

Former Chief of NIST's Fire Science Division Calls for Independent Review of World Trade Center Investigation

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Aug. 20, 2007 - James Quintiere, Ph.D., former Chief of the Fire Science Division of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), has called for an independent review of NIST's investigation into the collapses of the World Trade Center Towers on 9/11.

Dr. Quintiere made his plea during his presentation, "*Questions on the WTC Investigations*" at the 2007 World Fire Safety Conference. "I wish that there would be a peer review of this," he said, referring to the NIST investigation. "I think all the records that NIST has assembled should be archived. I would really like to see someone else take a look at what they've done; both structurally and from a fire point of view."



"I think the official conclusion that NIST arrived at is questionable," explained Dr. Quintiere. "Let's look at real alternatives that might have been the cause of the collapse of the World Trade Towers and how that relates to the official cause and what's the significance of one cause versus another."

Dr. Quintiere, one of the world's leading fire science researchers and safety engineers, also encouraged his audience of fellow researchers and engineers to scientifically re-examine the WTC collapses. "I hope to convince you to perhaps become 'Conspiracy Theorists', but in a proper way," he said.

James Quintiere, PhD

In his hour-long presentation, Dr. Quintiere discussed many elements of NIST's investigation that he found problematic. He emphasized, "In every investigation I've taken part in, the key has been to establish a timeline. And the timeline is established by witness accounts, by information from alarm systems, by any video that you might have of the event, and then by calculations. And you try to put all of this together. And if your calculations are consistent with some of these hard facts, then perhaps you can have some comfort in the results of your calculations. I have not seen a timeline placed in the NIST report."

Dr. Quintiere also expressed his frustration at NIST's failure to provide a report on the third skyscraper that collapsed on 9/11, World Trade Center Building 7. "And that building was not hit by anything," noted Dr. Quintiere. "It's more important to take a look at that. Maybe there was damage by the debris falling down that played a significant role. But other than that you had fires burning a long time without fire department intervention. And firefighters were in that building. I have yet to see any kind of story about what they saw. What was burning? Were photographs taken? Nothing!"

World Trade Center Building 7 was 610 feet tall, 47 stories, and would have been the tallest building in 33 states. Although it was not hit by an airplane on 9/11, it completely collapsed into a pile of rubble in less than 8 seconds at 5:20 p.m. on 9/11. In the 6 years since 9/11,

NIST has failed to provide any explanation for the collapse. In addition to NIST's failure to provide an explanation, absolutely no mention of Building 7's collapse appears in the 9/11 Commission's *"full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks."* [A brief video of the collapse can be seen at http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/IMAGES/WTC7_Collapse.wmv]

Dr. Quintiere said he originally "had high hopes" that NIST would do a good job with the investigation. "They're the central government lab for fire. There are good people there and they can do a good job. But what I also thought they would do is to enlist the service of the ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives], which has an investigation force and a laboratory of their own for fire. And I thought they would put people out on the street and get gumshoe-type information. What prevented all of this? I think it's the legal structure that cloaks the Commerce Department and therefore NIST. And so, instead of lawyers as if they were acting on a civil case trying to get depositions and information subpoenaed, those lawyers did the opposite and blocked everything."

In his presentation, Dr. Quintiere also criticized NIST's repeated failures to formally respond to serious questions raised about its conclusions regarding the WTC building collapses and the process it employed to arrive at those conclusions. "I sat through all of the NIST hearings. I went to all of their advisory board meetings, as an observer. I made comments at all."

Responding to a comment from a NIST representative in the audience, Dr. Quintiere said, "I found that throughout your whole investigation it was very difficult to get a clear answer. And when anyone went to your advisory panel meetings or hearings, where they were given five minutes to make a statement; they could never ask any questions. And with all the commentary that I put in, and I spent many hours writing things, and it would bore people if I regurgitated all of that here, I never received one formal reply."

Although Dr. Quintiere was strongly critical of NIST's conclusions and its investigatory process, he made it clear he was not a supporter of theories that the Twin Towers were brought down by pre-planted explosives. "If you go to World Trade Center One, nine minutes before its collapse, there was a line of smoke that puffed out. This is one of the basis of the 'conspiracy theories' that says the smoke puffing out all around the building is due to somebody setting off an explosive charge. Well, I think, more likely, it's one of the floors falling down."

