

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Megawati Sukarnoputri of
Indonesia and an Exchange With Reporters
September 19, 2001

President Bush. President Megawati was just telling me she had visited Washington during President Kennedy's time. It is my honor to welcome you back to Washington and to the Oval Office as President of your great nation.

I look forward to having a very good discussion about our relations, as well as what we're going to do, as people who love freedom, about terrorism. I want to thank you very much for your strong statements of support for the American people and your strong statement against terrorist activities. It meant a lot to us. You represent the nation with the most Muslim people in the world. I've made it clear, Madam President, that the war against terrorism is not a war against Muslims, nor is it a war against Arabs. It's a war against evil people who conduct crimes against innocent people.

And so, welcome to Washington, DC. I look forward to a long discussion. I appreciate so very much your vision for your very important country. Welcome.

President Megawati. Thank you, Mr. President. I will speak in Indonesian. I'm very honored to be your guest here today, even though we are in a moment of grief. I would like to express on behalf of the people and Government of Indonesia our deepest condolences to the American people. And we share this moment of grief with you.

I also want to say thank you, because even though you're having a difficult time, you're still able to meet me in this place which I'm quite familiar with. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Yes. Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

Response to Terrorist Attacks

Q. Mr. President, do you have any reason to believe Iraq is connected with the terrorist attack? And if so, what would your response be?

And could I ask your guest if she could respond to her Vice President saying that the tragedy would cleanse the sins of the United States?

President Bush. First, let me—anybody who harbors terrorists needs to fear the United States and the rest of the free world. Anybody who houses a terrorist, encourages terrorism will be held accountable. And we are gathering all evidence on this particular crime and other crimes against freedom-loving people.

And I would strongly urge any nation in the world to reject terrorism, expel terrorists. I would strongly urge the Taliban to turn over the Al Qaida organizers who hide in their country. We're—we're on the case. We're gathering as much evidence as we possibly can to be able to make our case to the world about all countries and their willingness to harbor or not harbor terrorists.

Q. A specific message to Iraq?

President Bush. The message to every country is, there will be a campaign against terrorist activity, a worldwide campaign. And there is an outpouring of support for such a campaign. Freedom-loving people understand that terrorism knows no borders, that terrorists will strike in order to bring fear, to try to change the behavior of countries that love liberty. And we will not let them do that.

Now, this is a campaign in which nations will contribute in a variety of ways. Some nations will be willing to join in a very overt way. Other nations will be willing to

join by sharing information. And information, in a campaign such as this, is going to be incredibly important. It's very important for us to be able to find where these people are. There's going to need to be a campaign—there needs to be a financial component of the campaign, where we need to cooperate to make sure we cut off funds, find these organizations that serve as front groups for funding these terrorist cells.

And so my message to all nations is we look forward to full cooperation.

Did you have a question for the President?

Indonesia's Response

Q. Yes. Could you respond, please, to the Vice President of your country who said that the tragedy will cleanse the Nation—the sins? Thank you.

President Megawati. After I heard and witnessed and saw what happened, the tragic events in New York and Washington, I immediately issued a statement which strongly condemned these attacks, which were very inhumane. And afterwards I sent a letter to President Bush expressing my condolences. So this is the position of my Government on this issue. So it's very clear.

Response to Terrorist Attacks

Q. Mr. President, since you've declared war against terrorism, there are a number of countries who seem to be saying, not so fast. China, in particular, has said that any strike must be preceded by irrefutable evidence. Others have raised concerns about civilian casualties. So the first question is, are you now prepared to provide such irrefutable evidence to countries? And what, in your mind, is the biggest challenge that you face in trying to construct this coalition?

President Bush. Well, first of all, we'll do what we need to do to achieve the first objective of a long campaign. And the first objective is to bring people to justice who we feel like committed this particular set

of atrocities, and to hold the organization accountable and to hold those who harbor them accountable. That's the first objective of a very long campaign.

David [David Gregory, NBC News], I think that the real challenge for America and our allies in this effort is to do a couple of things: One, condition the world, starting with our own country, that this will be a different kind of battle, a series of battles, that they will be fought visibly sometimes and sometimes we'll never see what may be taking place; that the—and that we fully understand that some nations will be comfortable supporting overt activities, some nations will be comfortable supporting covert activities, some nations will only be comfortable in providing information, others will be helpful and only feel comfortable helping on financial matters—I understand that; thirdly, that as these various—as the campaign evolves, some nations may take a more active role than others.

The mindset of war must change. It is a different type of battle. It's a different type of battlefield. It's a different type of war. And that, in itself, is going to be a real challenge for America and those other nations who understand that, because sometimes—look, the mission is to rout out terrorist activities. And there's a variety of ways in which that can happen.

Clearly, one of our focuses is to get people out of their caves, smoke them out and get them moving and get them. That's about as plainly as I can put it. And we're focused on that. But we're also focused, and we recognize that the Al Qaida organization exists in some 60-plus countries, and we're beginning to work with other nations that are receptive to the notion of fighting terrorism, and say, "Help us round up these people. You can play a constructive role."

