

MILESTONE DOCUMENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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That Shaped America



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President George W. Bush addresses the nation from the Oval Office on September 11, 2001, following the terrorist attacks earlier in the day. (AP Photo/Doug Mills)

GEORGE W. BUSH'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

2001

"We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."

Overview



At 8:30 in the evening on September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush addressed the nation on television and radio. His five-minute address was delivered in response to terrorist attacks on the nation that had taken place some twelve hours earlier. The attacks would become a defining moment in the Bush presidency and for the nation, leading ultimately to changes in American foreign policy, military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and years of controversy about appropriate and legal ways to combat terrorism at home and abroad. In his address, the president attempted to rally the nation to fight terrorism, to reassure people that the U.S. government was still functioning, to enlist the support of other nations in opposing terrorism, and to vow to bring to justice those responsible for the attacks.

Context

At approximately 8:30 in the morning on September 11, 2001, what had begun as a normal day on the sunny East Coast quickly turned into a day of confusion and tragedy. Working in teams, nineteen men hijacked four commercial airliners departing from Logan Airport in Boston; Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C.; and Newark International Airport in New Jersey. All of the planes were bound for California.

At 8:46 AM hijackers deliberately flew one of the planes into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City, though many observers who witnessed the event believed that the crash was a horrible accident. Then, at about 9:03, a second plane crashed into the Trade Center's South Tower—an event that was captured on film by journalists and citizens whose cameras were trained on the North Tower after the first crash. As smoke rose from the burning buildings in Lower Manhattan, at 9:37 a third plane crashed into the west side of the Pentagon building in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. A fourth airliner turned around over Ohio, and although its target remains unknown, authorities are reasonably certain

that the hijackers intended to crash it into the White House, the Capitol, or a similar target in the nation's capital. However, passengers and crew, who had learned about the earlier crashes through cell-phone conversations and knew that those hijackings had been suicide missions, attempted to regain control of the aircraft. In the struggle with the hijackers that ensued, the plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing all aboard.

These attacks were not the first on the World Trade Center. On February 26, 1993, a car bomb had exploded in the parking garage under the Trade Center's North Tower, killing six and injuring more than one thousand people. The attack was the work of Islamic terrorists, who apparently believed that the building would collapse if its structure was weakened by the blast, but the building survived the damage done to it. In the hours after the 2001 attacks, suspicion immediately fell on Islamic extremists, particularly on the terrorist organization known as al Qaeda. These suspicions were ultimately confirmed.

Terrorism, particularly terrorism emanating from Middle Eastern nations, had become a widespread and seemingly intractable problem during the 1980s and 1990s—and indeed the history of Arab terrorism directed against the United States dates all the way back to the nineteenth century, when President Thomas Jefferson had to deal with the terrorist actions of the Barbary Coast pirates in the Mediterranean Sea in America's first war, the Tripolitan War. In April 1983 the U.S. embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, was bombed, killing sixty-three people. Later that year, in October, 241 were killed in a suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine base in Beirut. Over the next two decades, military installations, embassies, nightclubs, cruise ships, and commercial airliners were all targets of terrorist attacks, culminating in the August 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 263 people and injuring more than five thousand. In response to those attacks, President Bill Clinton, on August 20, 1998, ordered cruise missile bombings of four al Qaeda training sites in Afghanistan. Two years later, on October 12, 2000, al Qaeda operatives attacked the USS *Cole* while it was docked at the port of Aden in Yemen. The attack killed seventeen sailors and injured thirty-nine others while destroying the ship.

Time Line

1993

■ **February 26**

Arab extremists detonate a car bomb in the parking garage under New York City's World Trade Center.

1998

■ Osama bin Laden, the leader of the Arab terrorist group al Qaeda, issues a fatwa, or a binding religious decree, declaring that it is the duty of Muslims to kill Americans and their allies.

2001

■ **January 20**

George W. Bush takes office as the forty-third president of the United States.

■ **September 11**

Nineteen members of al Qaeda hijack four American jetliners and crash them into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C. The target of the fourth, which crashed in a Pennsylvania field, was likely the White House or the Capitol in Washington, D.C. President Bush addresses the nation that evening.

■ **September 27**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation releases photos of the nineteen hijackers.

■ **October 4**

The British government releases information linking Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda organization with the Taliban, the ruling Islamic government in Afghanistan that provided al Qaeda with safe haven.

■ **October 7**

Forces led by the United States invade Afghanistan to oust the Taliban and begin the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

2003

■ **March 19**

U.S.-led forces launch an invasion of Iraq to oust the dictator Saddam Hussein.

