

package out of the House. I urge the Senate to work quickly to pass a bill, to get the bill in conference, to show the Nation that we can, in fact, deal with the aftermath of this tragedy.

My administration will be actively involved with helping to get a package moving. We stand ready. The Secretary of Treasury is prepared to take an active role to expedite the process, and we're prepared to take an active role to make sure that an airline security bill comes out of conference as quickly as possible.

I want to thank the House of Representatives for a good and constructive debate, for the passage of a good piece of legislation, and I look forward to working with Members of the Senate and the House to reconcile any differences. And I believe the differences are small, and I believe they can be reconciled quickly.

So if I can sign an airport security bill, airline security bill, it will say to the American people that we are doing everything we possibly can to recover from the aftermath of September the 11th.

I'll be glad to answer questions at the next—your next opportunity to see me.

Thank you.

Q. This is the best position I'll ever have. [Laughter]

The President. We'll work on that. Gordon, make sure the man gets a better position. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Assistant Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and an Exchange With Reporters November 2, 2001

President Bush. I'm proud to welcome President Obasanjo back to the White House. We just had a very good visit.

We discussed our mutual concern, our mutual desire, and that is to fight and win the war against terror. The President has been a steadfast friend of the United States Government and the United States people before and after September 11th; for that we're most grateful.

He has got a huge Muslim population in his country, and I assure him and assure those Muslims who live in his country that our war that we now fight is against terror and evil. It's not against Muslims. We both understand that the Islamic faith teaches peace, respects human life, is nonviolent. And I want to thank the President's leadership in sending a—not only a message of tolerance and respect but also his vision,

which I share, that our struggle is going to be long and difficult, but we will prevail. We will win. Good will overcome evil.

Part of the reason why is we've got a strong coalition. And the President is a part of that coalition. So welcome, Mr. President. Thank you.

President Obasanjo. Mr. President, thank you for receiving me once again at the White House. Of course, we have come this time to express solidarity, to express support, to express condolence for the terrorist attack on this country, on innocent people of all faiths and of all races on the 11th of September.

We have no doubt in our own mind that terrorism must be fought and it must be fought to a standstill. And as you have rightly said, we must distinguish and we must lead people to understand that there's

a difference between fighting terrorism and it doesn't matter what mask the terrorist wears—and of course the love that we have for humanity and the love that we have for men and women of all faiths.

I want to particularly commend your effort, Mr. President, for the way you have built up a coalition, because the tendency and the feeling we need to do something quickly—that you take time to build coalition. And as you rightly said, we are part of that coalition, and we will remain steadfastly part of that coalition.

We, as I said, we are unique in a way, because we have the highest population of Muslims in Africa. We are also unique in the fact that almost 50 percent of our population are Muslims and almost 50 percent are Christians. That has advantage and also has disadvantage. It is up to us to let our people, the citizens of our country, know that whatever faith they belong to, they are not safe as long as we allow terrorism to take hold of the world. Whatever ideal they stand for, their ideal will amount to nothing if terrorism rules the world. Whatever ambitions or aspirations they have, their ambition and aspiration will come to naught if terrorism is allowed to take over a ruling of the world.

And as I said to the President, if leaders who are brought into power through democratic means will abandon their responsibility to terrorists, then they might as well go home. The President, in that case, will have to go back to his ranch, and in that case, I will have to go back to my chicken farm. [Laughter] But we are not going to do that, because that would be height of irresponsibility. We have a duty. We have a commitment. And we believe that the duty and the commitment we have is the duty and commitment given to us by our people. And we should not shirk that responsibility.

I believe that the coalition—and I know you are anxious to ask questions—I believe that the coalition has this challenge, the challenge to fight terrorism. It is also a

challenge to make the world wholesome, more equitable, fairer, and safer for all of us to live in. I believe that the coalition should not relax until that objective is achieved. And I believe that we have a leader in President Bush to ensure that the world achieves that objective.

President Bush. Very eloquent. Thank you.

