

Text of president's Nov. 8, 2001 address

Bush reports on progress of war, urges public to meet 'the great national challenge'

We meet tonight after two of the most difficult and most **inspiring** months in our nation's history. We have **endured** the shock of watching so many **innocent** lives ended in acts of **unimaginable** horror. We have endured the sadness of so many funerals. We have faced **unprecedented** bioterrorist attacks delivered in our mail. Tonight many thousands of children are tragically living to live without one of their parents. And the rest of us are learning to live in a world that seems very different than it was on September the 10th. The moment the second plane hit the second building, when we knew it was a terrorist attack, many felt that our lives would never be the same. What we couldn't be sure of then, and what the terrorists never expected, was that America would emerge stronger, with a renewed spirit of pride and patriotism.

I said in my speech to a joint session of Congress that we are a nation **awakened** to danger. We're also a nation awakened to service and **citizenship** and **compassion**. None of us would ever wish the evil to have been done to our country, yet we have learned that out of evil can come great good. During the last two months we have shown the world America is a great nation. Americans have responded **magnificently**, with courage and caring. We have seen it in our children, who have sent in more than \$1 million for the children of Afghanistan. We have seen it in the compassion of Jewish and Christian Americans who have reached out to their Muslim neighbors. We have seen it as Americans have **reassessed** priorities -- parents spending more time with their children and many people spending more time in prayer and in houses of worship.

We have **gained** new heroes; those who ran into burning buildings to save others -- our police and our firefighters -- (applause); those who battled their own fears to keep children calm and safe -- America's teachers -- (applause); those who voluntarily place themselves in harm's way to defend our freedom -- the men and women of the armed forces. And tonight we join in thanking a whole new group of public servants who never enlisted to fight a war, but find themselves in the front lines of a battle nonetheless -- those who deliver the mail, America's postal workers. We also thank those whose quick response provided preventative treatment that has no doubt saved thousands of lives -- our health care workers.

We are a different country than we were on September the 10th; sadder and less innocent; stronger and more united; and, in the face of ongoing threats, determined and courageous. Our nation faces a threat to our freedoms, and the stakes could not be higher. We are the target of enemies who boast they want to kill -- kill all Americans, kill all Jews, and kill all Christians. We've seen that type of hate before, and the only possible response is to confront it and to defeat it.

This new enemy seeks to destroy our freedom and impose its views. We value life; the terrorists ruthlessly destroy it. We value education; the terrorists do not believe women should be educated or should have health care or should leave their homes. We value the right to speak our minds; for the terrorists, free expression can be grounds for execution. We respect people of all faiths and welcome the free practice of religion.

Our enemy wants to dictate how to think and how to worship, even to their fellow Muslims. This enemy tries to hide behind a peaceful faith. But those who celebrate the murder of innocent men, women and children, have no religion, have no conscience, and have no mercy.

We **wage a war** to save civilization itself. We did not seek it, but we will fight it, and we will prevail. This is a different war from any other nation has ever faced -- a war on many fronts, against terrorists who operate in more than 60 different countries. And this is a war that must be fought not only overseas, but also here at home. ...

Our enemies have threatened other acts of terror. We take each threat seriously. And when we have evidence of credible threats, we will **issue appropriate alerts**. A terrorism alert is not a signal to stop your life; it is a call to be **vigilant** -- to know that your government is on high alert, and to add your eyes and ears to our efforts to find and stop those who want to do us harm. A lot of people are working really hard to protect America. But in the long run, the best way to defend our homeland the best way to make sure that our children can live in peace, is to take the battle to the enemy and to stop them.

I have called our military into action, to hunt down the members of the al Qaeda organization who murdered innocent Americans. I gave fair warning to the government that **harbors** them in Afghanistan. The Taliban made a choice to continue hiding terrorists. And now they are paying a price. I am so proud of our military. Our military is pursuing its mission. We are destroying training camps, disrupting communications and dismantling air defenses. We are now bombing Taliban front lines. We are deliberately and systematically hunting down these murderers, and we will bring them to justice.

