

that at one point during this crisis you gave an order to shoot down any civilian airliner that approached the Capitol? Was that a difficult decision to make?

The President. I gave our military the orders necessary to protect Americans—do whatever it would take to protect Americans. And of course, that's difficult. Never did, in anybody's thought process about how to protect America, did we ever think that the evildoers would fly not one but four commercial aircraft into precious U.S. targets—never. And so, obviously, when I was told what was taking place, when I was informed that a unidentified aircraft was headed to the heart of the Capital, I was concerned. I wasn't concerned about my decision; I was more concerned about

the lives of innocent Americans. I had realized, there on the ground in Florida, we were under attack. But never did I dream we would have been under attack this way.

That's why I say to the American people, we've never seen this kind of evil before. But the evildoers have never seen the American people in action before, either, and they're about to find out.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:23 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India.

Remarks to Employees in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building September 17, 2001

The President. I'm here to remind people that the best way to fight terrorism is to not let terrorism intimidate America. A lot of people who work in this building were deeply worried about their lives last week. There are a lot of courageous people here, and they're coming back to work. And I want to thank them for that and remind them we've all got a job to do, people digging out the rubble in New York have

got a job to do, those of us in Government have a job to do.

Q. Mr. President, any reaction to the Taliban's refusal to——

The President. I'll talk to you all later.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:58 a.m. outside the cafeteria. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Employees in the Pentagon and an Exchange With Reporters in Arlington, Virginia September 17, 2001

The President. First, let me start off by saying to the members of the Pentagon press, the Secretary told me about how you conducted your business on that fateful day. I want to congratulate you and thank

you. Many of your members of the Pentagon press went out to help in the evacuation and the aid of the people who work