The chief challenge that authorities in the United States and other nations faced was that these acts of terrorism were carried out by nonstate actors. That is, they were the work not of identifiable governments but of groups of people acting on their own. In some instances, terrorists were given safe haven and material support in various countries, such as Libya, Pakistan, and Afghanistan; Afghanistan had become a particular focus, for the Islamic Taliban regime in that country gave protection to the al Qaeda network. In other cases, the terrorists lived as fugitives, often in highly isolated parts of the Middle East, where it was difficult to track them down. Further, it was difficult to trace the money used to finance their operations. Much of that money was filtered through front organizations that claimed to serve religious and charitable purposes. It was also challenging to locate the individuals who were planning such attacks. In many cases, they entered or remained illegally in Western nations, where they joined with others in planning and executing acts of terrorism.

The first reports of the September 11, 2001, attacks were broadcast at 8:48 AM, just minutes after the first airliner crash. When the second plane hit, it seemed clear that the crash was no accident. As much of the nation watched on television, the burning jet fuel from the airliners weakened the structure of the World Trade Center towers. The South Tower collapsed at 9:59 and the North Tower at 10:28. It is likely that the hijackers deliberately chose cross-country flights because the planes would be filled to capacity with fuel. Suddenly, Lower Manhattan was turned into a dust-choked war zone as emergency personnel tried to deal with the crisis.

Throughout North America, the airlines worked feverishly to get all airplanes back on the ground. International flights were denied entry into American airspace, and many had to land in Canada. President Bush was first informed of the attacks at 9:03 as he was addressing a class of schoolchildren in Sarasota, Florida. Because of uncertainty about the possibility of subsequent attacks and where and when they might occur, officials kept the president on the move throughout the day. He arrived back in Washington, D.C., early in the evening and addressed the nation at 8:30 PM.

In all, 2,999 people died as a direct result of the attacks. This figure includes the crew and passengers in the airliners, all of whom perished, and over one hundred people on the ground at the Pentagon. The bulk of the casualties were people who were working in or visiting the World Trade Center towers at the time of the attacks and who were unable to escape the buildings. Some, faced with the prospect of a fiery death, chose to leap out of windows to their deaths. More than four hundred of the dead were emergency workers, such as firefighters and police officers who responded to the initial fires caused by the airliners striking the World Trade Center and who were killed when the towers collapsed. In addition to the human cost, the 9/11 attacks had severe economic implications for the country, as airline travel was curtailed, investments lost

value, and economic activity slowed, worsening an economic recession that was already under way.

About the Author

George Walker Bush was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on July 6, 1946, the oldest son and first child of George Herbert Walker Bush, the forty-first president of the United States, and his wife, Barbara. Bush was raised in Midland and Houston, Texas, with his four siblings, Jeb, Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy. His grandfather, Prescott Bush, was a U.S. senator from Connecticut.

Bush attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and Yale University, where he received a bachelor's degree in history in 1968. As a college senior, Bush became a member of the secretive Skull and Bones society. By his own characterization, he was an average student.

In 1968, during the Vietnam War, Bush was accepted into the Texas Air National Guard. After training, he was assigned to duty in Houston. Critics argue that Bush was given preferential treatment because of his father's political standing and that his attendance was irregular. Bush took a transfer to the Alabama Air National Guard in 1972 to work on a Republican Senate campaign, and in October 1973 he received a discharge from the Texas Air National Guard to attend Harvard Business School.

After obtaining a master of business administration degree from Harvard, Bush entered the oil industry in Texas. In 1977 he was introduced to Laura Welch, a schoolteacher and librarian, whom he married; the two settled in Midland and had two children. In 1978 Bush ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. House of Representatives from the Nineteenth Congressional District. He returned to the oil industry as a senior partner or chief executive officer of several ventures, which suffered from the general decline of oil prices in the 1980s.

Bush moved to Washington, D.C., in 1988 to campaign for his father, who successfully ran for president. He then returned to Texas and in 1989 purchased a share in the Texas Rangers baseball franchise, serving as managing general partner for five years. However, in 1994 he returned to politics and was elected governor of Texas. Bush won the presidency in 2000 as the Republican candidate in a close and controversial contest over Vice President Al Gore. In that election, Gore won the nationwide popular vote, but Bush won the electoral vote. The outcome of the election was in doubt for weeks as charges were made of voting irregularities in Florida. Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court stopped a recount of the Florida vote, Bush carried the state by a razor-thin margin, and the state's electoral votes went into his column, securing him the win.