Throughout this battle we **adhere** to our values. Unlike our enemy, we respect life. We do not target innocent civilians. We care for the innocent people of Afghanistan, so we continue to provide humanitarian aid, even while their government tries to steal the food we send. When the terrorists and their supporters are gone, the people of Asian will say with the rest of the world, "Good **riddance**."

We are at the beginning of our efforts in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan is only the beginning of our efforts in the world. No group nor nation should mistake Americans' intentions. Where terrorist groups exist of global reach, the United States and our friends and **allies** will seek it out, and we will destroy it. After September 11th our government assumed new responsibilities to strengthen security at home, and **track down** our enemies abroad. And the American people are accepting new responsibilities as well. ...

Our people have responded with courage and compassion, calm and reason, resolve and fierce determination. We have refused to live in a state of panic or a state of denial. There is a difference between being alert and being intimidated, and this great nation will never be intimidated. ...

And something even more profound is happening across our country. The enormity of this tragedy has caused many Americans to focus on the things that have not changed, the things that matter most in life -- our faith, our love for family and friends, our **commitment** to our country and to our freedoms and to our principles. ...

Many ask, "What can I do to help in our fight?" The answer is simple: all of us can become a September the 11th volunteer by making a commitment to service in our own **communities**. So, you can serve your country by tutoring or mentoring a child, comforting the afflicted, housing those in need of shelter in a home. You can participate in your Neighborhood Watch or Crime Stoppers. You can become a volunteer in a hospital, emergency medical, fire or rescue unit. You can support our troops in the field, and just as importantly support their families here at home by becoming active in the USO or groups in communities near our military installations.

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Our great nation's national challenge is to hunt down the terrorists and strengthen our protection against future attacks. Our great national opportunity is to preserve forever the good that has resulted. Through this tragedy, we are renewing and reclaiming our strong American values.

Both Laura and I were touched by a recent newspaper article that quoted a little four-year-old girl who asked a telling and innocent question. Wondering how terrorists could hate a whole nation of people they don't even know, she asked, "Why don't we just tell them our names?" (Laughter.) Well, we can't tell them all our names, but together, we can show them our values.

Too many have the wrong idea of Americans as shallow, materialistic consumers who care only about getting rich or getting ahead. But this isn't the America I know. Ours is a wonderful nation, full of kind and loving people -- people of faith who want freedom and opportunity for people everywhere. One way to defeat terrorism is to show the world the true values of America through the gathering **momentum** of a million acts of responsibility, and decency, and service. ...

Our citizens have new responsibilities. We must be vigilant. Obviously, we must inspect our mail and stay informed on public health matters. We will not give in to exaggerated fears or passing rumors. We will rely on good judgment and good old common sense. We will care for those who have lost loved ones and comfort those who might at times feel afraid. We will not judge fellow Americans by appearance, ethnic background or religious faith. We will defend we will defend the values of our country and we will live by them. We will persevere in this struggle no matter how long it takes to prevail.

Above all, we will live in a spirit of courage and optimism. Our nation was born in that spirit of courage and optimism. Our nation was born in that spirit, as immigrants **yearning** for freedom **courageously** risked their lives in search of greater opportunity. That spirit of optimism and courage still **beckons** people across the world who want to come here. And that spirit of optimism and courage must guide those of us fortunate enough to live here. Courage and optimism led the passengers on Flight 93 to rush their murderers to save lives on the ground. Led by a young man whose last known words were the Lord's Prayer, and let's roll. He didn't know -- he didn't know he had signed on for heroism when he boarded the plane that day. Some of our greatest moments have been acts of courage for which no one could have ever prepared. We will always remember the words of that brave man expressing the spirit of a great country.

We will never forget all we have lost and all we are fighting for. Ours is the cause of freedom. We have defeated freedom's enemies before, and we will defeat them again. We cannot know every turn this battle will take. Yet we know our cause is just, and our ultimate victory is **assured**. We will no doubt face new challenges. But we have our marching orders. My fellow Americans, let's roll.