hijackings.” I may submit critiques of other points in the future, but for now I will just address this. My hope is that the Board Members will consider the counter-points I raise here and either issue their own response or, if no valid rebuttal can be produced, to either revise or retract this point from the website.

Point 1 of the Center’s webpage reads as follows:

It is exceedingly improbable that *all eight pilots* on the four airliners would have failed to enter the universal hijack code into their transponders and that all eight pilots would have either given up control of the aircraft or been incapacitated without first performing a violent flight control maneuver to thwart an invasion of the cockpit. (Emphasis in the original)

1. “Ten Reasons the Official Account of 9/11 Is Impossible,” *International Center for 9/11 Justice*, <https://ic911.org/ten-reasons>.

This is then followed by two references: a webpage for the 9/11 Consensus Panel,² and a video speech by Lieutenant Colonel David Gapp.

Before addressing the specific details and evidence used to support this point, it's first worth noting the Center's choice of describing this as "exceedingly improbable." This would appear to be a subtle admission on the part of the Center that it was at least *possible* the events described on the four planes could have taken place. "Exceedingly improbable" is obviously not "impossible." But that aside, the main issue at hand is whether the evidence for this point actually bares out. As we will see, it doesn't.

The main point raised by the 9/11 Consensus webpage is the failure of any of the flights' pilots to "squawk" the universal hijack code (7500) on their respective transponders. As the webpage correctly notes, pilots are trained to do this in the event of a hijacking, and several references are provided to support this. However, what both the Center and Consensus Panel webpages fail to mention is that this training was intended for *traditional hijackings*, wherein the hijackers actually announce their hijacking right from the get-go, in order to overtake the plane and detain the passengers and the crew. Most importantly, they don't intend to kill themselves or anyone else on the plane if they can help it. But in a *martyrdom* hijacking, this is clearly not the case. The point is not to announce to everyone what they're doing – the hijackers on 9/11 would have first made their way to the cockpits to incapacitate and/or kill the pilots, in order to gain control of the planes.

All of this is to say that the pilots on 9/11 would not have been trained to deal with such a hijacking – indeed, all information we have dating before 9/11 states quite the opposite. According to the 9/11 Commission Report:

[S]ecurity on board commercial aircraft, **was not designed to counter suicide hijackings**. The FAA-approved "Common Strategy" had been elaborated over decades of experience with scores of hijackings, beginning in the 1960s. It taught flight crews that the best way to deal with hijackers was to accommodate their demands, get the plane to land safely, and then let law enforcement or the military handle the situation. [...] The strategy operated on the fundamental assumption that hijackers issue negotiable demands (most often for asylum or the release of prisoners) and that, as one FAA official put it, "**suicide wasn't in the game plan**" of hijackers. **FAA training material provided no guidance for flight crews should violence occur.**³ (Bolding added)

Likewise, according to a Staff Report from the 9/11 Commission:

The anti-hijacking training for civil aviation aircraft crews in place on 9/11 was based on previous experiences with domestic and international hijacking and other hostage situations. It was aimed at getting passengers, crew, and hijackers safely landed. **It offered little guidance for confronting a suicide hijacking.**

Air carrier responsibilities for security and anti-hijacking training for flight crews were set forth in the Air Carrier Standard Security Program. In addition to specifying several hours of security training, it provided an outline of inflight hijacking tactics for both the cockpit and cabin crews. Among other things, **this outline advised air crews to refrain from trying**

2. "Point Flt-1: A Claim Regarding Hijacked Passenger Jets," *9/11 Consensus Panel*, <https://www.consensus911.org/point-flt-1>.

3. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.), p. 85.

to overpower or negotiate with hijackers, to land the aircraft as soon as possible, to communicate with authorities, and to try delaying tactics.

One of the FAA officials most involved with the Common Strategy in the period leading up to 9/11 described it as an approach dating back to the early 1980s, developed in consultation with the industry and the FBI, and based on the historical record of hijackings. The point of the strategy was to “**optimize actions taken by a flight crew to resolve hijackings peacefully**” through systematic delay and, if necessary, accommodation of the hijackers. The record had shown that the longer a hijacking persisted, the more likely it was to have a peaceful resolution. The strategy operated on the fundamental assumptions that hijackers issue negotiable demands, most often for asylum or the release of prisoners, and that “**suicide wasn’t in the game plan**” of hijackers.

Thus, on September 11, 2001, the Common Strategy, the last line of defense, **offered no defense against the tactics employed by the hijackers** of Flights 11, 77, 93, and 175.⁴ (Bolding added)

Thus, it is not at all clear that the pilots on any of the flights could have executed any sort of violent resistance towards the hijackers. Nor is it clear that they would have had time to enter the hijack code, especially if the hijackers rushed into the cockpits and put a knife to the throats of the pilots. We must remember that all of the pilots would have been strapped into their seats at the time, in a confined space, rushed by suicidal terrorists, in situations where it could have been as many as five against two (or four against two, in the case of Flight 93). No doubt all of the pilots on all four flights were smart, resourceful, brave, and tough in their own way. But none of that may have been enough to overpower groups of terrorists, again, especially in a confined space where they are strapped into their seats. No pre-9/11 documentation that I’m aware of has surfaced that shows pilots were given any sort of training to deal with such a circumstance. Until such evidence is provided, we simply cannot say that the idea of the hijackers overpowering the pilots is “exceedingly improbable.”

The Center’s webpage also notes that the pilots could have “[performed] a violent flight control maneuver to thwart an invasion of the cockpit.” However, no evidence is provided to substantiate this claim. As it happens, the question of whether the pilots could have executed any such maneuvers to thwart the hijackers was investigated after the attacks. For example, in 2003 a document was put out by the International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations which investigated this question.⁵ The document, first and foremost, reiterates the point made by the 9/11 Commission Report and Staff Notes; that the training pilots had before 9/11 was NOT for suicide hijackings.

