

President Condemns Attack in Bali

Remarks by the President Upon Departure for Michigan
The South Lawn

1:45 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Last night I called Prime Minister Howard of Australia to express our country's deepest sympathies to the citizens of that good country who lost their lives, to the families who mourn and cry. I send the same sympathies and prayers to the family of the U.S. citizens -- or citizens -- as well as citizens from around the world. The murder which took place in Bali reminds us that this war against terror continues. I've constantly told the American people that the struggle against terror is going to be a long and difficult struggle; that we're dealing with cold-blooded killers; that the enemy does not value innocent life like we do; and that we must continue to pursue the enemy before they hurt us again.



VIDEO Multimedia
President's Remarks
 [view](#)
 [listen](#)

I believe that the attacks on the French vessel in Yemen is connected with this type of terror, that they're related. I believe that the attack on our Marines in Kuwait reflect the international nature of these cells, these killer cells. We've got to continue to work together; those of us who love freedom must work together to do everything we can to disrupt, deny, and bring to justice these people who have no soul, no conscience, people who hate freedom.

I told the Prime Minister and I told Prime Minister Blair -- the Prime Minister of Australia and I told Prime Minister Blair this morning that I'm absolutely determined to continue to lead the coalition. They recognize the need for us to continue to work together. And it's a sad day for a lot of people around the world, and -- but it also is a day in which we've got to realize that we've got a long way to go to make the world more secure and more peaceful.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Ron.

Q Sir, how does this emphasize the risk that we have in this country --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes --

Q -- and does this improve your ability to put together a coalition and a resolution in the U.N.?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that the free world is -- must recognize that no one is safe, that if you embrace freedom you're not safe from terrorism. And clearly, the attacks in Bali -- I think we have to assume it's al Qaeda. We're beginning to hear some reports that's more definitive than that, but I wait for our own analysis, but clearly it's a deliberate attack on citizens who love freedom, citizens from countries which embrace freedom. They're trying to intimidate us, and we won't be intimidated.

I'm concerned about our homeland. Obviously, if I knew of a specific piece of intelligence that would indicate a moment or a place in which the enemy would attack, we'd do a lot about it. But that's why we're still working with our authorities, the different -- taking the intelligence as we know it, and responding.

Here at home we're not immune from these kinds of attacks, and I'm concerned about it.

Yes, Steve.

Q Mr. President, does this mean now that al Qaeda has reconstituted itself, and do you think -- how does this play on your policy on Iraq?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, first, I -- we're making great progress in the war against terror. But as I told our citizens, and have been repeatedly telling our citizens, this is a long war. And it's going to take a while to fully rout al Qaeda. We don't know whether bin Laden is alive or dead. You know, they keep floating supposed letters and -- or radio broadcasts. We do know that al Qaeda is still dangerous. And while we've made good progress, there's a lot more work to do.

As I've repeatedly said, our thoughts about Iraq relate to the war on terror, and that dealing with -- or getting Saddam Hussein to disarm is all part of making the world more peaceful. And it's all part of the war against terror.

Yes, John.

Q Mr. President, do you -- on that point, on Osama bin Laden, do you have a response to the letter that was put out today, allegedly under his name, praising the killing of the American Marine in Kuwait? And do you share the concerns of Senator Richard Shelby, who believes that this is, in fact, a new al Qaeda offensive?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I -- first, I don't know whether bin Laden is alive or dead. I -- you know, I do know al Qaeda is extremely dangerous. I do know that there are still some of his top lieutenants roaming around, and that we're doing everything we can to bring them to justice.

John, I also know that the enemy still wants to hit us, and that the -- as I mentioned earlier, that I believe the attack on the French vessel was a terrorist attack. Obviously, the attack on our Marines in Kuwait was a terrorist attack. The attack in Bali appears to be an al Qaeda-type terrorist -- definitely a terrorist attack; whether it's al Qaeda-related, or not -- I would assume it is. And therefore, it does look like a pattern of attacks that the enemy, albeit on the run, is trying to once again frighten and kill freedom-loving people. And we've just got to understand, we are in a long struggle.

And I am absolutely determined now, as I was a year ago, to continue to rout out these people, to find them, to use the best intelligence we can and to bring them to justice. And we will continue to pursue.

Q With the alert that the State Department put out last week, and now the decision to bring home American family -- embassy families, and urging travelers to come home from Indonesia, does this appear to be a time in which Americans worldwide ought to stay closer to home, if this is part of a new wave of terrorism?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that all depends where, and I think they ought to take guidance from the State Department, but clearly, the State Department is

reacting to this attack, and reacting to some intelligence before. As you know, we're constantly putting out alerts when we get some kind of data that indicates our people overseas are at risk.

Q What about concerns of the last -- sniper attack --

THE PRESIDENT: The sniper attacks, first of all, I'm just sickened, sick to my stomach to think that there is a cold-blooded killer at home taking innocent life. I weep for those who lost their loved ones. I am -- the idea of moms taking their kids to school and sheltering them from a potential sniper attack is not the America I know. And therefore, we're lending all the resources of the federal government, all that have been required to do everything we can to assist the local law authorities to find this -- whoever it is.

Q -- (inaudible) --

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, it is a form of terrorism, but in terms of the terrorism that we think of, we have no evidence one way or the other, obviously. But anytime anybody is randomly shooting, randomly killing, randomly taking life, it's cold-blooded murder and it's -- it's a sick mind who obviously loves terrorizing society. And we're doing everything we can to capture whoever that might be and bring them to justice. And the federal government -- I've been -- I get briefed on it every morning. Bob Mueller, the head of the FBI, was in this morning and gave me a full briefing on what the FBI knew, how we're helping, what we're doing. But it's obviously a terrible, terrible situation.

