

Fresh challenges confront a determined America

by Martin Merzer
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Stock prices plunged, three more airlines announced major layoffs and President Bush demanded the capture of Osama bin Laden "dead or alive" as fresh challenges Monday confronted Americans determined not to be terrified by terrorism.

"I want justice," Bush said of bin Laden, the extremist leader and prime suspect in last week's catastrophic attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"There's an old poster out West that said, 'Wanted, dead or alive.'"

Bin Laden apparently remains in a hideout in Afghanistan, shielded by that nation's hard-line Taliban regime. Taliban-run radio reported that a council of Islamic clerics would meet Tuesday to decide whether to hand over bin Laden to the West, but no sign emerged that they were ready to surrender him.

About 5,300 people are missing and presumed dead in the most lethal and ruinous crime ever committed against American civilians. Secretary of State Colin Powell said Monday that 37 nations lost citizens when the World Trade Center collapsed.

The resulting economic shock wave began to rumble Monday.

The Federal Reserve unexpectedly slashed a key short-term interest rate by half a point to 3 percent, far down from 6.5 percent at the beginning of this year.

The Fed's one-eighth rate reduction of 2001 was intended to bolster confidence and the economy, but stock prices plummeted as trading resumed after the longest moratorium since the Great Depression.

At one point, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down a record 721.56 points. It closed at 8,920.70, down 684.81 points for the day, a loss of 7.1 percent. The NASDAQ average fell to 1,579.55, a loss of 6.8 percent.

Both indexes sank to levels not seen since 1998.

Airline stocks suffered particularly, with some losing more than 40 percent of their value. Several major airlines have announced 20 percent cuts in schedules after last week's hijackings, and executives said they lost \$1 billion in business last week.

USAirways said Monday that it will lay off 11,000 people, 24 percent of its work force; America West will eliminate 2,000 jobs; America Trans Air will eliminate 1,500 jobs.

Continental said last week that it will lay off 12,000 workers. Ailing Midway Airlines shut down shortly after the attacks.

The White House said President Bush will meet Tuesday with top executives of several airlines, and Attorney General John Ashcroft announced that federal agents would ride shotgun aboard some commercial airlines. Typically, federal agents are armed.

Ashcroft also called for legislation that would allow authorities to impose wiretaps on people wherever they roam. Currently, they can tap only specific telephones.

"We need these tools to fight the terrorism threat which exists in the United States," Ashcroft said.

In New York City, thousands of people returned to work for the first time since last Tuesday. They endured two-hour commutes, found military trucks parked on city streets and attempted to absorb startling panoramas

