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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
September 11, 2001

## **Remarks by the President After Two Planes Crash Into World Trade Center**

Emma Booker Elementary School  
Sarasota, Florida

9:30 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, this is a difficult moment for America. I, unfortunately, will be going back to Washington after my remarks. Secretary Rod Paige and the Lt. Governor will take the podium and discuss education. I do want to thank the folks here at Booker Elementary School for their hospitality.

Today we've had a national tragedy. Two airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack on our country. I have spoken to the Vice President, to the Governor of New York, to the Director of the FBI, and have ordered that the full resources of the federal government go to help the victims and their families, and to conduct a full-scale investigation to hunt down and to find those folks who committed this act.

Terrorism against our nation will not stand.

And now if you would join me in a moment of silence. May God bless the victims, their families, and America. Thank you very much.

END 9:31 A.M. EDT

For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
September 11, 2001

## **Remarks by the President Upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base**

Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana

**THE PRESIDENT:** I want to reassure the American people that the full resources of the federal government are working to assist local authorities to save lives and to help the victims of these attacks. Make no mistake: The United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts.

I've been in regular contact with the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense, the national security team and my Cabinet. We have taken all appropriate security precautions to protect the American people. Our military at home and around the world is on high alert status, and we have taken the necessary security precautions to continue the functions of your government.

We have been in touch with the leaders of Congress and with world leaders to assure them that we will do whatever is necessary to protect America and Americans.

I ask the American people to join me in saying a thanks for all the folks who have been fighting hard to rescue our fellow citizens and to join me in saying a prayer for the victims and their families.

The resolve of our great nation is being tested. But make no mistake: We will show the world that we will pass this test. God bless.

END

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## **Press Briefing to the Pool By Ari Fleischer**

Aboard Air Force One

1:47 P.M. EDT

**MR. FLEISCHER:** While on the ground at Barksdal, the President spoke to the Vice President several times -- the Vice President, of course, being at the operations center at the White House.

He spoke with the Secretary of Defense; he spoke to Senator Schumer; he had spoken to his wife prior to landing in Louisiana.

**Q** Do you know where she is?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** She's at a secure facility.

**Q** And his daughters?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** They're also at a secure location.

**Q** Are they with her or ?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** No, no, they're at their respective schools.

So he spoke to several members of the national security team, and I mentioned Senator Schumer. And he has been receiving information ? information will continue to come in and it'll continue to be evaluated. There will be a National Security Council meeting later this afternoon, in which the President will participate via teleconference.

And, needless to say, all elements of the United States government are now doing their part, not only to help those who have been hurt, but to collect information, to analyze it and to provide it to the President.

**Q** Does the President now know anything more about who is responsible, the coordinated attack, and whether this is it or --

**MR. FLEISCHER:** That information is still being gathered and analyzed. And I anticipate that will be an ongoing process for a little while. Often, at a time like this, information comes in, it turns out not to be true. The proper procedure is to carefully, thoroughly evaluate all information and do so in a ?

**Q** Had there been any warnings that the President knew of?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** No warnings.

**Q** Does the President ? is he concerned about the fact that this attack of this severity happened with no warning?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** First things first: his concern is with the safety of people who have lost their ? the health and security of the American people and with the families of those who have lost

their lives. There will come an appropriate time to do all appropriate look backs. His focus is on events this morning.

Q Has he been given any estimate of what the American casualties may be?

MR. FLEISCHER: I don't believe so, Ann.

Q Has he spoken with Mayor Giuliani or Governor Pataki?

MR. FLEISCHER: He spoke with Governor Pataki. He plans to speak with Mayor Giuliani.

Q Who is with him on the plane?

MR. FLEISCHER: Chief of Staff Card, Karl Rove, Dan Bartlett, myself, Gordon.

Q -- that's it?

MR. FLEISCHER: Yes, as I indicated, we've pared everything back so that we can ?

Q And does the President feel hunted or in jeopardy? I mean, he is kind of trying to stay out of ?

MR. FLEISCHER: The President is looking forward to returning to Washington. He understands at a time like this, caution must be taken; and he wants to get to back to Washington.

Q What's he doing right now?

MR. FLEISCHER: He's talking to people on the phone from his cabin.

