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**SCHAKOWSKY: BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S MISSTATEMENT OF THE DAY -
WAR ON TERRORISM**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) issued today's "Bush Administration's Misstatement of the Day" on the war on terrorism.

Evidence is growing that the Bush Administration did not feel a sense of urgency about the threat posed by Al Qaeda prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, however, is defending the White House against these claims and stated on March 28, 2004 during an appearance on 60 Minutes: "The administration took seriously the threat" of terrorism before 9/11.

But according to a *Washington Post* article today titled "Top Focus Before 9/11 wasn't on Terrorism - Rice Speech Cited Missile Defense":

On Sept. 11, 2001, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice was scheduled to outline a Bush administration policy that would address "the threats and problems of today and the day after, not the world of yesterday" -- but the focus was largely on missile defense, not terrorism from Islamic radicals.

A review of major public pronouncements in the first eight months of 2001 found relatively few extensive statements by Bush, Vice President Cheney or Rice about al Qaeda, bin Laden or other Islamic extremist groups.

A *Chicago Tribune* article titled "Panel to Probe Rice Contradictions," also disputes claims by Dr. Rice. The story states:

Rice, in an opinion piece published in The Washington Post on March 22, claimed that Bush had a plan to take military action against Al Qaeda before Sept. 11. But Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, under questioning by the commission, said that a military plan was not put in place until "after the horror of 9/11."

Rice also claimed that Bush was engaged so deeply on the issue of terrorism that he had personally requested a CIA briefing on the threat posed by Al Qaeda, which he received in August 2001 at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. The CIA, however, later said that it had

acted on its own in preparing that report.