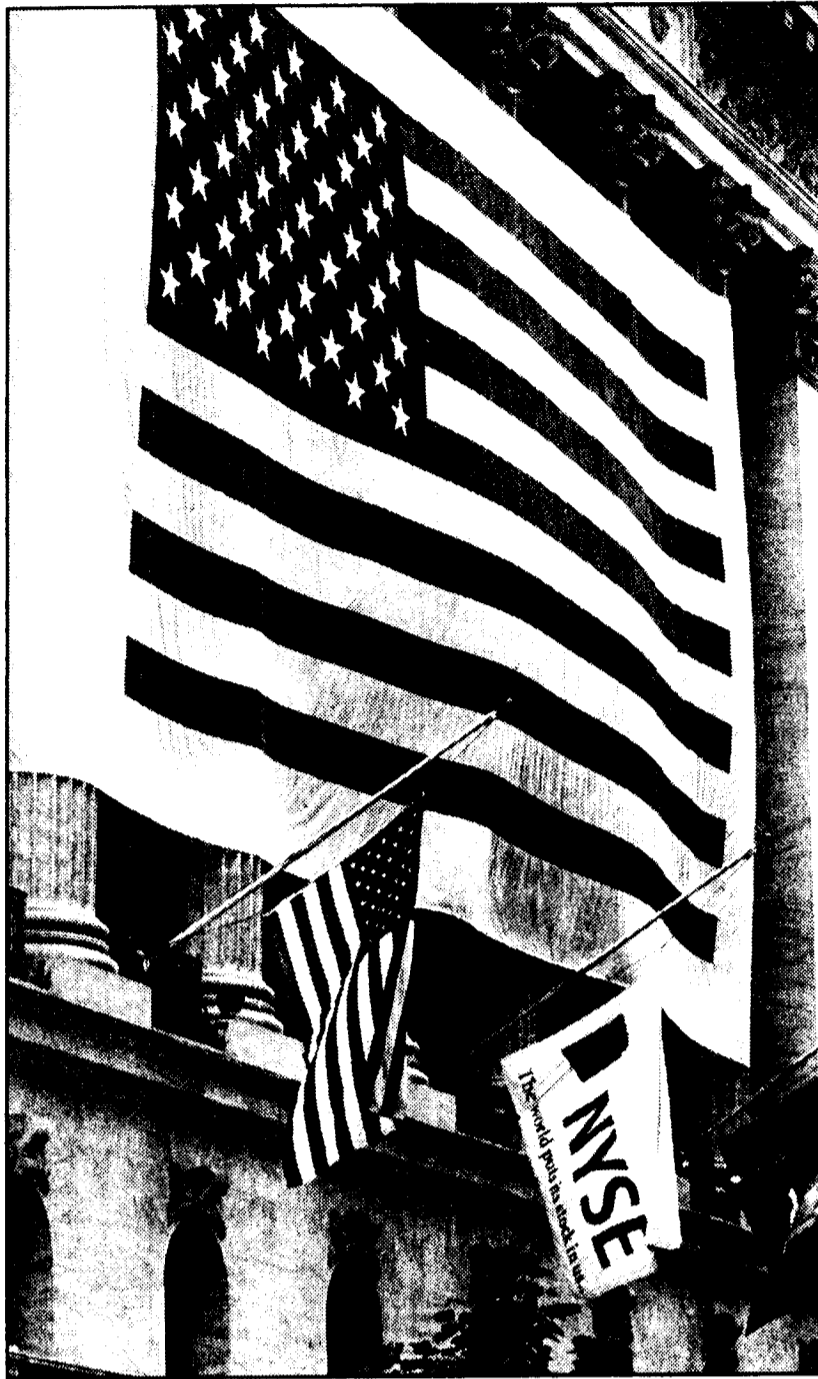


PHOTO BY ROBERT ROSAMILIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

An enormous American flag hangs on the exterior of the New York Stock Exchange in lower Manhattan.

of destruction.

"TV didn't prepare you for it - the soldiers in uniform, the army vehicles in the streets, the police checking ID cards," said lawyer Michael Boxer. "It was surreal, very surreal."

Many eyes turned to Asia, where diplomats from neighboring Pakistan urged Afghanistan's leaders to surrender bin Laden and spare their nation and region the retaliatory fury that Bush has threatened.

The Taliban began moving weapons, including Russian Scud missiles, near Afghanistan's border with Pakistan, a nuclear power. Pakistan effectively closed its 880-mile border even as Afghan refugees streamed toward it.

Bin Laden is believed to have orchestrated and financed last week's suicide assaults, which transformed jetliners into guided missiles that destroyed the twin-tower trade center and destroyed a wing of the Pentagon.

"It's barbaric behavior," Bush said during a Monday visit to his damaged military headquarters. "They slit throats of women on airplanes in order to achieve an objective that is beyond comprehension. And they like to hit, and then they like to hide."

An acrid smell still rose from the smoldering wreckage at the Pentagon. One hundred and eighty-eight people are presumed dead or missing at the Pentagon.

At one point, as Bush shook hands in the cafeteria, a lone woman began singing "God Bless America." Soon, apparently spontaneously, the entire room joined the singing, including the President.

Work at the Pentagon crash site was slowly leveling off, and two search crews were expected to go home as

early as Tuesday.

"We have completed the primary shoring-up objectives and are lessening that effort at this point in time," said Assistant Fire Chief Tom Carr of Montgomery County, Md.

But he added that, "the search and evidence recovery are still continuing."

Throughout the day, Bush and his administration tightened the pressure on Afghanistan's leaders and placed them on notice: Bin Laden and other terrorism suspects must lose their sanctuaries and accept their fates.