Q In his cabin?

MR. FLEISCHER: Yes.

Q Thank you for bringing us whatever you can, in terms of information on what he's doing.

END 1:51 P.M. EDT

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## **Press Briefing to the Pool By Ari Fleischer**

Aboard Air Force One  
En Route Andrews Air Force Base

5:30 P.M. EDT

**MR. FLEISCHER:** The President will address the nation tonight, upon his return to the White House. He met this afternoon for one hour and five minutes with his national security team via live tele-conference from Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska.

Among the things the President said were, "We will find these people and they will suffer the consequence of taking on this nation. We will do what it takes," and he continued, "No one is going to diminish the spirit of this country."

The President has also heard today from countless world leaders either who are calling to -- back to Washington or have sent him directly communiques. He's heard from Britain, France, Germany, Russia -- a host of nations, all of whom have expressed their outrage at this attack, and who have assured the American people that the international community stands with America.

That's what I've got.

**Q** The message tonight, do you know how soon after he gets back to the White House he'll be able to do that?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** Can't indicate yet.

**Q** And when he does, the message is to the American people, as he said earlier, and to foreign countries ?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** It will be a message of resolve and reassurance. It will be a reassuring message that our nation has been tested before, our nation has always prevailed.

**Q** Does the President have any information about the source of the violence and the mastermind behind it?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** I'm not going to discuss any of the intelligence information that's been provided to the President.

**Q** Can you give us some idea of why the stops that we made today were made? I understand the nature of the tragedy that we're dealing with, but why these particular locations?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** For security purposes that involve the President.

**Q** I mean, was this more like a roll of the dice as in, which Air Force bases will we end up at? Or is this more wanting ?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** Well, of course, nobody would ever know what Air Force base we would end up at. That's routine procedure. There are a series of plan that you always hope remain on the shelf that, unfortunately, today had to be implemented.

And so, as a matter of security, the President traveled in the manner that he did and that also allowed the national security community to assess the ongoing nature of a threat. Obviously, the President is now returning to Washington.

**Q** Why is he returning now? Who makes the decision that it is safe for his return now?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** Well, ultimately, it's the President. Information is provided to the President about any type of threat, and the President makes the final determination. The President wanted to get back to Washington. He understood that there can be a period of caution so that the security people can make a full and proper assessment about any threats.

They were afforded that opportunity. The President traveled to a secure location while they took that opportunity. And now, obviously, the President is returning home safely.

**Q** There was some confusion earlier about whether the Vice President was at the White House the entire time, or whether he was evacuated and ultimately returned to the White House.

**MR. FLEISCHER:** Well, my information is he was at the White House the whole time. You'd have to check with his office about what time he arrived at the White House. But from the beginning, when the President spoke to him this morning, he was at the White House, that's where the President reached him.

**Q** A number of domestic groups have called off, you know, scheduling a number of activities -- baseball, Emmy awards. How does the President now view the next few days for his concentration? He will have to deal with this pretty exhaustively over the rest of the week.

**MR. FLEISCHER:** The President thinks it's important for America to return to their lives. As he indicated, this is a test of America's resolve and that no one will diminish America's spirit; and America's spirit includes a return to normal lifestyles.

**Q** As for his schedule for the rest of the week, he will now focus on this primarily?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** Of course, this will be his top priority now.

**Q** What are his plans for -- in terms of, is he going to stay in the White House? Is he going to be moved to a different location from there?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** We'll, of course, advise you of any presidential travel, as always. But the President is returning to the Oval Office and he will go to work.

**Q** He will what? I'm sorry.

**MR. FLEISCHER:** The President is returning to the White House to go to work.

**Q** And you'll let us know details of the speech?

**MR. FLEISCHER:** Yes.

Q Have the networks been informed ?

MR. JOHNDROE: No.

Q Now, at this teleconference meeting with these -- his national security team, was he projected on a wide-screen TV or did someone videotape him? Was he alone? Can we get some more details on him?

MR. FLEISCHER: People could see each other, that's how these tele-conferences work.

Q Did he sit in a room before a single, solitary camera? Was he in that room alone or was he with his aides and advisors?

MR. FLEISCHER: No, there were other people in the room with him. And he was visible. And he could see the people who were talking to him from the White House.

