

Remarks on Departure for Capitol Hill With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters

September 20, 2001

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome my friend, and a friend to America, Prime Minister Tony Blair to the White House. I appreciate him coming to America in our time of need. One of the first phone calls I got after that terrible day was from the Prime Minister. He was reassuring to me. He was—he showed to be a true friend, and I appreciate that. I'm so honored you're here.

And I look forward to giving a speech tonight. The Prime Minister has kindly agreed to come and listen to it. So I'm not going to answer any questions tonight. I'm going to let my speech be exactly what I want to say.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister has agreed to say a few comments and then take a couple of questions from you.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you, Mr. President. It's my honor to be here and also to pay tribute to your leadership at this immensely difficult time. I was in New York earlier today, and it's perhaps only when you are actually there that the full enormity and horror of what happened comes home to you.

And I said then, I would like to repeat, that my father's generation went through the experience of the Second World War, when Britain was under attack during the days of the Blitz. And there was one nation and one people that, above all, stood side by side with us at that time. And that nation was America, and those people were the American people. And I say to you, we stand side by side with you now, without hesitation.

This is a struggle that concerns us all, the whole of the democratic and civilized and free world. And we have to do two things, very clearly: We have to bring to account those responsible, and then we have to set about at every single level, in every way that we can, dismantling the apparatus of terror and eradicating the evil of mass terrorism in our world.

And I know that America, Britain, and all our allies will stand united together in that task. And I give you, on behalf of our country,

our solidarity, our sympathy, and our support.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

United Kingdom's Response

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, have you discussed what Britain's involvement in any military action might be?

Prime Minister Blair. Well, of course, we've discussed the full range of issues. Now is not the moment to go into the details of whatever response we make. But I think that you can be in no doubt at all of our determination to act to make sure, as I say, that those responsible for this event are brought to account. And in the talks I had in Europe before I left, I believe that sense of solidarity is echoed right round the world.

Q. Prime Minister, how are you prepared to go on supporting a full-scale war—[*inaudible*]—

Prime Minister Blair. I believe we have to go on fighting terrorism as long as it takes, because what happened on the 11th of September was, of course, a brutal and horrific attack on America, but it was a demonstration of what these people are capable of in any part of the world. And the important thing to realize is that there is no limit on what they would do that is moral. They have no regard for the sanctity of human life. They don't share the values of democracy or freedom or justice. The only limits on what they do are practical or technical.

And that is why it is our duty—I believe this—it is our duty to take action to make sure that at every level we can—how these groups are financed, how they operate, how they move about, the weapons that they acquire—at every single level, we have to take the action necessary to put an end to it.

International Support

Q. Prime Minister, the President said tonight that countries have to choose between being with you or being with the terrorists. How many countries do you believe are making the choice to be with terrorists? And what are the consequences to countries still not sure which side they're on?

Prime Minister Blair. Well, I just wanted to say this to you in conclusion to that question. I believe right round the world there

is support for firm action now. And I believe the coalition of support for that action is growing. It is strengthening; it is not diminishing. And that is the impression that I have had from many of the conversations I've had with world leaders in all different parts of the world. Because this struggle is something that should unite people of all faiths, of all nations, of all democratic political persuasions, and I believe it will.

President Bush. We've got to go. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:12 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11

September 20, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tempore, Members of Congress, and fellow Americans:

In the normal course of events, Presidents come to this Chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight, no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people.

We have seen it in the courage of passengers, who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground, passengers like an exceptional man named Todd Beamer. And would you please help me to welcome his wife, Lisa Beamer, here tonight. [*Applause*]

We have seen the State of our Union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion. We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own.

My fellow citizens, for the last 9 days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our Union, and it is strong.

Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

I thank the Congress for its leadership at such an important time. All of America was touched, on the evening of the tragedy, to see Republicans and Democrats joined together on the steps of this Capitol, singing "God Bless America." And you did more than sing, you acted, by delivering \$40 billion to rebuild our communities and meet the needs of our military.

Speaker Hastert, Minority Leader Gephardt, Majority Leader Daschle, and Senator Lott, I thank you for your friendship, for your leadership, and for your service to our country.

And on behalf of the American people, I thank the world for its outpouring of support. America will never forget the sounds of our national anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the streets of Paris, and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. We will not forget South Korean children gathering to pray outside our Embassy in Seoul, or the prayers of sympathy offered at a mosque in Cairo. We will not forget moments of silence and days of mourning in Australia and Africa and Latin America.

Nor will we forget the citizens of 80 other nations who died with our own: dozens of Pakistanis; more than 130 Israelis; more than 250 citizens of India; men and women from El Salvador, Iran, Mexico, and Japan; and hundreds of British citizens. America has no truer friend than Great Britain. Once again, we are joined together in a great cause—so honored the British Prime Minister has crossed an ocean to show his unity with America. Thank you for coming, friend.

On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars, but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war, but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking, who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all