"The people who think they can provide them safe havens will be held accountable," Bush said. "The people who feed them will be held accountable. And the Taliban must take my statement seriously."

French President Jacques Chirac was scheduled to meet with Bush at the White House on Tuesday. British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrives for crisis consultations Thursday.

A coalition appeared to be forming.

"We mean no ill toward the people of Afghan," Powell said. "They are a suffering people. They are a poor people. And for that reason alone, they should not allow these invaders to put their society at risk and to connect themselves to the government of Afghanistan."

Powell was asked if he was certain that bin Laden is still in Afghanistan.

"I can't be certain of where he is," Powell said. "I'm reasonably confident and certain that if the Taliban government wanted to find him, they would know where he is if he is still in Afghanistan, and I have seen nothing to indicate he is not still in Afghanistan."

Terrorists may be planning further strikes in U.S.

by Warren P. Strobel
and Alfonso Chardy
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Terrorists linked to those who attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon may be planning further strikes inside the United States, top U.S. intelligence officials said Sunday, adding that they could not rule out the use of chemical or biological weapons.

The officials, while cautioning that they have no evidence about specific planned attacks, said it now appears that Tuesday's devastating strikes were part of a broader terrorist plot and that some of those involved were

still at large.

"The intelligence community is saying their plan of terrorism had more than just Tuesday," Sen. Bob Graham, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in an interview with The Miami Herald and The Associated Press shortly after appearing on CNN for a round-table discussion on the attacks.

Graham, D-Fla., said U.S. intelligence officials believe that the other potential components of the plot could include a variety of methods such as concealed small nuclear devices, or biological and chemical weapons.

Graham spoke after receiving a briefing from the CIA.

A senior intelligence official con-

firmed that the CIA was on alert for further attacks, and he cited information that other would-be terrorists acquired pilots' licenses, as did the hijackers who commandeered four commercial jetliners Sept. 11.

But because security at airports has been tightened, "they'll probably shift to an alternate mode" of attack, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official emphasized that there is no hard evidence that Osama bin Laden, the prime suspect behind Tuesday's attacks, and his associates have acquired chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. But that has long been bin Laden's goal, "and you can't rule that out," the official said.

In discussing the potential for further deadly terrorist attacks, the Bush administration must balance competing needs: keeping the public informed, protecting classified information and avoiding further panic in an already jittery nation.

"Your government is alert . . . that evil folks still lurk out there," President Bush said Sunday.

Graham said that the continuing threat was the reason the federal government was imposing tighter security at airports and other sites.

"This is not the time for the public to panic," he said. "Rather, it's a time for the public to be cautious."

Graham, in a separate appearance on ABC-TV, said the CIA had told him Sunday morning that while groups associated with bin Laden were the prime suspects and that "there was also evidence that there might be other groups, including other terrorist groups outside of Afghanistan, that might be involved in this tragic situation."

He did not specify which groups. Bin Laden's loose terrorist network, known as al Qaeda ("the Base"), has links with a variety of other terrorist groups in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia, according to the State and Justice departments.

The CIA - which has taken considerable political heat for failing to warn of the most devastating terrorist attacks in U.S. history - and other spy agencies, including the eavesdropping National Security Agency, have been working feverishly over the last six days to sift through threat data.

There are "indications that it may

not be over and it may not be limited to what we've already seen," the intelligence official said.

Officials are watching for threats both on U.S. soil and to U.S. installations overseas. Officials in the Philippines said Friday that militants there may have planned to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Manila on or about Sept. 11.

