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A Declaration of Truth and Accountability

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a free people to examine the conduct of those who govern them, and to question the narratives by which wars are waged, liberties are surrendered, and the public is commanded to trust without evidence, a decent respect to the memory of the dead and to the judgment of posterity requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to demand truth.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all people are endowed with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, the pursuit of truth, and the right to hold accountable those who exercise power in their name.

That governments are instituted to secure these rights, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; and that whenever any government, agency, or institution places secrecy above accountability, suppresses evidence, or demands obedience without examination, it becomes the duty of a free people to inquire, to investigate, and, where necessary, to demand reform.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that institutions long established should not be altered for light and transient causes. Yet when a pattern of secrecy, contradiction, suppression, and unanswered questions becomes too substantial to ignore, the people have a right—and a solemn duty—to bring those questions into the light.

We therefore appeal to the evidence, to the historical record, to the laws of physics, to sworn testimony, and to the conscience of every citizen.

Of the Questions Before Us

Nearly twenty-five years have passed since the morning of September 11th, 2001, when thousands of innocent people were murdered, families were shattered, and the course of American history was forever changed.

We shall never forget the dead.

We shall never forget the firefighters, police officers, paramedics, airline crews, office workers, passengers, and ordinary citizens who faced unimaginable terror.

We shall never forget those who continue to suffer from the consequences of that day.

But remembrance without inquiry is incomplete.

And therefore we ask:

By what evidence was the history of that day established?

What investigations were conducted, and when?

What evidence was preserved, and what evidence was lost?

Which questions were answered, and which were dismissed?

And by what authority are the people expected to accept conclusions that remain contested by engineers, scientists, investigators, victims' families, and citizens who have examined the available record and found unanswered questions?

Of Operation Northwoods

It has been documented that, in 1962, senior officers of the United States military considered a proposal known as **Operation Northwoods**, which contemplated deceptive acts of violence and terrorism intended to create public support for military action against Cuba.

The proposal was presented within the highest levels of the national-security establishment.

It was not carried out.

President John F. Kennedy rejected it.

And therein lies a lesson that no free people should forget:

The fact that a government possesses the power to contemplate an act does not establish that it committed that act.

But neither does the rejection of one secret plan prove that no future institution could ever contemplate another.

Therefore, let history teach us neither blind trust nor blind suspicion, but vigilance.

For secrecy creates the possibility of abuse; transparency creates the possibility of accountability.

Of September the Eleventh

On that terrible morning, the American people were confronted with an unprecedented attack.

Yet almost immediately, explanations began to emerge concerning those responsible, their motives, their affiliations, and the appropriate response of the United States.

We therefore ask whether every conclusion was established through evidence sufficient to withstand the most searching independent examination.

We ask why certain intelligence failures occurred.

We ask why warnings were not acted upon.

We ask what was known before the attacks and by whom.

We ask why certain foreign nationals were permitted to leave the United States in the days immediately following the attacks, and what investigations accompanied their departure.

We ask what evidence concerning foreign assistance, financing, or facilitation was withheld from the public and why.

We ask whether claims concerning individuals and governments were established by evidence, by intelligence assessments, or by assumptions formed in the chaos of the moment.

And we ask these questions not because questions themselves constitute proof, but because a free republic cannot fear the answers.

Of the Investigation

We further find cause for examination in the long delay preceding the establishment of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States.

For more than a year after the attacks, the American people and the families of the dead awaited a comprehensive national investigation.

That commission was ultimately established only after sustained pressure from victims' families and their advocates.

We do not presume from delay alone the existence of a hidden design.

But neither do we accept delay as a reason to cease asking why it occurred.

For when nearly three thousand citizens perish in an attack upon the nation, the demand for an independent accounting is neither partisan nor radical.

It is the ordinary expectation of a free people.

Of Evidence and Secrecy

We have witnessed the invocation of national security to prevent disclosure of information concerning the attacks.

We have witnessed disputes over access to government records.

We have witnessed litigation in which questions of state secrecy and national security collided with the demands of victims' families for discovery.

We recognize that legitimate secrets sometimes exist.

But secrecy must never become a permanent substitute for accountability.

For when the government possesses evidence concerning an event of such magnitude, the burden of secrecy should be temporary, narrow, and subject to lawful review.

The people cannot meaningfully consent to policies justified by facts they are forbidden to examine.

Of the Buildings

We therefore turn to the physical evidence.

The World Trade Center towers were struck by aircraft and subsequently destroyed.

World Trade Center Building 7 was not struck by an aircraft, yet it too collapsed later that day.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology investigated that collapse and concluded that fire-induced structural failure initiated a progressive collapse.

Yet the collapse has remained the subject of continuing dispute among engineers, researchers, and members of the public.

Particular attention has been given to the period during which portions of the visible descent of Building 7 exhibited acceleration consistent with free fall.

We acknowledge the findings of the official investigation.

We also acknowledge that critics dispute the interpretation of those findings.

And so, we demand not faith, but examination.

Let the models be published.

Let the assumptions be examined.

Let the calculations be reproduced.

Let independent engineers challenge the conclusions.

Let competing hypotheses be tested against the physical record.