President Obasanjo's Visit

Q. Mr. President, President Bush, why did it take so long to have an African leader visit here, when African leaders had made such strong statements of sympathy and statement of condemnation of the terrorists? Why did it take so long?

President Bush. One of the first phone calls I received was from President Obasanjo. His support has never been—has never wavered. There's no question about where we stood in the coalition. And I'm proud to have him by my side.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Operation Enduring Freedom

Q. Sir, is it still your position that the bombing campaign would stop if the Taliban turned over bin Laden and his followers? Or has the war gone beyond that?

President Bush. We still have the same objective, and that is for the Taliban to hand over Al Qaida, the leaders, to release those who are being detained, and to destroy any terrorist training camps. And they've been given ample time to meet those demands, and now they're paying a price for not having met the demands.

Sonya [Sonya Ross, Associated Press]. Wait a minute, let me get the "prints" out of the way. Thank you.

Relations With the Muslim World

Q. Could you tell us a little bit more about what you discussed, in terms of reaching out to young people in Muslim countries and addressing the poverty and the despair that they feel, so that they do

not become foot soldiers for terrorist networks?

And for President Obasanjo, could you tell us how you plan to deal with the military action in east central Nigeria last week, where some civilians were killed?

President Bush. We did spend time talking about the totality of a war against terror not only requires strong military action, strong diplomatic action, strong financial action, but it also recognizes that we need to share a message that our respective governments respect tolerance, respect other points of view. We don't share the point of view that evil is religious. We don't appreciate the fact that somebody has tried to hijack a religion in order to justify terror activities.

And we also recognize that economic prosperity throughout the world is more likely to make people appreciate rule of law, appreciate other people's points of view. That's one reason why I've been such a strong supporter of AGOA, which is the African Trade Act. That's why I believe we ought to start a new round at Qatar, a new round for world trade. I mean, I believe prosperity can best be enhanced by a world that trades in freedom. And I think that's a significant part of making sure people are able to rise out of poverty.

But on the other hand, I don't accept the excuse that poverty promotes evil. That's like saying poor people are evil people. I disagree with that. Usama bin Laden is an evil man. His heart has been so corrupted that he's willing to take innocent life. And we are fighting evil, and we will continue to fight evil, and we will not stop until we defeat evil.

Anyway, you've got a question for the President?

Military Action in Nigeria

Q. On the actions in east central Nigeria by the Nigerian military, in which some civilians were killed?

President Obasanjo. Maybe you don't know what happened. Let me just put you

into exactly what happened. That is an area where there have been some clashes between two or three groups, the Tiv, the Jukun, and the Fulanis. And this has been going on for, oh, maybe 15, 10 years. At times it goes down; at times it goes up.

And this time when it went up, the Governors of the two States where this happened, Taraba State and Benue State, separately invited to the military, through me, to take care of the—what I call the lawlessness of young men who put illegal roadblock on either side of the State boundary, and if you do not belong to their ethnic group, they take you and kill you.

And then we sent soldiers there to clear the roadblock and keep this menace out of the way. And they did that. And the last roadblock, the last roadblock, in a place called Vaase, the soldiers were ambushed and taken, disarmed, and killed; and their bodies were dismembered, chopped up.

And then I got in touch with the Governor, and I said, "Do everything to apprehend those who committed this heinous crime, and hand them over to us." After 3 days, they called on me and said that, "I have failed. I will ask you to send soldiers to help me in apprehending these people." And that's what we did.

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much.

President Bush. Good morning.

Q. James Rosen, Fox News.

President Bush. If that's the case, then I'll call on somebody else. [*Laughter*]

Presidential Records Act Executive Order

Q. Now that you're a wartime President, sir, interest in your decisionmaking processes, and those that you involve your staff in, is going to be greater than even normal times. And yet, the Executive order that you signed yesterday makes it harder for journalists, scholars, historians to write anything about what decisions you're going to be making and have made, even sympathetically. And I wonder why you took that action?

