

## Mountain: Barney Frank's role in 9/11

By Tom Mountain

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Gerald Posner, author of "Case Closed," the widely acclaimed book on the assassination of President Kennedy, has penned another blockbuster, "Why America Slept - The Failure to Prevent 9/11." In it, Posner details how over two decades the breakdown in authority, jurisdiction and communication among the various levels of the government responsible for protecting our borders and preventing terrorist infiltration led directly to the establishment of foreign terrorist sleeper cells in the United States, which culminated in the terrorist bombings of Sept. 11, 2001.

What Posner reveals is nothing short of startling, as he details the misguided complicity of none other than our own Congressman Barney Frank, whose meddling in the immigration laws since the early 1980s had disastrous consequences:

"Congressman Barney Frank, the Massachusetts Democrat who was a strong advocate of protecting civil liberties, led a successful effort to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act so that membership in a terrorist group was no longer sufficient to deny a visa.

"Under Frank's amendment, which seems unthinkable post 9/11, a visa could only be denied if the government could prove that the applicant had committed an act of terrorism. Rendered toothless by the Frank amendment, the Reagan administration had virtually no way to block entry visas even when there was information linking the individuals to terrorist groups."

And so it began.

Since 1798, when President John Adams signed into law the Alien Enemies Act, the country had legally and effectively prevented known or suspected enemy agents or terrorists from gaining entry into the United States. But the various amendments to the immigration laws put forth by Barney Frank over the span of two decades derailed this crucial government policy which had worked remarkably well for nearly two centuries.

Between 1981 and 2001, Barney Frank sponsored no less than 13 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act, which had the effect of opening the nation's floodgates to a well-disciplined, well-organized network of terrorist sleeper cells and support groups that have since become entrenched here in America for up to two decades.

The Frank Amendment of 1989, the crown jewel of the congressman's assault on our immigration laws, declared that a foreigner could not be denied a visa because of his ideology, which meant that that no matter how repugnant, hostile or undemocratic an individual's politics, these could not be grounds for denying him entry into the United States.

What's more, the very essence of what constituted terrorist activities was redefined by Frank, as his 2004 political opponent and talk show host Chuck Morse explains, "The Frank Amendment raised the bar and made it more difficult for government officials to prove a connection between the visa applicant and terrorist activities. Mere association with a group deemed to be involved with terrorism would no longer be enough to deny a visa as it had been previously."

Morse continues, "None of those affiliated with Hamas or the 9/11 hijackers who entered the country legally after the Frank Amendment went into effect were formally affiliated with 'terrorist activities' by the new and more narrow definition of the term."

Yet the Frank Amendment of 1989 was hardly alone in damaging the national interest. As early as 1981, Frank sponsored an amendment to greatly expand the teacher and student visa program. The new definition for each was so vague and diluted, and the means for verifying that these special visa recipients were actually enrolled as students or teachers was so unenforceable, that the 9/11 terrorist commander Mohammed Atta obtained a student visa knowing that immigration authorities would never check up on him. And he was correct.

In 1995, after Brandeis student Alisa Flatow was murdered by Islamic Jihad in the Gaza

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Strip, it was revealed that Sami al-Arian, the alleged leader of Islamic Jihad, had easily obtained a teaching visa to the University of Florida, made possible by H.R. Amendment 5287, sponsored by Congressman Frank.

The Frank Amendment opened the doors to our nation for some of the most unseemly characters ever to come out of the Middle East. Aside from the unprecedented influx of foreign terrorists, a large support group of foreign anti-American radical Muslim sympathizers sprouted up in the 1990s as a result of these new lax visa requirements. This was even further exacerbated by follow up legislation from Frank, which effectively tied the hands of overseas American consular officials by stripping them of their traditional discretion in granting visas, then impeding the CIA and FBI from even sharing information about these questionable aliens once they landed in America.

So having sabotaged those immigration laws which had succeeded in keeping out foreign terrorists for nearly two centuries, Frank then proceeded to launch a campaign against CIA funding during the Clinton administration, which resulted in severe CIA budget cuts in 1996, despite dire warnings from Clinton's CIA director, George Tenet, of an ominous terrorist threat.

In my conversation with Mr. Frank, he referred to Posner's book (soon to be made into a TV miniseries) as "a shockingly bad book." He then railed against his political nemesis Chuck Morse as "delusional," and predictably blamed the Republicans whom, he contends, "rewrote the immigration laws in 1995."

The Congressman exhibited an almost exasperated disbelief when I continued to query him, as if I were a knave to even dare to question his legislative record. When I evidently let on that I was less than convinced by his response, he questioned whether I had listened to anything he already told me. So chagrined was Mr. Frank that someone should be disinclined to accept his rhetoric as gospel.






It also struck me that not since Boston Herald columnist Howie Carr raked him over the coals during the infamous male prostitute scandal had any member of the media seriously challenged him. But at least here I focused on his legislative record, rather than his peculiar and sometimes reckless habits. Yet the Congressman will undoubtedly reveal his notoriously thin skin as a result of this column.

In the last congressional campaign, Mr. Frank found himself in the unusual position of being put on the defensive, and even uttered a falsehood that the 9/11 hijackers were here illegally. Yet of the 19 hijackers, all but three were here legally, and he knew it.

Because it was Barney Frank, after all, who made it possible for the 9/11 terrorists to legally enter - and remain in - the United States ... which likely explains why he was recently dropped from the Congressional Committee on Homeland Security.

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