Q They were ?

MR. FLEISCHER: It was two-way.

Q -- imposed on a video screen for him, at his location?

MR. FLEISCHER: It was two-way.

Q Thank you.

END 5:36 P.M. EDT

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September 11, 2001

**Press Briefing by Karen Hughes, Counselor to the President**  
National FBI Headquarters

Washington, D.C.

MS. HUGHES: Counselor to President Bush. And I'm here to update you all on the activities of the federal government in response to this morning's attacks on our country.

As you heard from President Bush a short time ago, the federal government is acting to help local communities with search and rescue and emergency management operations, to take all appropriate precautions to protect our citizens and to identify those responsible for these despicable attacks on the American people.

While some federal buildings have been evacuated for security reasons and to protect our workers, your federal government continues to function effectively. We have a federal emergency response plan, and at President Bush's direction, we are implementing it. We began to implement it immediately after the first attack in New York this morning.

We contacted American forces and embassies throughout the world and placed them on high alert. The United States Secret Service immediately secured the President, the Vice President and the Speaker of the House, and they are all safe. They have also secured members of the national security team, the President's Cabinet and senior staff.

As you know, President Bush was in Sarasota, Florida when the first attack occurred this morning. Air Force One has now landed at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska, and the President is in a secure location. He is in continuous communication with the Vice President and key members of his Cabinet and national security team.

Vice President Cheney and our National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, are in a secure facility at the White House. I have just come from there. The Secretary of Transportation and other members of our White House senior staff are gathered at a command center there, and we are coordinating with other branches of our federal government.

The Secretary of Defense remains at the Pentagon, and the Secretary of State is en route back to Washington from his trip to South America.

President Bush is conducting a meeting of the National Security Council as we speak. They are meeting President Bush from his location and other members from different locations in Washington and other locations.

As many of you have been reporting, the Federal Aviation Administration ordered all airports closed, and all planes which were in the air were directed to land at the nearest airport. International flights were diverted to alternate locations outside of the United States.

Transportation Secretary Mineta has directed the Federal Aviation Administration to suspend operations until at least 12:00 noon tomorrow. So, no airline flights will operate until at least then, and until the FAA announces that operations will be resumed.

Secretary Mineta has also issued orders controlling the movement of all vessels in United States navigable waters. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has activated eight

urban search and rescue task forces in New York and four of these highly-trained teams are at work here in Washington at the Pentagon.

Every federal agency has implemented continuity of operations and four of these highly trained teams are at work in Washington at the Pentagon. Every federal agency has implemented continuity of operations plans to make sure the government continues to function effectively.

While the market is closed today because of the situation in Manhattan, the United States financial system has continued to operate. Banks have been open all day. The Federal Reserve has operated regularly and continuously.

The Department of Health and Human Services has mobilized medical personnel and supplies to provide help to local authorities who are working so diligently to respond and try to help the victims of these terrible attacks.

President Bush has committed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to identify and bring to swift justice those responsible for these despicable attacks. The Department of Justice is setting up a hotline for families who fear that their relatives may have been victims of one of these attacks, and we will be announcing that telephone number shortly.

Our fellow citizens and our freedom came under attack today. And no one should doubt America's resolve. President Bush and all our country's leaders thank the many Americans who are helping with rescue and relief efforts. We ask our fellow Americans for your prayers for the victims, for their families, for the rescue workers, and for our country.

Thank you all very much. And we will continue to update you as information is available and confirmed.

END

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## **Press Briefing by Attorney General, Secretary of HHS, Secretary of Transportation, and FEMA Director**

Press Briefing by Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of HHS Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta, and FEMA Director Joseph Allbaugh  
The Briefing Room

7:15 P.M. EDT

**MS. BUCHAN:** Good evening. We'll be having General Ashcroft, Secretary Thompson, Secretary Mineta, and Director Allbaugh will each be providing you with updates on how their agencies are responding to today's events. As we'll be giving you as frequent updates as possible, they will not be taking questions at this time. And with that, I will turn it over to General Ashcroft.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHCROFT:** Thank you. Today America has experienced one of the greatest tragedies ever witnessed on our soil. These heinous acts of violence are an assault on the security of our nation. They are an assault on the security and the freedom of every American citizen.

