

in this hour of grief. Noting that the victims included innocent civilians of many nationalities, including an Indonesian citizen, the two leaders agreed that these indiscriminate attacks have no place in a civilized world.

The two Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of religious freedom and tolerance in relations within and among nations. As leader of the world's largest Muslim population and third largest democracy, President Megawati joined President Bush in underlining the importance of differentiating between the religion of Islam and the acts of violent extremists. Emphasizing that Islam is a religion of peace that neither teaches hatred nor condones violence, President Megawati encouraged President Bush in his stated purpose of building a broad coalition across religious

lines and cultures to deal with these new and dangerous threats. She further emphasized the importance of taking into account the views of the Muslim world as the United States leads an appropriate response to the events of September 11. Noting that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States, President Bush assured President Megawati that the American people respect Islam as one of the world's great religions and that the United States would join hands with freedom-loving people of all religions to combat transnational terror.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters *September 19, 2001*

The President. I want to welcome the Members, the leadership of the Congress here, and I want the Nation to know how proud I am of how they have helped unite our country. Senator Daschle and the Speaker and Senator Lott and Representative Gephardt have really showed that in times of emergency and crisis, that our Government can function in a way that is just exemplary. And I want to thank them for coming down.

I'm also so pleased to accept the invitation of the Speaker and the leaders to come and address the Congress tomorrow night. I look forward to the opportunity to explain to the American people who it is and who would do this to our great country and why—why would people choose America? A lot of our citizens have got a lot of questions about what has taken place on September the 11th and subsequent to that, and I owe it to the country to give an

explanation. And I want to thank the Congress for giving me a chance. I can't think of a better place than to talk about freedom and the battle to maintain freedom in one of the greatest halls of freedom, and that is in the United States Congress.

So, thank you for the invitation. I accept wholeheartedly, and I will see you all tomorrow night.

I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions. Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

Public Safety

Q. Mr. President, will you be able to tell all Americans whether they're going to be safe while you prepare to retaliate, or could terrorists strike again while we prepare for war?

The President. Ron, I think America needs to know that we in Government are on alert, that we recognize life around the

White House or around the Congress is not normal, is not the way it used to be because we're very aware that people have conducted an act of war on our country, and that all of us urge our fellow Americans to go back to work and to work hard, but we must be on alert. And our Government is working hard to make sure that we run down every lead, every opportunity to find someone who would want to hurt any American.

The American people are united. They're united in their resolve to help heal the Nation. But they're also united in the understanding that we've entered into a new day, and we'll deal with it.

Role of Religions

Q. Sir, you've been stressing that this is not a war against Islam. However, there are some around the world who view the coming battle along religious lines. I'm wondering how worried you are that some view this as a holy war, and are declarations of jihad at all affecting U.S. plans?

The President. I appreciate that question. First of all, it is so important for my fellow Americans, as well as everybody in the world to understand that America will hold those evildoers accountable. We don't view this as a war of religion, in any way, shape, or form. As a matter of fact, Islam preaches peace. The Muslim faith is a peaceful faith, and there are millions of good Americans who practice the Muslim faith who love their country as much as I love the country, who salute the flag as strongly as I salute the flag.

And for those who try to pit religion against religion, our great Nation will stand up and reject that kind of thought. We won't allow that to creep into the consciousness of the world. We're going to lead the world to fight for freedom, and we'll have Muslim and Jew and Christian side by side with us.

Social Security Surplus

Q. Mr. President, you promised only to dip into the Social Security surplus in an emergency, a recession, or war. And in your words, this constitutes a war. How much of the Social Security surplus are you prepared to spend?

The President. We are—not only has someone conducted an act of war on us, our economy has slowed way down, and this is an emergency. We've had all three, it seems like to me. And I'm going to work with Congress to send a clear message to American—American workers, American business people that this Government will respond to this emergency.

We'll respond to the emergency in terms of working on a package for the airline industry that has been severely affected. We'll respond to work to fight terrorism. The Congress has already responded with a supplemental that will not only help fund our military but, as importantly, will send a clear message to the people of New York and New Jersey and Connecticut that we'll help you rebuild.

And this is exactly the subject we talked about, the definition of how much is enough to get America going again, as to be able to endure this emergency.

Q. And if that means all the surplus, are you prepared to spend all the surplus?

The President. We're reasonable people. The Members here, the leaders from the Congress, are very reasonable. And they are mindful about Government money as well as anybody else. But we're dedicated—we're dedicated to saying to the American people, "This is an emergency, the likes of which we have not seen in a long time in this country, and this Government will come together and deal with it." And that's exactly what's going to happen.

National Economy

Q. Sorry to ask another one, but did you mean to say just now that we are in

a recession? You said, “It looks to me like we’ve got all three.”

The President. No, I said—well, I said—let me put it this way, tough economic times. There’s no question it’s tough times. And Ron, I don’t have all the numbers, but let me just say this: I can pick up all the statistics, but make no mistake about it, this has affected our economy in a big way. Now, I’ve still got faith that we’ll recover. The strength of the American economy has always been our entrepreneurial spirit and our workers, and that’s still prevalent. But you’ve seen the statistics on the airlines—they’re beginning to lay off people. Big airline manufacturing companies are responding. And this Government will respond.

Now, I don’t have—don’t get me wrong—I don’t have all the numbers at my disposal because they have to start counting them up, but this has shocked our economy. And we’re going to respond. And that’s exactly what this leadership and I have been talking about.

Pakistan’s Response

Q. Mr. President, do you feel like you’ve got the full support of President Musharraf? And how hard is it going to be for him to live up to his pledges, given his domestic situation?

The President. Well, there’s no question that President Musharraf has taken a bold position, which is to say he will work to the extent he can with America and our

allies as we deal with the prime suspect in the case. And we appreciate so very much his statement of support. I said we’ll give the President a chance to perform, and I believe he has done—done so. We will work and consult closely with Pakistan and India to make sure that that part of the world is as stable as can possibly be stable.

Let me say that, in terms of foreign policy and in terms of the world, this horrible tragedy will provide us with an interesting opportunity. One of the opportunities is in the Middle East. I’m pleased with the fact that Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Sharon have taken positive steps toward bringing peace to the region. I think we have an opportunity to refashion the thinking between Pakistan and India. I think there’s some interesting opportunities to shake terrorism loose from sponsor states.

And this Government, working with Congress, are going to seize the moment. Out of our tears I said I see opportunity, and we will seek opportunity, positive developments from this horrible tragedy that has befallen our Nation.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:39 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National
Emergency With Respect to Iran
September 19, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C.

1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with