Before September 11th, this role was defined by strategy as one of negotiation, to ramp down the rage of the terrorists by listening to their demands, and by offering solutions while protecting the safety of passengers and crew. Control of the airplane remained with the pilots, although the destination was often a variable. The situation presented to four airline crews on 9/11 was distinctly different. The terrorists were trained and capable of eliminating the

4. “National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States: Staff Report No. 4 – The Four Flights” (2004), pp. 1–2, https://irp.fas.org/congress/2004_rpt/staff_statement_4.pdf.

5. “Aggressive Manoeuvring,” *IFALPA*, April 2003, <https://www.ifalpa.org/media/2034/03adobl01-aggressive-manoeuvering.pdf>.

crew, and flying the fully fuelled wide-body aircraft into predetermined ground targets. There could be no negotiations. The hijackers were willing to die in the inferno of successfully completing their mission, or die while trying to do so.⁶

But more to the point, the document also makes clear that executing “aggressive aircraft maneuvers” (AAMs) is not as simple a matter as the International Center suggests. In fact, executing such maneuvers can *very dangerous*, due to the immense pressure this could potentially put on the plane, and the danger it would pose to passengers and crew members. The IFALPA investigated this question, considering test flights carried out by Boeing and Airbus, and real-world hijackings where such maneuvers were attempted. Their conclusion was rather straightforward: “All the information that IFALPA ADO pilots have gathered to date indicate that AAMs and CTMs [counter terrorist maneuvers] are inappropriate, and perhaps the most dangerous thing that a pilot could do to resolve a situation where terrorists are attempting [to] gain control of the aircraft.”⁷ If, as the International Center and 9/11 Consensus Panel wish us to believe, pilots are as well trained as they suggest, then they most certainly would have been trained to know what maneuvers are and aren’t safe for an airplane to attempt.

In conclusion, Point 1 of the International Center is demonstrably unsupported. The Center has not demonstrated that it was impossible or even improbable for the hijackers on the four flights to have overpowered the pilots successfully, nor have they demonstrated there was much the pilots could have done to prevent this. In order for this point to be valid, the Center must present pre-9/11 evidence showing (1) pilots were given training to deal with suicide hijackings specifically, and (2) that violent flight maneuvers were recommended and considered safe before 9/11 to deal with hijackings. Until such evidence is presented, there is no justification I can see to keep this point, as it is, on the website.

Furthermore, in presenting these arguments, the Center has unfortunately overlooked a much more valid point that could be made in regards to the flights being hijacked. In a sense, the Center is correct that the flights should not have been hijacked; not because the pilots should have been able to prevent it, but because security measures that should have been in place were not. As many 9/11 researchers are aware, there is substantial pre-9/11 information that indicated terrorists could attempt aircraft hijackings, even intending to use the aircrafts as weapons to attack the US.⁸ For example, in May of 2001, Senator John Kerry was warned by a retired FAA special agent that Logan International Airport “was ripe for a ‘jihad’ suicide operation possibly involving ‘a coordinated attack.’”⁹ Likewise, one of the best-known pre-9/11 planned terrorist operations (but thankfully never carried out) was the Bojinka Plot, which would have involved blowing up airplanes, and in at least one case hijacking an aircraft and crashing it into a building.¹⁰ This information was known to the U.S. by at least 1996.

6. Ibid., p. 1.

7. Ibid., p. 3.

8. See for example the webpage “9/11 Warnings: not a surprise attack nor an ‘intelligence failure’,” at <http://www.oilempire.us/warnings.html>.

9. Paul Sperry, “The Warning Kerry Ignored,” *New York Post*, 15 March 2004, archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20040402024457/http://nypost.com/postopinion/opedcolumnists/20808.htm>.

10. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 147–53. See also Maria Ressa, “Philippines: U.S. missed 9/11 clues years ago,” *CNN*, 26 July 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/07/26/khalid.confession/index.html>.

After 9/11, the security measures taken to ensure unauthorized personnel cannot enter the cockpit of an aircraft were beefed up substantially.¹¹ But given the many pre-9/11 warnings the U.S. received, such measures should have been implemented well before the attacks. It's this oversight on the part of the government, which enabled the hijackings to even occur, that warrants further investigation, to ascertain whether this represents a matter of extreme incompetence on the part of official bodies, or perhaps something more sinister and intentional.

For all of these reasons discussed, I recommend the International Center for 9/11 Justice either revise Point 1 of their site, or retract it entirely. As I emphasized at the beginning, it is more important now than ever to collect only the strongest evidence of the falsity of the official narrative of 9/11, and present that, and only that, to the public at large. We have a responsibility as researchers to both the victims of the attacks and their grieving loved ones to get the story straight about what happened that day, in the hopes of achieving the new investigation we all so desperately want.

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About the Author: Adam Taylor has been researching the events of September 11th, 2001 since August 2007. He has contributed to sites such as the 9/11 Debunkers Blog (<http://911debunkers.blogspot.com>), AE911Truth (<https://www.ae911truth.org>) and ScientificMethod911.org (archived at <https://scientistsfor911truth.com/Discussion/Methodsite/index.html>). He is the author of the AE911Truth multi-part essay “Debunking the Real 9/11 Myths: Why Popular Mechanics Can’t Face Up to Reality” (<https://www.ae911truth.org/evidence/technical-articles>).

11. “Jet cockpit doors nearly impossible to open by intruders,” *Toronto Star*, 27 March 2015, <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/03/26/jet-cockpit-doors-nearly-impossible-to-open-by-intruders.html>.