**We will not tolerate such acts. We will expend every effort and devote all the necessary resources to bring the people responsible for these acts, these crimes, to justice.**

Now is the time for us to come together as a nation to offer our support, our prayers for the victims and for their families, for the rescue workers, for law enforcement officials, for every one of us that has been changed forever by this horrible tragedy.

The following is a summary of the known facts surrounding today's incidents. American Airlines Flight 11 departed Boston for Los Angeles. Hijacked by suspects armed with knives, this plane crashed into the World Trade Center. United Airlines Flight 175 departed Boston for Los Angeles, was hijacked and crashed into the World Trade Center.

American Airlines Flight 77 departed Washington-Dulles for Los Angeles, was hijacked and crashed into the Pentagon. United Airlines Flight 93 departed Newark for San Francisco, was hijacked and crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Crime scenes have been established by the federal authorities, in New York, in the Washington, D.C. area, in Pittsburgh, in Boston, and in Newark. The full resources of the Department of Justice, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Attorneys Offices, the U.S. Marshal's Service, the Bureau of Prisons, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Office of Justice Programs, are being deployed to investigate these crimes and to assist survivors and victim families.

Thousands of FBI agents in all the field offices across the country, and in the international legate offices, assisted by personnel from other Department of Justice agencies, are cooperating in this investigation.

The FBI has established a website where people can report any information about these crimes. That address is: [www.IFCCFBI.gov](http://www.IFCCFBI.gov). That address again: [www.IFCCFBI.gov](http://www.IFCCFBI.gov). Individuals can report any information they know about these crimes to that website.

It takes courage for individuals to come forward in situations like this, and I urge anyone with information that may be useful and helpful to authorities to use this opportunity.

The Office of Victims of Crime has established a toll-free 800 number for family and friends of victims. They can call 800-331-0075, to leave contact information for a future time when more information is available, to find out information about a victim or to find out information about the rights of victims and the services available to victim survivors and victim families.

The determination of these terrorists will not deter the determination of the American people. We are survivors, and freedom is a survivor. A free American people will not be intimidated, nor will we be defeated. We will find the people responsible for these cowardly acts, and justice will be done.

**SECRETARY THOMPSON:** Every single American lost something today. And every one of us at this time expresses our deepest sympathy to the victims of today's tragedies, and their families.

It is now our mission to begin the healing from this tragedy. From the moment that we learned of these attacks, the Department of Health and Human Services has begun readying teams and resources to be sent to New York City and the Washington area to meet any needs of state and local officials.

So far, we have sent four disaster medical teams to New York City, and three of these disaster medical teams to the Washington/Northern Virginia/Baltimore area.

These medical teams each consist of about 35 physicians, nurses, and emergency medical technicians. They are all trained to deal with traumatic injuries and other emergency needs.

We've also sent four disaster mortuary operational response teams to New York and three to the greater Washington area. We're also in the process of shipping a great deal of emergency medical supplies to New York City with the help of the Centers for Disease Control. In short, we're making the full force of the Department of Health and Human Services, both as resources and medical expertise, available to the areas that need our assistance.

We've also, this afternoon, activated the United States Public Health Service Commission Corps, which consists of approximately 6,000 health professionals. We also are giving back-up assistance to the 500-bed ship *Comfort* of the United States Navy.

Americans all over are calling up and asking what they can do. The best thing they can do is respond to this great call by volunteering to give blood. We need Americans to continue to

answer that call. No matter where you live, please, do your civic duty and assist us by donating blood.

Our primary job is to make sure Americans, harmed by this tragedy, get the help that they need. We will remain in constant contact with the governors, the mayors, public health officials and other local officials to make sure that all their needs are being met.

It is a sad day, but America and all of its citizens certainly share tonight in the grief that has been caused. And as the President and everybody in his administration have said, we, the government, will continue to operate and continue to provide the services to all Americans.

**SECRETARY MINETA:** One of the most cherished freedoms is the freedom of movement, the ability to move freely and safely. But today, that freedom was attacked. But we will restore that freedom throughout the national transportation system as soon as possible. And we will restore the highest-possible degree of service.