As president, Bush pushed through a \$1.3 trillion tax cut program and the No Child Left Behind Act, an education initiative. Following the 9/11 attacks, Bush announced a global war on terrorism and ordered an invasion of Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime, destroy al

Qaeda, and capture its leader, Osama bin Laden. In March 2003 Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq, asserting that Iraq was in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, a resolution, passed unanimously in 2002, in which the United Nations found Iraq and its leader, Saddam Hussein, in violation of ten previous resolutions regarding disarmament.

Bush was reelected in 2004 over the Democrat John Kerry, despite controversy over Bush's handling of the Iraq War and of the economy. After his reelection, he was the target of increasingly heated criticism. His domestic approval declined from 90 percent (the highest ever recorded by the Gallup Organization) immediately after the September 11, 2001, attacks to a low of 26 percent (in a *Newsweek* poll taken in June 2007), the lowest level for any sitting president in thirty-five years. Only Harry S. Truman and Richard M. Nixon scored lower.

Explanation and Analysis of the Document

Bush's Address to the Nation on September 11, 2001, was brief, lasting just five minutes. The president used simple language to reach a broad audience. While the speech does not outline policy in detail, it hints at a significant change in America's response to the terrorism of the 1990s and into the new millennium.

Bush opens his remarks by stating that the nation has been attacked by yet unidentified terrorists and that the victims were largely innocent civilians. He notes that thousands of lives were suddenly ended by "evil, despicable acts of terror" and then recalls the images seen in the media of "airplanes flying into buildings." He characterizes the events as "acts of mass murder" intended to frighten the nation.

Bush states that even such acts of terror cannot shake the resolve of the nation, and in paragraph 3 he remarks that while such attacks can dent the steel of a building, they cannot dent the "steel of American resolve." In paragraph 4 he develops the metaphor of the United States as a beacon of light for freedom and democracy and states that America was attacked because of that role. This paragraph is brief, but it establishes that America was targeted largely because it stands for freedom, opportunity, and values that are antithetical to those held by the terrorist organizations responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

In paragraph 5 Bush notes that the initial response to the attacks was by rescue workers representing "the best of America" as well as others who gave blood, housing, and other forms of support to their fellow Americans in a time of disaster. Here the president contrasts this heroism with the "worst of human nature" displayed by the terrorists. He goes on to explain that he has implemented the government's emergency response plan, mentioning that the nation's military is "powerful" and "prepared" and that emergency teams are working with local rescue efforts in New York and Washington, D.C.



In paragraph 7 Bush continues the theme of an immediate response to the aftermath of the attacks, stating that the nation's first priority is to help those who are injured and to protect the nation from further attack. It was also vital for the president to reassure a stunned and grieving nation that essential government functions would continue without interruption and that people could rely on these services. In paragraph 8 he comments that federal agencies that had to be evacuated during the crisis would reopen the following day. He also assures the American people that the nation's financial institutions would be "open for business" as well.

At the time of this address, it was not yet known who was responsible for the attacks. In paragraph 9 Bush states that the search is under way for those responsible and that he has directed the full resources of the "intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice." At the end of this paragraph he makes a short but highly significant policy declaration that "we will make no distinction between the terrorists ... and those who harbor them." Because terrorists are generally nonstate actors, Bush holds countries that harbor them equally responsible for their actions.

Bush recognizes that he cannot act alone and needs support from both Congress at home and governments around the world. In paragraph 10 he thanks those members of Congress who have already joined in condemning the attacks and those foreign leaders who have called him to offer their condolences and support. Paragraph 11 continues this theme as Bush calls upon those who seek "peace and security in the world" to join in a common war against terrorism. This brief initial statement is the call to arms for what would soon become the global war on terror and the hallmark of Bush's presidency. Bush concludes this paragraph with a religious theme, praying for help from a "greater power" and closing the paragraph with the often-quoted Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me."

In the final substantive paragraph, Bush concludes his address by stating his conviction that September 11 was a day when all Americans "from every walk of life" were united in their resolve for justice and peace. He reiterates that America has "stood down enemies before" and will "do so this time" as well. He notes that "none of us will ever forget this day." He concludes this paragraph by stating that the nation will "go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world." Bush then closes the address with his thanks and calls on God's blessing for America.

Audience

As with any presidential address, particularly in response to a national crisis, this one had many audiences. The nominal audience was the American people in general, and the purpose of the address was to provide the public with reassurance. Within that general audience, though, were more particular audiences.

One audience was the people in New York City and Washington, D.C., who were directly affected by the attacks. The president wanted those people to know that the federal government was doing everything it could to ensure their safety, that rescue operations were under way, and that authorities were making every effort to locate people who were missing in the chaos and debris. Further, the president wanted to provide a measure of comfort for those who had lost loved ones in the attacks.

