

Bush to nation: America awakened to danger

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush cautioned a shaken nation Thursday that there are "struggles ahead and dangers to face" as America and its allies combat global terrorism. He announced a new Cabinet-level office to fortify homeland defenses.

Addressing a joint session of Congress nine days after suicide hijackers are believed to have killed more than 6,000 people at the Pentagon and World Trade Center, Bush clasped the badge of a slain policeman in his fist.

"I will not forget this wound to our country, or those who inflicted it. I will not yield. I will not rest," he said.

The Sept. 11 attacks had put the United States on notice that the world's only superpower was not immune to attack, Bush said. He named Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge to head the new Office of Homeland Security. Ridge, a Republican, will resign Oct. 5, and will be replaced by Lt. Gov. Mark Schweiker.

Using forceful terms, Bush delivered a verbal indictment against Osama bin Laden and demanded that Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia surrender the suspected terrorist, release imprisoned Americans and give the United States full access to terrorist training camps.

These demands are not open to discussion, Bush said. "They will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate."

The commander in chief directed U.S. military forces to "be ready" for the gathering war: "The hour is coming when America will act and you will make us proud."

Bush asked every nation to take part, by contributing police forces, intelligence services and banking information.

With British Prime Minister Tony Blair watching from a House gallery seat at first lady Laura Bush's right arm, Bush said:

"The civilized world is rallying to America's side. They understand that if terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror unanswered cannot only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments and we will not allow it."

Bush entered the House of Representatives chamber to a rousing applause — from Democrats and Republicans alike — that punctuated his remarks 30 times. Stepping from the massive rostrum, he wrapped Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle in a long and emotional embrace before turning to hug House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt, too.

"Tonight there is no opposition party," said Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., standing beside Daschle, D-S.D., for a bipartisan broadcast afterward.

Unprecedented security shrouded Bush's visit to the Capitol one week after it was evacuated for the second time because of suspected threats.

Vice President Dick Cheney stayed away, due to security concerns. Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., third in line for the presidency, was in the vice president's customary seat behind Bush. Robert

Byrd, D-W.Va., next in line as the Senate president pro tempore, sat beside Hastert.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson was the Cabinet member who, by custom, watched from a secure location.

Bush relegated today's terrorists to the ranks of the 20th century's evil forces: "By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions — by abandoning every value except the will to power — they follow in the path of fascism and Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends, in history's unmarked grave of discarded lives."

In the nationally televised prime-time address, his fourth since taking office only eight months ago, Bush tried to explain to a horrified nation the hatred of its enemies.

"The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans and make no distinctions among military and civilians, including women and children," Bush said.

Even as he spoke of wiping out terrorism, Bush conceded that the violent extremists had already extracted a heavy toll.

"Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss and in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war," he said.

While cautioning that Americans need remain on alert, Bush said, "It is my hope that in the months and years ahead, life will return almost to normal."

He asked for patience. He warned of more casualties.

This war against elusive terrorists, he said, "will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat."

He said it would be a war unlike any in history. "It may include dramatic strikes, visible on television, and covert operations, secret even in success."

Still, he assured the nation, "We'll go back to our lives and routines, and that is good. Even grief recedes with time and grace. But our resolve must not pass."

Bush carried the police badge that Arlene Howard gave him last Friday from during his trip to Ground Zero, the massive pile of rubble and death that was New York's twin towers.

Mrs. Howard's son, George, was still wearing the shield when his body was pulled from the wreckage.

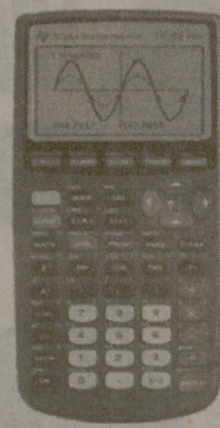
Bush shook it in his closed fist. "This is my reminder of lives that ended, and a task that does not end," he said.

The White House said the idea behind Bush's new homeland-security office is to have a central command knitting together the counterterrorism functions now scattered across several entities, including the FBI, CIA, the National Guard and local police and firefighting forces.

The office will not only focus on preventing terrorist attacks, but also on fortifying potential targets by developing plans to protect the nation's transportation, power and food systems.

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Twin sentenced in flight disruption

ANCHORAGE (AP) — A woman convicted along with her twin sister of disrupting an international flight that had to be diverted to Anchorage was sentenced Thursday to two years of probation.

Crystal Mikula, 22, of Buckley, Mich., also was fined \$500 by a federal judge after pleading guilty to simple assault on board a flight from San Francisco to Shanghai on April 19.

Her identical twin, Cynthia Mikula, also of Buckley, was sentenced a day earlier to five years probation and ordered to pay more than \$86,000 in restitution.

The restitution represents United Airlines' costs for the diversion.

Prosecutors said the women were headed to a modeling competition when they got drunk, argued, yelled profane language at each other

and smoked in the airliner restroom.

When the flight crew tried to intervene, Cynthia Mikula struck a female flight attendant in the face and hit a male flight attendant and the captain, according to prosecutors.

Her sister jumped on the back of another flight attendant and choked him in an attempt to prevent her sister from being restrained with plastic handcuffs.

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