These terrorist acts are designed to steal the confidence of Americans. We will restore that confidence. We have already taken some first steps as a precaution. I have ordered the FAA to ground all commercial air traffic until at least tomorrow afternoon. After the attack, some of our aircraft were diverted to Canada. And so we owe our Canadian neighbors a debt of gratitude for helping us as we redirected over 120 flights and their passengers to airports in Canada.

As of 6:00 p.m., Amtrak resumed its passenger rail service. Major railroads have taken steps to protect their assets as well. The United States Coast Guard is taking all necessary actions to control the movements of all vessels in navigable waters of the United States. Coast Guard helicopters have been assisting with medical and national security tasks.

We are currently looking at a wide variety of additional security measures to increase traveler security. Travelers will indeed see increased security measures at our airports, train stations, and other key sites. There will be higher levels of surveillance, more stringent searches. Airport curbside luggage check-in will no longer be allowed. There will be more security officers in random identification checks.

Travelers may experience some inconveniences. But we ask for your patience. But we must do whatever it takes with safety as our highest priority. The Department of Transportation is working closely with the White House and appropriate federal agencies to mount a coordinated nationwide recovery effort. Each American must know that we will restore our national transportation system to a safe and efficient status as quickly as possible. Our system has been severely burdened by the stress of these horrendous attacks, but we will recover.

In a democracy, there is always a balance between freedom and security. Our transportation systems, reflecting the values of our society, have always operated in an open and accessible manner. And they will again. Please be assured that we are activating all of our resources on an emergency basis, and services will be restored as soon as possible.

**DIRECTOR ALLBAUGH:** Good evening. I activated this afternoon eight urban search and rescue task forces from all over the United States, and an incident support team, to arrive in New York. They are on their way as we speak. I've spoken with Governor Pataki, Governor Gilmore, Mayor Giuliani; they are handling this about as well as anyone could handle it.

These teams we've deployed are especially trained teams from all across the country, comprised of engineers and other technical individuals, with dogs that are trained to handle incidents such as this.

We at FEMA have also put a team on the ground, an advanced element team, who will be at the scene of the disaster probably as we speak. The Army Corps of Engineers are already on the ground, getting ready to handle debris removal.

This afternoon, as you know, the President did declare New York City a disaster. I have named Ted Monette the Federal Coordinating Officer. He will be my personal representative on the ground during the duration of this incident.

In Washington, as the Secretary said, we have three mortuary teams on site, three medical teams, four urban search and rescue teams. I believe this afternoon we shared with members of the media the names of those specific teams.

We will be deploying individuals as needed. I'll be in constant contact with those governors; additional search and rescue, if needed. We're identifying additional needs that state and local governments are requiring.

As a result of the President's disaster declaration, tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m., individuals who have been harmed may call our help line. Let me give you that number: 1-800-462-9029. We at FEMA will do all that we possibly can. After all, that is our job.

Our hearts are hurting this evening. Those individuals who have lost loved ones or do not know where their loved ones are, are in our prayers and are in our thoughts.

Thank you all very much.

END

7:28 P.M. EDT

## Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation

8:30 P.M. EDT

**THE PRESIDENT:** Good evening. Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. The victims were in airplanes, or in their offices; secretaries, businessmen and women, military and federal workers; moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror.

The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge structures collapsing, have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed; our country is strong.

A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.

America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.

Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. And we responded with the best of America -- with the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could.

Immediately following the first attack, I implemented our government's emergency response plans. Our military is powerful, and it's prepared. Our emergency teams are working in New York City and Washington, D.C. to help with local rescue efforts.

Our first priority is to get help to those who have been injured, and to take every precaution to protect our citizens at home and around the world from further attacks.

The functions of our government continue without interruption. Federal agencies in Washington which had to be evacuated today are reopening for essential personnel tonight, and will be open for business tomorrow. Our financial institutions remain strong, and the American economy will be open for business, as well.

The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.

I appreciate so very much the members of Congress who have joined me in strongly condemning these attacks. And on behalf of the American people, I thank the many world leaders who have called to offer their condolences and assistance.

America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism. Tonight, I ask for your prayers

for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened. And I pray they will be comforted by a power greater than any of us, spoken through the ages in Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me."

This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

Thank you. Good night, and God bless America.

END 8:35 P.M. EDT