

Nature of the Coalition

Q. Mr. President, you said this morning that you wanted more than sympathy or words from other countries. What nations were you specifically talking about, and what do you want from them?

President Bush. I am going to the United Nations to give a speech on Saturday. And I am going to praise those nations who have joined our coalition. But a coalition partner must do more than just express sympathy; a coalition partner must perform. And our coalition partner here has performed; we work together.

And that means different things for different nations. Some nations don't want to contribute troops, and we understand that. Other nations can contribute intelligence sharing, and for that we're grateful. But all nations, if they want to fight terror, must do something. It is time for action. And that's going to be the message of my speech at the United Nations.

I have no specific nation in mind, at least as I stand here now. Everybody ought to be given the benefit of the doubt. But over time, it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity. You are either with us or you are against us in the fight against terror. And that's going to be part of my speech at the United Nations.

Last question.

President Chirac. Just one comment. I would just like to remind you, ladies and gentlemen, that through Resolution 1373, the Security Council of the United Nations acknowledged the legitimacy of U.S. action and also outlined the obligation for all countries to join the fight against terrorism. So, of course, all nations and countries contribute according to their capabilities. But there is no way they can get out of this commitment. It is the legitimacy and the legitimate reaction of the U.S. that was endorsed.

President Bush. The soup is getting cold. Do you want one more question from the French press?

President Chirac. You are the—you're the boss.

President Bush. I'm the boss? Well, let's go eat, then. [Laughter] Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. President Chirac referred to U.N. Special Representative for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi. President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network in Vienna, Virginia
November 7, 2001

The United States is pressing the war against terror on every front, from the mountains of Afghanistan to the bank accounts of terrorist organizations. The first strike in the war against terror targeted the terrorists' financial support. We put the world's financial institutions on notice: If you do business with terrorists, if you support them or sponsor them, you will not

do business with the United States of America.

Today we are taking another step in our fight against evil. We are shutting down two major elements of the terrorists' international financial network, both at home and abroad. Ours is not a war just of soldiers and aircraft. It's a war fought with

diplomacy, by the investigations of law enforcement, by gathering intelligence, and by cutting off the terrorists' money.

I want to thank Secretary Paul O'Neill for being here today and for being the leader of this fine organization. I want to thank the Director, Jim Sloan, as well. You're doing some imaginative work here at the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, and I want to thank all the fine Americans who are on the frontline of our war, the people who work here.

I want to thank Secretary Colin Powell for being here, as well. He's doing a magnificent job of stitching together one of the greatest coalitions ever, a coalition of nations that stands for freedom. And I want to thank our Attorney General for coming—the man whose job it is to make sure that any time we find anybody inside our country who will threaten an American, threaten our institutions, they will be brought to justice. And that's exactly what our Nation is doing.

Acting on solid and credible evidence, the Treasury Department of the United States today blocked the U.S. assets of 62 individuals and organizations connected with two terror-supporting financial networks, the Al Taqwa and the Al Barakaat. Their offices have been shut down in four U.S. States. And our G-8 partners and other friends, including the United Arab Emirates, have joined us in blocking assets and coordinating enforcement action.

Al Taqwa is an association of offshore banks and financial management firms that have helped Al Qaida shift money around the world. Al Barakaat is a group of money-wiring and communication companies owned by a friend and supporter of Usama bin Laden. Al Taqwa and Al Barakaat raise funds for Al Qaida; they manage, invest, and distribute those funds. They provide terrorist supporters with Internet service, secure telephone communications, and other ways of sending messages and sharing

information. They even arrange for the shipment of weapons.

They present themselves as legitimate businesses. But they skim money from every transaction for the benefit of terrorist organizations. They enable the proceeds of crime in one country to be transferred to pay for terrorist acts in another.

The entry point to these networks may be a small storefront operation, but follow the network to its center and you discover wealthy banks and sophisticated technology, all at the service of mass murderers. By shutting these networks down, we disrupt the murderers' work.

Today's action interrupts Al Qaida's communications. It blocks an important source of funds. It provides us with valuable information and sends a clear message to global financial institutions: You are with us, or you are with the terrorists. And if you're with the terrorists, you will face the consequences.

We fight an enemy who hides in caves in Afghanistan and in the shadows within in our own society. It's an enemy who can only survive in darkness. Today we've taken another important action to expose the enemy to the light and to disrupt its ability to threaten America and innocent life.

I'm proud of the actions of our agencies. We're making a difference. We're slowly but surely tightening the noose, and we will be victorious.

Now it's my honor to welcome the Secretary of Treasury, Paul O'Neill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network Office's Multimedia Room. In his remarks, he referred to Shaykh Ahme Nur Jimale, founder, Al Barakaat; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.