

# commentary

from other pens...

## Lapses before Pearl Harbor echoed prior to Sept. 11

By Calvin Woodward

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — They said authorities lacked the imagination to foresee the surprise attack. They said vital intelligence never made it to those who might have saved the day.

So many clues. Never the right conclusions.

When members of Congress' intelligence committees begin joint hearings Tuesday to explore why the government did not prevent the Sept. 11 attacks, they will find history hanging over their shoulder.

In 1946, another House-Senate panel delivered its report on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor five years earlier. It found a bushel of overlooked intelligence, bosses and subordinates who did not talk to each other and plenty of fault to go around.

Lawmakers then thought they had settled on lessons that, if followed in generations to come, would mean no more Pearl Harbors.

Lawmakers now are looking at why America was caught so horribly off guard once again.

In the intervening years, some lessons may have been forgotten.

### FAILURE OF IMAGINATION

Then: The Pearl Harbor committee, building on the findings of seven other inquiries after the Dec. 7, 1941, attack, said U.S. officials possessed "unusually significant and vital intelligence" but failed to "employ the necessary imagination" to put it together.

Now: America possessed vital intelligence before Sept. 11 about hijacking intentions of al-Qaida and other signs of imminent trouble from restive terrorists.

Senior Bush administration officials say they could not have imagined hijackers would go on a suicide mission using airliners as missiles. This, despite the knowledge before Sept. 11 that terrorists had talked of using such tactics and had hoped to destroy the Eiffel Tower that way.

Larry Johnson, who was deputy director of the State Department's office of counterterrorism in the first Bush administration, said officials are paid to think creatively.

"That information was in their files," he said, "and if they weren't imagining it, that is a failure of intelligence and of imagination."

### BLINDED BY THE OBVIOUS

Then: "There is a danger of being blinded by the self-evident," the Pearl Harbor committee said. In the weeks leading to the attack it had been evident Japan would go after South Pacific targets far from Hawaii.

Now: Whether there was enough handwriting foreshadowing the Sept. 11 attacks is just now being explored.

If not blinded by other possibilities, some U.S. officials were, at least, distracted. They say much of the intelligence chatter they were intercepting pointed overseas as the place where the threat was greatest.

### BROKEN COMMUNICATIONS

Then: The committee said it was essential that subordinates and superiors not hold anything important back from each other.

There were instances before Pearl Harbor of subordinates in Washington not informing superiors of what they knew, including Japanese intentions conveyed in intercepted telegrams from Tokyo. Moreover, a "war warning" issued by superiors in Washington was misinterpreted and played down by commanders in Hawaii.

Now: The Phoenix memo, in which an FBI agent raised concerns about Arabs training at U.S. flight schools, did not make it past FBI middle managers before Sept. 11.

An agent in Minnesota alleges the bureau hindered an investigation of Zacarias Moussaoui, arrested on immigration charges a month before the attacks after arousing suspicions over his flight training.

Agent Coleen Rowley said her colleagues were so frustrated by the roadblocks they took their concerns to the CIA, and were reprimanded. FBI Director Robert Mueller has promised to improve cooperation between headquarters and field offices as part of restructuring the bureau.

Those sorts of problems were familiar back in 1946, too. "The unapproachable or superior attitude of officials is fatal," that report said.



## Weather seems harsher as I get older

The older I get, the more I am affected by the weather.

The cold seems colder, the wind harsher, the thunder louder, the rain wetter...well, you get the drift.

I can't tell you why, but severe weather is just more annoying to me now. The funny thing is that for four years I lived in a place famous for its extremely cold weather and I don't remember being bothered one bit.

I went to college in Gunnison, Colo., a mountain town about 30 miles south of the Crested Butte ski resort.

The temperature would sometimes drop to -30 during the winter in Gunnison, and most times it was colder there in the summer than it was in Denver during the winter.

In Crested Butte, where I worked for a while at a ski rental shop, the snow would be piled more than 10-feet high, almost touching the roofs on some houses.

You'd think all that cold and snow would wear



### rachel miscall

● unraveling

on a person, but I don't remember minding it.