Dr. Quintiere summarized the NIST conclusion about the cause of the collapses of the Twin Towers, "It says that the core columns, uninsulated due to the fact that the aircraft stripped off that insulation; they softened in the heat of the fire and shortened and that led to the collapse. They pulled in the external columns and it caused it to buckle. They went on further to say that there would be no collapse if the insulation remained in place."

Dr. Quintiere then presented his and his students' research that contradicts the NIST report and points to a different cause for the collapses; the application of insufficient fire-proofing insulation on the truss rods in the Twin Towers. "I suggest that there's an equally justifiable theory and that's the trusses fail as they are heated by the fire with the insulation intact. These are two different conclusions and the accountability for each is dramatically different," he said.

Dr. Quintiere's presentation at the World Fire Safety Conference echoed his earlier statement to the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Science, on October 26, 2005, during a hearing on "The Investigation of the World Trade Center Collapse: Findings, Recommendations, and Next Steps", at which he stated:

"In my opinion, the WTC investigation by NIST falls short of expectations by not definitively finding cause, by not sufficiently linking recommendations of specificity to cause, by not fully invoking all of their authority to seek facts in the investigation, and by the guidance of government lawyers to deter rather than develop fact finding.

I have over 35 years of fire research in my experience. I worked in the fire program at NIST for 19 years, leaving as a division chief. I have been at the University of Maryland since. I am a founding member and past-Chair of the International Association for Fire Safety Science—the principal world forum for fire research. ...

All of these have been submitted to NIST, but never acknowledged or answered. I will list some of these.

1. Why is not the design process of assigning fire protection to the WTC towers fully called out for fault? ...
2. Why were not alternative collapse hypotheses investigated and discussed as NIST had stated repeatedly that they would do? ...
3. Spoliation of a fire scene is a basis for destroying a legal case in an investigation. Most of the steel was discarded, although the key elements of the core steel were demographically labeled. A careful reading of the NIST report shows that they have no evidence that the temperatures they predict as necessary for failure are corroborated by findings of the little steel debris they have. Why hasn't NIST declared that this spoliation of the steel was a gross error?
4. NIST used computer models that they said have never been used in such an application before and are the state of the art. For this they should be commended for their skill. But the validation of these modeling results is in question. Others have computed aspects with different conclusions on the cause mechanism of the collapse. Moreover, it is common in fire investigation to compute a time-line and compare it to known events. NIST has not done that.
5. Testing by NIST has been inconclusive. Although they have done fire tests of the scale of several work stations, a replicate test of at least & [sic] of a WTC floor would have been of considerable value. Why was this not done? ...
6. The critical collapse of WTC 7 is relegated to a secondary role, as its findings will not be complete for yet another year. It was clear at the last NIST Advisory Panel meeting in September [2005] that this date may not be realistic, as NIST has not demonstrated progress here. Why has NIST dragged on this important investigation?" [The full text of Dr. Quintiere's statement to the Science Committee can be found at http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/science/hsy24133.000/hsy24133_0f.htm]

Dr. Quintiere is one of the world's leading fire science researchers and safety engineers. He served in the Fire Science and Engineering Division of NIST for 19 years and rose to the position of Chief of the Division. He left NIST in 1990 to join the faculty of the Department of Fire Protection Engineering at the University of Maryland, where he still serves.

Dr. Quintiere is a founding member and Past Chair of the International Association for Fire Safety Science (IAFSS). He is also a Fellow of the Society of Fire Protection Engineering and a Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He has received numerous awards for his contributions to fire science research and engineering, including:

- The Department of Commerce Bronze Medal (1976) and Silver Medal (1982)
- The Howard W. Emmons Lecture Award from the IAFSS in 1986
- The Sjölin Award in 2002 for outstanding contribution to the science of fire safety by the International Forum of Fire Research Directors, NIST
- The 2006 Guise Medal by the National Fire Protection Association

Dr. Quintiere's presentation "*Questions on the WTC Investigations*" was given twice at the 2007 World Fire Safety Conference; Education Session M21 on June 4 (69 minutes) and Spotlight Session T54 on June 5 (102 minutes). Recordings of the presentations can be purchased from the National Fire Protection Association at http://www.fleetwoodonsite.com/index.php?cPath=21_22&sort=2a&page=7&osCsid=04863b41ce2195a3ebc57ec492fa21e3

For a list of over 180 other engineers and architects who question the official investigation into the events of 9/11, please visit <http://PatriotsQuestion911.com/engineers.html>

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