President Bush. We responded to a new law written by Congress that lays out a procedure that I think is fair for past Presidents. And it is a process that I think will enable historians to do their job and at the same time protect state secrets. That's why I did what I did.

Q. [Inaudible]—be able to get their hands on documents for many years?

President Bush. There are some documents that are privileged and protected. And this is just to make sure those documents remain protected and privileged. I don't see this as anything other than setting a set of procedures that I believe is fair and reasonable.

Plante [Bill Plante, CBS News].

Terrorist Threat Alerts

Q. Mr. President, the Director of Homeland Security, Governor Ridge, has just said that the state of alert which was introduced last Monday, the high state of alert, is now indefinite. A lot of Americans are rattled by what they see as a mixed message, being told to go about their business on the one hand and yet having to look for some unspecified threat on the other. What's your message?

President Bush. Well, I wasn't rattled when I went out and threw out the ball at Yankee Stadium, right after I had instructed the Justice Department to inform 17,000 law enforcement agencies to be aware, to harden targets, to harden assets. Most Americans, Bill, understand that there is a new day here in America. They appreciate the efforts the Government is making, and they're going to fight terrorism by going about their daily lives.

But what Governor Ridge is saying and what I've been saying all along is, we're in a new day here in America. We're fighting a two-front war, and I believe most Americans understand that now. And I appreciate the courage of most Americans, but we have a responsibility at the Government to protect the people. When we see something that we think is credible, we

hear something that might be real, we're going to notify the respective authorities to help harden targets.

Nature of the Conflict

Q. Mr. President, given these terror alerts—given that these terror alerts are indefinite, should the American people conclude that despite the bombing campaign, that Usama bin Laden and the Al Qaida network are no less potent or able to conduct a terror campaign than they were before the 9–11 attack?

President Bush. Oh, no. As a matter of fact, I think that the American people ought to conclude that our enemy is fighting an army not only overseas but at home, that the enemy is being hunted down abroad and at home. We've detained over 1,000 people here in America. We're running down every single lead. We're hardening assets. We're on the hunt. We're going to chase them down.

And the American people fully understand that we're in for a long struggle. And I appreciate the patience of the American people. We are making progress overseas in Afghanistan. We're slowly but surely tightening the net on the enemy. We're making it harder for the enemy to communicate. We're making it harder for the enemy to protect himself. We're making it harder for the enemy to hide. And we're going to get him—and them.

There are some that say, "Well, shouldn't this have happened yesterday?" This is not an instant gratification war. This is a struggle for freedom and liberty. This is a struggle for the ability for America and America's children to live in peace. This is a struggle for the people of this good man's country to be able to live in peace.

And that's why I can assure our allies, assure the American people, for so long as I'm the President, this will be my focus. And we're making very good progress.

Q. Mr. President, were you surprised, even if you weren't looking for instant gratification, at the resilience of the Taliban regime under these attacks? And are you concerned, sir, about the future, about the disarray among the people who may take over Afghanistan if the Taliban should fall?

President Bush. Terry [Terry Moran, ABC News], we've been at this part of the battle for a couple of weeks. And as I explained to the American people, this is going to be a long struggle. And I am very satisfied, and the American people should be satisfied, with the progress we're making on the ground.

The Taliban's air defenses have been completely demolished. Their assets, whatever assets they had, have been demolished, and we're slowly but surely tightening the net to achieve our objective. This is a different kind of war. The country has been used to Desert Storm, or have been used to Kosovo, where we were able to have massive formations marching across the desert and/or simply an air campaign that eventually brought a country to its knees. This is a different type of struggle, and our strategy reflects that. And I believe the American people understand that and are very patient, as am I.

I am mindful of the objective; the military is mindful of the objective in Afghanistan. But the objective goes beyond just Afghanistan. That's why we're working on the financial front to cut off money. That's why I have encouraged nations all around the world to apprehend those who are known terrorists, and over 280 have been arrested thus far.