For steel, concrete, gravity, fire, and structural failure do not alter their behavior according to political convenience.

The laws of nature require no loyalty to any government.

If the official explanation withstands rigorous independent examination, let it be strengthened by that examination.

If it does not, let the evidence reveal where it fails.

Of the Physical Evidence

Questions have likewise been raised concerning the dust, steel, microspheres, chemical residues, and alleged energetic materials recovered from the ruins.

Some researchers have interpreted certain findings as evidence consistent with thermitic or other energetic reactions.

Other investigators have disputed those interpretations and have offered alternative explanations.

Here again, we demand neither predetermined conclusion nor unquestioning acceptance.

We demand samples.

We demand chain-of-custody records.

We demand reproducible experiments.

We demand independent laboratories.

We demand that competing hypotheses be tested under conditions capable of distinguishing one explanation from another.

For science does not fear replication.

Truth does not require the protection of authority.

Of the Crime Scene

We further object to the rapid removal and recycling of enormous quantities of structural steel from the World Trade Center site before every conceivable forensic examination had been completed.

Whether such removal was necessary, negligent, or consistent with ordinary emergency practice is itself a matter capable of investigation.

But where the scene of a crime contains physical evidence, prudence demands preservation.

The destruction, alteration, or dispersal of evidence diminishes the ability of future investigators to test competing explanations.

And therefore, we declare:

No crime scene of national consequence should ever again be treated as disposable before independent forensic examination has been completed.

Of Names and Ridicule

We object also to the habit of answering difficult questions with ridicule rather than evidence.

A citizen who asks a question is not thereby guilty of believing its most extreme answer.

A researcher who challenges an official conclusion is not thereby disproven.

And a person who demands evidence is not thereby an enemy of the republic.

The phrase *conspiracy theory* may sometimes describe an unfounded claim.

But it must never become a substitute for investigation.

Let claims be tested by evidence.

Let evidence be tested by replication.

Let conclusions be tested by criticism.

And let citizens be permitted to think without fear.

Of War and Liberty

The consequences of September 11th extended far beyond that terrible morning.

The United States enacted sweeping new surveillance authorities.

Military campaigns were launched abroad.

Thousands of American service members were killed or wounded.

Millions of civilians overseas suffered the consequences of wars and political upheaval.

Trillions of dollars were committed.

Civil liberties were placed under new pressures.

And generations were born into a world reshaped by the policies enacted in the name of national security.

Whatever one's conclusions concerning the origins of September 11th, the consequences demand examination.

For the power to wage war, to surveil citizens, and to restrict liberty must always remain subject to constitutional restraint.

Fear cannot become a permanent source of political authority.

Of the Duty of a Free People

We therefore declare that remembrance requires more than ceremonies.

It requires evidence.

Justice requires more than convictions.

It requires due process.

Patriotism requires more than obedience.

It requires the courage to question those who govern.

And liberty requires more than constitutional words written upon parchment.

It requires citizens willing to defend those words when they become inconvenient to power.

We do not demand that every citizen accept our conclusions.

We demand only that citizens remain free to examine the evidence and reach their own conclusions.

We do not demand that every official be presumed guilty.

We demand that no official be presumed beyond examination.

We do not demand that every disputed hypothesis be accepted.

We demand that legitimate questions be answered honestly.

And we do not claim that suspicion constitutes proof.

We claim that proof must be permitted to speak.

A Declaration of Accountability

Therefore, we, the people who refuse to forget, appealing to the highest standards of evidence and to the judgment of history, solemnly declare:

That the dead deserve the truth.

That the living deserve honest answers.

That government secrecy must have limits.

That physical evidence must be preserved.

That scientific claims must be reproducible.

That official conclusions must remain open to legitimate scrutiny.

That national security must never become a permanent shield against accountability.

That the Constitution belongs not to agencies, officials, parties, or administrations, but to the people.

And that no government possesses a right greater than the consent granted to it by those whom it governs.

We call upon Congress to exercise its constitutional authority.

We call upon the courts to protect lawful discovery and due process.

We call upon scientists and engineers to examine disputed evidence without fear or favor.

We call upon journalists to investigate rather than merely repeat.

We call upon citizens to read the documents for themselves.

And we call upon every institution entrusted with public power to remember that secrecy is a temporary privilege, while accountability is a permanent obligation.

And for the Support of This Declaration

With a firm reliance upon the judgment of a free people, we pledge to one another our determination that questions shall not be silenced by ridicule, that evidence shall not be buried beneath bureaucracy, and that truth shall not be subordinated to convenience.

We seek neither vengeance nor blind accusation.

We seek examination.

We seek transparency.

We seek accountability.

We seek the restoration of public confidence through evidence rather than command.

For the fallen.

For the first responders.

For the families who still grieve.

For those whose lives were forever altered.

For those who served.

For those who died.

For those who remain.

And for generations yet unborn, who will inherit both the Constitution and the consequences of the choices made in its name.

Let the record be opened.

Let the evidence be examined.

Let the questions be heard.

Let the truth, whatever it may prove to be, stand without fear.

And let no free people ever again be told that they must choose between patriotism and the pursuit of truth.

We, the People, choose both.