

Remarks in a Meeting With the National Security Team and an Exchange
With Reporters at Camp David, Maryland
September 15, 2001

The President. I've asked the highest levels of our Government to come to discuss the current tragedy that has so deeply affected our Nation. Our country mourns for the loss of life and for those whose lives have been so deeply affected by this despicable act of terror.

I am going to describe to our leadership what I saw: the wreckage of New York City, the signs of the first battle of war.

We're going to meet and deliberate and discuss, but there's no question about it, this act will not stand. We will find those who did it; we will smoke them out of their holes; we will get them running; and we'll bring them to justice. We will not only deal with those who dare attack America; we will deal with those who harbor them and feed them and house them.

Make no mistake about it: Underneath our tears is the strong determination of America to win this war. And we will win it.

I'm going to ask the Secretary of State to say a few things, and then the Attorney General.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. Thank you, Mr. President. I might just say that I'm very pleased with the response we've been getting from the international community. I think every civilized nation in the world recognizes that this was an assault not just against the United States but against civilization.

We should also take note, it's not just Americans who lost lives in the World Trade Center. Dozens of countries lost lives, and they realize that this was an attack against them as well.

We are receiving expressions of support from around the world and not just rhetorical support but real support for whatever may lay ahead in this campaign that is

ahead of us to win the war that the President has spoken of.

I might especially want to thank the President and the people of Pakistan for the support that they have offered and their willingness to assist us in whatever might be required in that part of the world as we determine who those perpetrators are. It's a coalition that will stay intact, that will be built upon over time. And what we have to do is not just go after these perpetrators and those who gave them haven but the whole curse of terrorism that is upon the face of the Earth. And this is a campaign that we have begun this week, and we will stick with it until we are successful.

The President. Attorney General.

Attorney General John D. Ashcroft. Four days ago we began an investigative effort to understand not only those who perpetrate this heinous assault against America and free people everywhere but to develop an understanding of those who are associated with it and how it was conducted.

The FBI, together with very cooperative local and State officials and law enforcement agencies, has processed thousands of leads. We are making the kinds of contacts and developing the information that allow us to describe this as proceeding with reasonable success. We believe that the picture is developing a kind of clarity that's appropriate. We have named 19 individuals that we have high levels of confidence were the hijackers. And we are further refining our understanding of the ways in which this terrible crime was developed.

I might add that we have put in place very serious measures that we believe will provide greater security and provide a basis for our country returning to the kind of freedom and business and conduct that is characteristic of this great Nation.

U.S. Response to Terrorist Attacks

Q. Sir, what do you say to Americans who are worried that the longer it takes to retaliate, the more chance the perpetrators have to escape and hide and just escape justice?

The President. They will try to hide. They will try to avoid the United States and our allies, but we're not going to let them. They run to the hills. They find holes to get in, and we will do whatever it takes to smoke them out and get them running, and we'll get them.

Listen, this is a great nation. We're a kind people. None of us could have envisioned the barbaric acts of these terrorists. But they have stirred up the might of the American people, and we're going to get them, no matter what it takes.

In my radio address today I explained to the American people that this effort may require patience. But we're going to—

Q. How long—

The President. As long as it takes. And it's not just one person. We're talking about those who fed them, those who house them, those who harbor terrorists will be held accountable for this action.

Usama bin Laden

Q. Sir, are you satisfied that Usama bin Laden is at least a kingpin of this operation?

The President. There is no question he is what we would call a prime suspect. And if he thinks he can hide and run from the United States and our allies, he will be sorely mistaken.

U.S. Military

Q. Mr. President, do you have a message for the reservists that you called up yesterday? Can you tell us whether you think more may have to be called up?

The President. The message is for everybody who wears the uniform: Get ready. The United States will do what it takes to win this war. And I ask patience of the American people. There is no question in

my mind, we'll have the resolve. I witnessed it yesterday on the construction site. Behind the sadness and the exhaustion, there is a desire by the American people to not seek only revenge but to win a war against barbaric behavior, people that hate freedom and hate what we stand for. And this is an administration that is going to dedicate ourselves to winning that war.

Pakistan

Q. What did Pakistan say it would do to help the United States?

Secretary Powell. We put before the Pakistani Government a specific list of things that we would like cooperation on, and they've agreed to all those items. I'm not prepared to announce today what those specific items are. But the Pakistani Government was very forthcoming, and we're appreciative.

U.S. Response to Terrorist Attacks

Q. Mr. President, what kind of military options are you considering, if you could talk broadly?

The President. This is an administration that will not talk about how we gather intelligence, how we know what we're going to do, nor what our plans are. When we move, we will communicate with you in an appropriate manner. We're at war. There has been an act of war declared upon America by terrorists, and we will respond accordingly. And I appreciate very much the American people understanding that. As we plan, as we put our strategy into action, we will let you know when we think it's appropriate, not only to protect the lives of our service men and women but to make sure our coalition has had proper time to be noticed, as well. But we're going to act.

Q. What is the risk of additional attacks on us at this point?

The President. I would think the American people need to be—go about their business on Monday but with a heightened

sense of awareness that a group of barbarians have declared war on the American people.

Q. Sir, how much of a sacrifice are ordinary Americans going to have to be expected to make in their daily lives, in their daily routines?

The President. Our hope, of course, is that they make no sacrifice whatsoever. We would like to see life return to normal in America. But these people have declared war on us, and we will do whatever it takes to make sure that we're safe internally. So, therefore, people may not be able to board flights as quickly. Our borders are tighter than they've ever been before. We're taken a variety of measures to make sure that the American people are safe, just as the Attorney General spoke about.

But we hope, obviously, that the measures we take will allow the American economy to continue on. I urge people to go to their businesses on Monday. I understand Major League Baseball is going to start playing again. It is important for America to get on about its life. But our Government will be on full alert, and we'll be tracing every lead, every potential, to make sure that the American people are safe.

Q. How long do you envision—

The President. The definition is, whatever it takes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:19 a.m. in the Laurel Cabin. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address *September 15, 2001*

Good morning. This weekend I am engaged in extensive sessions with members of my National Security Council, as we plan a comprehensive assault on terrorism. This will be a different kind of conflict against a different kind of enemy.

This is a conflict without battlefields or beachheads, a conflict with opponents who believe they are invisible. Yet, they are mistaken. They will be exposed, and they will discover what others in the past have learned: Those who make war against the United States have chosen their own destruction.

Victory against terrorism will not take place in a single battle but in a series of decisive actions against terrorist organizations and those who harbor and support them. We are planning a broad and sustained campaign to secure our country and eradicate the evil of terrorism. And we are determined to see this conflict through.

Americans of every faith and background are committed to this goal.

Yesterday I visited the site of the destruction in New York City and saw an amazing spirit of sacrifice and patriotism and defiance. I met with rescuers who have worked past exhaustion, who cheered for our country and the great cause we have entered. In Washington, DC, the political parties and both Houses of Congress have shown a remarkable unity, and I'm deeply grateful. A terrorist attack designed to tear us apart has instead bound us together as a nation.

Over the past few days, we have learned much about American courage, the courage of firefighters and police officers who suffered so great a loss, the courage of passengers aboard United 93 who may well have fought with the hijackers and saved many lives on the ground.

Now we honor those who died and prepare to respond to these attacks on our