I remember walking to class in a skirt with the wind whipping around me. I had to step over snow drifts and jump across puddles. I was cold, but I don't remember feeling annoyed. I guess I just accepted my environment.

Things have changed.

I have shivered through the past two winters, praying for a little sunshine and warmth. The temperature hardly ever drops below zero in Goodland, but I sit at my desk rubbing my hands together and I pile blankets onto my bed at night.

When it's cold and dreary outside, that's how I feel on the inside — cold and dreary.

## Governor candidates sounding like moderates

'Tis the season to sound moderate in Kansas politics, judging from the behavior of the state's governor wannabes.

In the state's political circles, "moderate" has become shorthand for Republicans who, like Gov. Bill Graves, view themselves as pro-education and business-friendly.

They're often pragmatic, usually not hostile to abortion rights, typically well-groomed and carry the patina of country club respectability. Sometimes, they use code phrases like "traditional Republican" or "mainstream Republican" to describe themselves.

But most importantly, they're supposed to occupy the political center. This year's crop of major gubernatorial candidates wants voters to place them in the middle of the road.

They sense that they'll have to attract votes from moderate Republicans and similarly minded independent voters to win the governor's race.

"I think moderate voters are THE swing voters in the state of Kansas," said Sen. Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, a moderate. "It's the same reason that, in the presidential election, everyone tries to appeal to soccer moms."

Seeking the Republican nomination are Senate President Dave Kerr of Hutchinson, State Treasurer Tim Shallenburger, Wichita Mayor Bob Knight, and Dan Bloom, a former Eudora schools superintendent.

The only announced Democratic candidate is Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius.

On paper, the GOP nominee should win easily. In the last election, more than 735,000 registered to vote as Republicans, and many of the 424,000 unaffiliated voters leaned toward the Republican Party. That compared to about 449,000 registered Democrats.

But, of course, there's the eternal struggle within the GOP between conservatives and moderates, a conflict that likely dates to Ur-Gov. Charles Robinson, just after statehood.

Prominent moderates griped loudly and publicly last year that if Shallenburger were nominated, moderates would be alienated and might sit out the race or vote for Sebelius.

As House speaker, Shallenburger was an ardent tax cutter during the mid-1990s, and he strongly



### john hanna

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opposes abortion.

And to moderates, he hangs out with the wrong sort. As a legislator, he was friendlier than many Republicans to labor unions and trial lawyers. Worst of all is his association with U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, the leader of the conservative wing.

Shallenburger has insisted that he's not as far right as he's been painted. Some right-of-center Republicans think he's closer to the party's true center than other GOP candidates.

"Most people in Kansas are probably right of center, but if you ask them where they are, they'll say they're in the center," said conservative Rep. Doug Mays, R-Topeka. "They pride themselves on being in the middle of the road. I think the candidates are trying to appeal to that."

Knight's main moderate credential is his lieutenant-governor running mate, House Speaker Kent Glasscock, of Manhattan.

In television ads, Knight has described himself as pro-education, and he's praised Glasscock's working in helping pass \$252 million in tax increases this year to prevent cuts in education and social services.

"Bob Knight has a strong progressive record," Glasscock said. "he has a long history of being a traditional Republican in a very difficult political environment."

But Knight is an unknown to many moderates, and his anti-abortion stance hurts him with some.

"It's clear there are a lot of Republican moderate activists who are holding back until all of these candidates show their true stripes," Schmidt said.

As for Kerr, he had avoided being labeled after becoming Senate president in January 2001. But his announcement tour made it clear where he puts himself.

During a tour stop outside Topeka High School, he said the tax increases this year were necessary to save public schools.

"I was not going to let the public schools be deci-

When I was in high school, I remember my father complaining about the snow and cold and how it affected his mood. I didn't understand it then, but I do now.

I was so excited for spring to arrive this year, but it has brought with it thunderstorms, high winds and rain — more annoying weather.

The strong winds are especially bothersome because I personally don't see how they benefit anyone or anything. Wind has kicked up more dust off fields this spring than I can ever remember — of course, I don't remember ever caring about the wind before.