And I pray for the -- I pray for the families who grieve and suffer. And I worry about a society where moms can't take their kids to school. And obviously we're going to do everything we can to help the local authorities bring these people to justice.

Q Mr. President, on the U.N. resolution -- could I have a second one, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: It's the new me, I'm answering all kinds of questions. (Laughter.)

Q Are you prepared to meet the French halfway on their concerns on the trigger of the use of force? Specifically, are you willing to drop the language that specifies the use of any and all means to --

THE PRESIDENT: John, I think what's important is that, first of all, we are working with all parties to get a resolution done. I talked about it again, I talked to Tony Blair about that subject. What I'm interested in is making sure that Saddam Hussein is disarmed. He said he wouldn't have weapons of mass destruction; it is in our national interest that he not have weapons of mass destruction. And anything we do must make it very clear that Saddam must disarm, or there will be consequences. And how that language is worked out is up to the diplomats.

But I am very firm in my desire to make sure that Saddam is disarmed. Hopefully, we can do this peacefully. The use of the military is my last choice, is my last desire. But doing nothing, allowing the status quo to go on, is unacceptable, particularly since we've got a new war on terror that we've -- that was launched on September the 11th, 2001; particularly since oceans no longer protect America from people who hate us.

And so we'll see how it plays out. But I'm anxious to work with the international community. If I wasn't I wouldn't have gone to the United Nations.

Q Are you willing to be a little more oblique about that particular part of the language?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll just see how it comes. What I'm not -- what I want is a firm resolution that says, you disarm, and an inspection regime that is there not for the sake of inspectors, but is there to achieve the objective of disarming Mr. Saddam Hussein. It's his choice to make. And in order to make sure the resolution has got any kind of credence with Mr. Hussein, there has to be a consequence.

Randy.

Q Mr. President, are you satisfied with the cooperation you've gotten from Indonesia up until now in fighting terrorism?

THE PRESIDENT: I will speak to Ms. Megawati soon. She is in Bali right now and she is obviously grieving for her citizens that lost their lives. And I'm going to make it clear to her that we need to work together to find those who murdered all those innocent people and bring them to justice. And I hope I hear the resolve of a leader that recognizes that anytime terrorists take hold in the country it's going to weaken the country itself. And there has to be a firm and deliberate desire to find out -- find the killers before they kill somebody else.

See, these are the kinds of people that, if they go unchallenged and don't feel like there's going to be any consequences, they will continue to kill. These are nothing but cold-blooded killers. They do not value life the way we value life in the civilized world. They take no care for innocent life. They just blow up in the name of a religion which does not preach this kind of hatred or violence.

And the war we fight is a different kind of war. There will be times in which people settle in and say, well, gosh, there's nothing going on in the war; and then something like this happens, and it's a reminder about how dangerous the world can be if these al Qaeda are free to roam.

And so we're chasing them, and we're denying them sanctuary. We've made great progress in the war against terror. We've hauled in, and-or killed a bunch of their leaders. There are still more out there. There are -- the training camps that they have been using have been disrupted. We're doing a better job of cutting off their money. We've got them on the run, and we intend to keep them on the run. They are still lethal, and they are still dangerous.

Q Congress is about to go out, sir. What's the bare minimum you expect --

THE PRESIDENT: When Congress goes out? Well, they -- there's a lot of talk about job creation, and there should be. So what they ought to do is pass some bills that will help with jobs, like the terrorism insurance bill. There has been a lot of talking here in Washington on issues such as terrorism insurance, which clearly will help create the job base, expand the job base. And yet, with a couple of days to go, it's hard to tell whether or not they're going to get a bill to my desk.

The energy bill will be good for jobs. There ought to be an energy bill on my desk. And so I think -- I think before they go home I hope they recognize they can make a difference in job creation. They've also got to make sure they don't overspend. They need to make sure we have fiscal discipline. On the way out of town, if they have to do a CR, it ought to be a clean CR, and then if they feel like they need to come back, they can come back and deal with the appropriations process.

I'd also like to get the defense appropriations bill -- it passed the House, it looks like it's going to pass the Senate soon, which is a very good sign. But, you know, in four days time, no telling what's going to happen up here. Let's hope they get some constructive things done in terms of jobs.

Listen, thank you all.

Q Sir, could we ask you one more question, sir? Senator Graham last week said that the number one threat to this nation still remains al Qaeda and questioned the wisdom about going after Saddam Hussein while al Qaeda remains the number one threat. Based on what's happened for the last week in terms of Yemen, Kuwait, and Bali, does it suggest that that argument does hold some water?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they're both equally important, and they're both dangerous. And as I said in my speech in Cincinnati, we will fight if need be the war on terror on two fronts. We've got plenty of capacity to do so. And I also mentioned the fact that there is a connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. The war on terror, Iraq is a part on the war on terror. And he must disarm.

And so I -- I respect the opinion of a lot of people, and I respect his opinion. But if we don't deal with Saddam Hussein and disarm him -- hopefully, it will be done peacefully -- he becomes more and more dangerous. And someday we don't want to step back and say, where was the United States government? How come we didn't act? And we've got plenty of capacity to fight the war against al Qaeda, which is going to take a while. We just learned a lesson this weekend: it's going to take a while to succeed. And at the same time, the United Nations hopefully will pass -- will show their strong desire to disarm Saddam and we can get after it, get him disarmed before he hurts America. And I'm absolutely confident we can achieve both objectives, John.

Listen, thank you all.

Q Does this constitute a press conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely. The difference between this news conference and the one in the East Room is you didn't get to put makeup on. (Laughter.)

Q You didn't --

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, I didn't. But -- that was an unnecessary cheap shot, I apologize. It's a Columbus Day cheap shot. (Laughter.) See you all.

END 1:58 P.M. EDT

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021014-2.html>

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)