That's why this coalition is so important, that it remain strong, to raise the risk for those who would like to conduct terrorist activities. That's why we're standing in solidarity with the Philippines, for example, that's working hard to get rid of Abu Sayyaf.

In other words, this is a global battle. There happens to be two known fronts, two visible fronts: one, Afghanistan; and the

other, the United States of America. And we're making good progress on both fronts.

Microsoft Antitrust Case

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us, sir, why the administration made the deal it did this morning in the Microsoft case and what you would say to the State attorneys general, who feel the concessions are so great they're walking away?

President Bush. I think you need to talk to the Attorney General on that, if you don't mind.

Kelly [Kelly Wallace, Cable News Network].

Governor Gray Davis of California

Q. Mr. President, two quick, unrelated questions. Number one, have you made a decision, and have you ruled out stopping or lessening the military action during Ramadan? And number two, if you could just comment on how California Governor Davis handled that FBI alert yesterday, and if you think your administration wants to issue any guidelines for State and local authorities to handle this in the future?

President Bush. Well, as a former Governor, I didn't particularly care when the Federal Government tried to tell me how to do my business. When I was the Governor of Texas, I was elected by the people of Texas, and I handled my State's business the way I thought was necessary. And I think any Governor should be able to conduct their business the way they see fit.

I think what should be noticed is, is that we are constantly in touch with State and local authorities as to general and/or specific threats. Part of the homeland defense is active and strong communications, so that Governors and/or local authorities can harden targets, respond to uncorroborated evidence, and to protect their people.

First part of the question? This is the old two question—two-part question. It's one of the old press tricks, Mr. President. You're allowed one question, and then they ask two. [Laughter]

Bombing During Ramadan

Q. Have you made a decision—are you ruling out stopping or lessening the military action during Ramadan?

President Bush. I'll let our military speak to that. My own personal attitude is, is that the enemy won't rest during Ramadan and neither will we. We're going to pursue this war until we achieve our objective. As to the specific times and dates, we'll let the military speak to that. They're in charge of this operation. This is not a political campaign; this is a war. And I respect the chain of command; I honor the chain of command. And I will tell you, our military is doing a very good job.

Anthrax

Q. Sir, what would you say to Americans who are concerned they haven't heard a clear answer on how this anthrax got to this woman in New York, how it killed her, and who are afraid it could happen to them?

President Bush. I would say to the American people that we're learning a lot about anthrax, and we're doing everything we can to find out all the facts. And when we get the facts, we'll share it with the American people.

I will also say to the American people, I believe that the hard work of our public health officials has saved lives. I believe the fact that we've got people all around our country working hours upon hours have helped save life in America. And for that, the American people are grateful, and so am I.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group, Muslim separatists operating in the southern Philippines. The Executive order of November 1 on further implementation of the Presidential Records Act is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring the United Service Organizations
November 2, 2001

Good afternoon. Laura and I want to welcome you all to the White House. Welcome. Thanks for coming.

I also want to thank all who work with the USO. It is important. It's important for our country, and it's important for the world. And I want to thank you for coming so we can honor such a fine, fine organization.

I also want to thank Wayne Newton for being here. I appreciate so very much your leading the USO Celebrity Circle. I don't know whether or not you spent much time with Bob Hope before you took the assignment, but this job has got a 60-year term limit to it. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Dick Myers and the other members of the Joint Chiefs who are

here. I am proud of the job you all are doing. I want to thank the Secretary of the Navy, Gordon England, for coming, as well. I appreciate so very much Members of the United States Congress who are here. Senator Reed, thank you so very much. I don't know if Congressman Edwards is here—my Congressman. He's the Congressman for Crawford, Texas. Good to see you, sir. Answer my mail, will you? *[Laughter]*

I appreciate Norm Mineta, who is here. Part of our battle against terrorism is to have a strong homefront and to make sure our airlines are secure. And we've got a really good man running the Department