For the broader American public, the president wanted to assure people that the federal government was taking all possible steps to protect the country from further attacks. Thus, the address informed the public that the U.S. military was in a high state of readiness and that all federal agencies, including federal law enforcement agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency, had been mobilized to deal with further threats. While no further attacks materialized in the hours, days, and weeks following the September 11 attacks, many Americans were apprehensive. Thus, in large part the address was designed to provide reassurance to the American people.

An additional domestic audience, one that is probably always in a president's mind when he is addressing the nation, included members of the U.S. Congress. In speaking directly to the American public, the president began to mobilize support for actions that he believed he needed to take to respond to the attacks and to ward off future attacks. Some of those actions would require the backing of Congress, either in approving the actions or in providing funding. Bush was thus gathering public support—and indeed his approval rating with the public was high in the period following the attacks.

An implied audience was the terrorists themselves as well as those who aided and supported them, including foreign governments. The president did not begin his address with the customary "My fellow Americans." He knew that people around the world would be listening. By vowing to take firm action, he put terrorists on notice that he would take steps to bring them to justice. Additionally, he put nations that harbored terrorists on notice that he would hold them to account. This principle became known as the Bush Doctrine, which was that nations that harbored or supported terrorists would meet with the same response from America as the terrorists themselves. The language of the address was concise and clear. The president did not use the language of diplomacy, which often relies on hints and ambiguity. He wanted the address, when it was translated into foreign languages, to leave no room for doubt or uncertainty.

Finally, the president was addressing foreign governments and their people, whose interests were allied with those of the United States. The address was a first step in enlisting the support of foreign governments, especially those of nations that had themselves been the victims of terrorism, in the effort to hunt down the terrorists and bring them to justice. Thus, with this address, Bush began the process of building a coalition of nations, along with their law enforcement agencies, in the global war on terror.

Essential Quotes

“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.”

(Paragraph 3)

“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.”

(Paragraph 4)

“Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. And we responded with the best of America.”

(Paragraph 5)

“We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”

(Paragraph 9)

“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.”

(Paragraph 11)

“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.”

(Paragraph 12)

Impact

Assessing the impact of the speech itself is difficult, given that on the evening of September 11, 2001, the nation was still in a state of confusion, uncertainty, and fear. The identities of the hijackers had not yet been determined, and at this point Americans in general were only vaguely familiar, if at all, with the name al Qaeda. The president’s

extremely high approval rating in the days and weeks following the attacks suggests that the impact of his words and actions was regarded as favorable and that the president was showing firm leadership in response to the crisis.

An issue that arose in the aftermath of the attacks was the effectiveness of federal law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency. Many observers believe that



if these agencies had had a more cooperative, integrated relationship, the attacks could have been prevented, for there were numerous clues that the attacks were impending. Unfortunately, no one was able to assemble the clues into a coherent picture because federal agencies were not sharing information with each other. However, after the attacks, federal, state, and local counterterrorism agencies began to work together not only to carry out search-and-rescue operations at “Ground Zero,” the World Trade Center site, but also to investigate the attacks and determine who was responsible. Ultimately, this effort led to a major restructuring of U.S. intelligence operations, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and the establishment of new counterterrorism centers.

The chief impact of the speech had to do with its initial expression of what came to be known as the Bush Doctrine; the phrase echoes similar doctrines in America’s past, such as the Monroe Doctrine articulated by President James Monroe in 1823. The Bush Doctrine stated that the United States was justified in taking military action against any nation that supported or harbored terrorist organizations. After al Qaeda was identified as the perpetrator of the attacks, the president ordered U.S. military forces to strike terrorist bases in Afghanistan and to overthrow the Taliban regime that had supported al Qaeda. Later Bush articulated a policy of preemption, expanding the doctrine such that the United States was justified in attacking terrorists or terrorist-harboring nations before they might act against the country rather than merely waiting to respond to an attack. Bush referenced the doctrine in part in 2003 when he initiated a war in Iraq, overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein on the ground that the dictator was a state sponsor of terrorism and a threat to other nations. In the diplomatic arena he identified other nations as supporters and sponsors of terrorism, particularly nations he called the “axis of evil” (first mentioned in his 2002 State of the Union address), a trio that included Iraq, Iran, and North Korea (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>). While he stopped short of overt military actions in some cases, he sought sanctions and other actions in an effort to bring about changes in either policy or regime.