We fully understand that certain NGOs, nongovernmental organizations, serve as fronts, as a funding mechanism for terrorist

organizations. We expect there to be activity on those fronts, as well.

So the challenge is to redefine the terms of the conflict, the campaign, in a way that the leaders understand, and in a way that the people of the world understand. There's a certain impatience with war of the past. People demand a certain clarity of a specific battlefield. But this is the first—this is a new type of struggle. It's really the first series of battles in the 21st century.

Again I repeat, terrorism knows no borders. It has no capital, but it does have a common ideology, and that is they hate freedom, and they hate freedom-loving people. And they particularly hate America at this moment. But many leaders understand that what happened in New York City and Washington, DC, could have easily have happened in their capital, as well.

It's a long answer to a short question.

Q. Can I follow on one point? Do you, to your mind, have irrefutable evidence that links Al Qaida and specifically Usama bin Laden to these attacks?

President Bush. When we take action, we will take action because we believe—because we know we'll be on the right. And I want to remind people that there have been terrorist activities on America in the past as well. And there has been—there have been indictments have been handed down. This is a war not against a specific individual, nor will it be a war against solely one organization. It is a war against terrorist activities. Our Nation must do everything we can to protect the homeland, and we are. The Attorney General briefs on a daily basis, as does the Director of the FBI, talking about what we're doing to do the best we can to protect the American people from any further activity.

But the best way to make sure that America is safe, the people of Indonesia are safe is to find terrorism at its roots and to root it out, to get them out of their caves and get them moving, cut off their finances, and hold them accountable.

Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority

Q. Mr. President, now that Chairman Arafat has said he was willing to fight terrorism and he wants to join your coalition, are you willing to talk to him?

And for President Megawati, a quick question is, are you able to offer your Government and your people's support for this coalition, or do you have that support in your country?

President Bush. Let me first—I would hope that Chairman Arafat backs up his strong statement with action. We take his words very seriously that he is interested in doing everything he can to reduce terrorism and violence in the Middle East. That was a very positive statement he made. And I hope he stays focused on achieving the goal he stated. And so to that end, our administration and our Government is continuing to talk to Chairman Arafat to encourage him to live up to his words, and at the same time working with the Israelis to encourage them to seize the moment. Progress is being made.

Madam President, I said at the time, through my tears I see opportunity. One of the opportunities I saw was the ability not to put—not only for freedom-loving nations to come together to say resolutely we will fight terrorism, but I felt like there would be—that this event may shake up the attitudes of the Middle East where people would end up resolving to show the world that there could be peace there as well. And progress is being made. And I want to tell the American people, the Secretary of State—even though we're focused on what happened in New York and Washington, DC, we're also very much involved in the Middle East, and Secretary Powell was on the phone yesterday with leaders in the Middle East, urging them to seize this moment. And so we have a sense of—we now have a sense of optimism that something positive may take place in the Middle East.

Sept. 19 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Your question to the President?

President Bush. Thank you all.

Indonesia's Response

Q. Are you able to offer the support of your country to this coalition against terrorism?

President Megawati. Indonesia has always been against violence. Anything that relates to violence, including acts of terrorism, we will definitely be against it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to Vice President Hamzah Haz of Indonesia. President Megawati spoke in Indonesian, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Indonesia

September 19, 2001

As leaders of the world's second and third largest democracies, President George W. Bush and President Megawati Soekarnoputri today vowed to open a new era of bilateral cooperation based on shared democratic values and a common interest in promoting regional stability and prosperity. They agreed that a strong bilateral partnership between the two countries will benefit both nations, the region, and the international community. President Bush and President Megawati emphasized the importance of a strong and prosperous ASEAN and pledged to cooperate to promote those objectives.

President Megawati condemned the barbaric and indiscriminate acts carried out against innocent civilians and pledged to cooperate with the international community in combatting terrorism. She underscored that terrorism also increasingly threatens Indonesia's democracy and national security. The two Presidents agreed that their respective officials would soon discuss concrete ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism, in particular on capacity and institution building. They further affirmed their intention to expand cooperation to combat other transnational crimes, including piracy, organized crime,

trafficking in persons, narcotics, and smuggling of small arms.

President Bush expressed his conviction that Indonesia's transition to democracy is one of the most significant developments of this era. Noting the great importance the United States attaches to Indonesia's success, he pledged his support for President Megawati's efforts to build a stable, united, democratic and prosperous Indonesia. In that context, President Bush pledged to work with Congress to secure the Administration's request for at least \$130 million in bilateral assistance for Indonesia in fiscal year 2002, with a special focus on assisting Indonesia's efforts with legal and judicial reform. Recognizing the priority President Megawati places on rebuilding communities in conflict zones, President Bush pledged an additional \$10 million to assist internally displaced persons, with a focus on the Moluccas. He further pledged \$5 million for Aceh, to support reconciliation, help rebuild schools and other infrastructure destroyed in the ongoing violence, and assist with economic development projects, including environmental improvements and transportation. To strengthen Indonesia's law enforcement capability, President Bush also committed,