I value sunlight much more now than I ever did when I was younger.

In high school and college, I couldn't have cared less whether it was dark or light outside.

Actually, I likely preferred the dark because that meant I was probably at a party, not in a classroom.

Now, I cherish long, warm, sunny days.

The more, the better.

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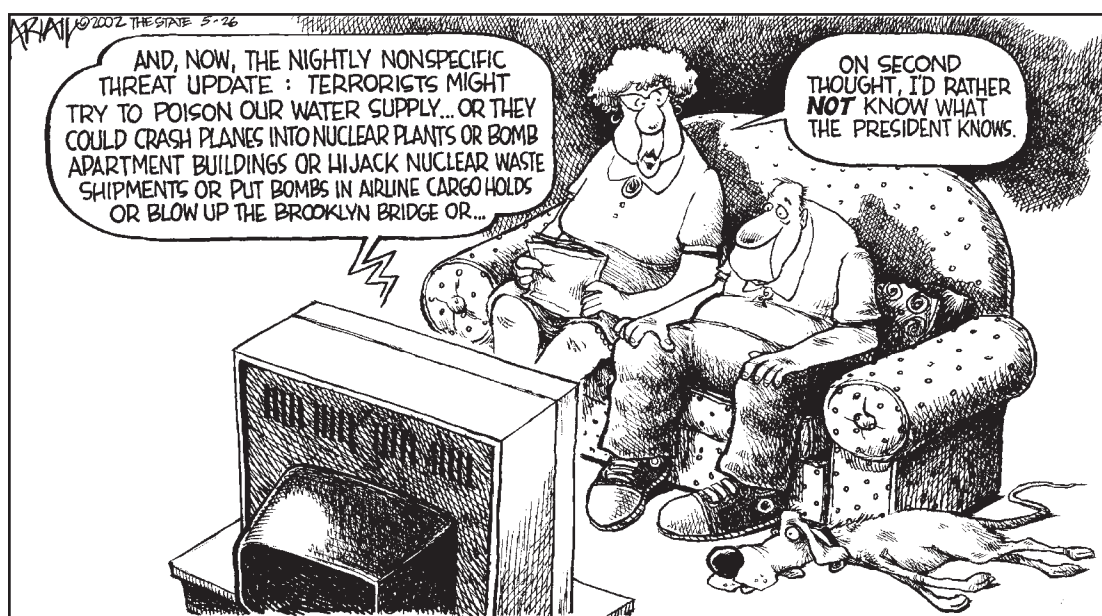
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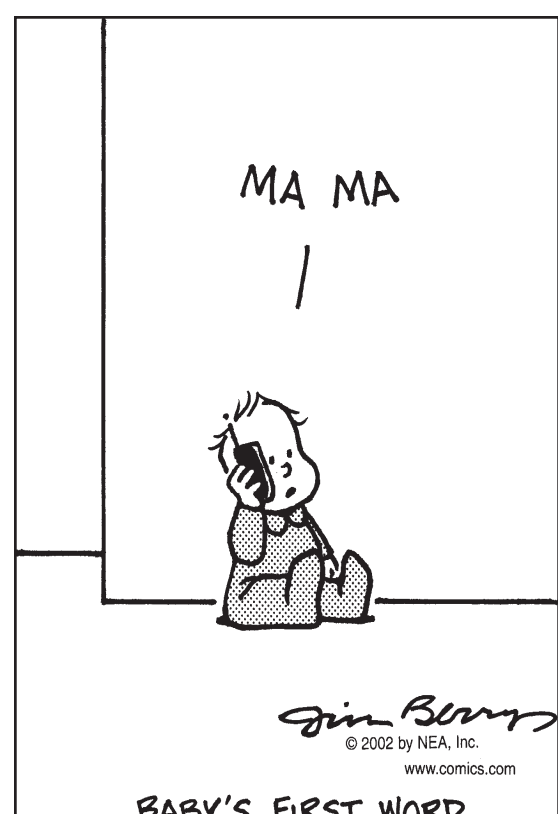
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