The president’s call to other nations to join in the fight against terrorism was in many respects successful. The president’s goal was to build an international coalition to fight the war on terror, and many nations agreed to contribute resources. Many provided intelligence resources, military forces, and economic and diplomatic support for the war on terror. Many of those same nations did not support the U.S.-led war in Iraq and in fact were sharply critical of the president both for launching the war and for his handling of it. Nevertheless, U.S. and foreign intelligence agencies continued to cooperate in hunting down terrorists and preempting terrorist attacks. There have been failures, notably the train bombing of March 2004 in Madrid, Spain, and the London train bombing in July 2005, but there were many successes as well, notably the absence of further terrorist attacks on U.S. soil from 9/11 through the end of 2007.

Related Documents

“Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” White House Web site. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>. Accessed on March 10, 2008. In this address, the president reports on progress; identifies Osama bin Laden as the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks; reassures Muslims in America and throughout the world that the issue is terrorism, not religion; and steels the nation for a long, sometimes frustrating fight.

“Congressional Reports: Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities before and after the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001.” GPO Access Web site. <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/serialset/creports/911.html>. Accessed on March 10, 2008. This publication summarizes the official congressional investigation of the attacks.

The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. New York: Norton, 2004. This report was issued by a special bipartisan commission appointed by President Bush to study the attacks.

“President Bush Salutes Heroes in New York.” White House Web site. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010914-9.html>. Accessed on March 10, 2008. This brief address was delivered to cheer the rescue workers at the site of the World Trade Center.

“President Delivers State of the Union Address.” White House Web site. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>. Accessed on March 10, 2008. This address reports progress in the war on terror, particularly the success of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. It marked Bush’s first use of the phrase *axis of evil*.

“President’s Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance.” White House Web site. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010914-2.html>. Accessed on March 10, 2008. These remarks were a slightly more prayerful version of the president’s September 11 address, noting that by this time Americans were learning the names of those killed.

“September 11, 2001: Attack on America. Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives; September 12, 2001.” The Avalon Project at Yale Law School Web site. URL: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/sept_11/letter01_091201.htm. Accessed on March 10, 2008. The purpose of this letter was to request the House to pass emergency funding legislation to finance the war on terror.

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—By Michael J. O'Neal



Questions for Further Study

1. How have other U.S. presidents responded to attacks on the United States? For example, how did President Jefferson respond to the attacks of the Barbary Coast pirates during his administration? How did President Franklin D. Roosevelt respond to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that brought America into World War II?

2. In September 1901, a single terrorist killed President William McKinley. McKinley's successor, President Theodore Roosevelt, declared that he would rid the world of terrorists. In what he called "Big Stick Diplomacy" or the "Big Stick Policy," he claimed that the United States had the right to intervene in the affairs of foreign nations, particularly in the Western Hemisphere. How is this change in U.S. foreign policy similar to the Bush Doctrine? How is it different?

3. In his Address to the Nation on September 11, 2001, Bush describes America as an example for the world, the "brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world." Many observers, though, have sharply criticized the president for various actions and policies in the war on terror. Some of these include suspension of the writ of habeas corpus for those arrested for terrorist activities (meaning that they can be held without formal charges) and various abuses of constitutionally protected freedoms. Is there an inconsistency between the president's words and actions? If so, how? Should suspected terrorists be treated in a way different from ordinary criminals? Why or why not? Do you agree with the argument that terrorists are in effect soldiers in a war and therefore can be held as prisoners of war rather than as criminals? Why or why not?

Glossary

financial institutions	banks, stock exchanges, and brokerage firms
intelligence community	federal agencies charged with intelligence operations, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and several others
law enforcement community	federal agencies charged with investigating criminal activities, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and numerous others
terrorism	premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents

GEORGE W. BUSH'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

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."

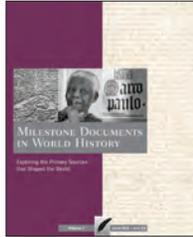
This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

Thank you. Good night, and God bless America.

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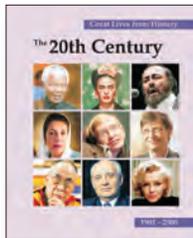
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Milestone Documents in World History.
Ed. Brian Bonhomme & Cathleen Boivin.
4 volumes; 1,872 pages.
ISBN: 978-0-9797758-6-4
Dallas, TX: Schlager Group, 2010.
LIST PRICE: \$395



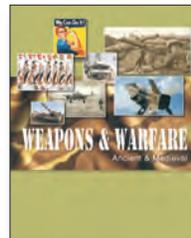
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Great Lives from History: The 20th Century. Ed. Robert F. Gorman.
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