Beginning in 1993, bin Laden and his associates made attempts to produce chemical weapons and obtain the components of nuclear weapons, according to the 1998 indictment of bin Laden associates charged in the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

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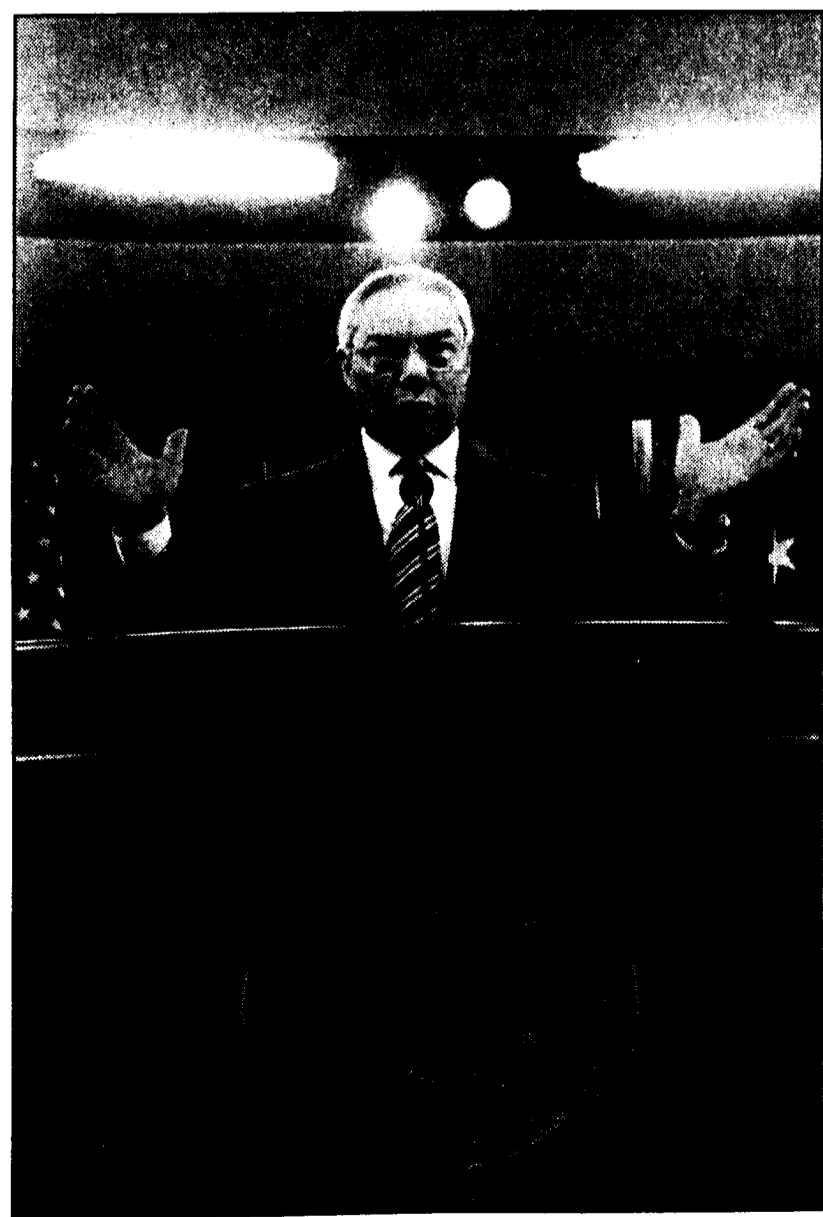


PHOTO BY CHUCK KENNEDY/KRT

At a news conference at the State Department on Wednesday Sept. 13, 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell identified Osama bin Laden as the prime suspect in last Tuesday's terrorist attack.

Pilots are ready to defend their planes; federal agents will become sky sheriffs

by Mike McGraw
and Seth Borenstein
Knight Ridder Newspapers

America's commercial pilots say they're prepared to turn their cockpits into foxholes the next time a suicidal hijacker wants to commandeer a plane.

Flight crews are exploring aggressive defense tactics such as wielding emergency crash axes as weapons during attacks and using the awesome power of the plane itself to keep terrorists off-balance, pilots and aviation experts said. On Monday, the pilots' union plotted strategies in a nationwide security briefing as they considered new approaches for defending cockpits.

"Now we will defend the cockpit at all costs," US Airways First Officer Roy Freundlich said as commercial air traffic tried to return to normal following last week's suicide attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Pilots may soon have help. On Monday, Attorney General John Ashcroft said numerous federal agents would be flying on commercial jets to help guard against terrorists, as he urged Congress to enact new anti-terrorism laws.

Aggressive defense tactics for pilots would be a dramatic change. In the past, the hijacking strategy has been to cooperate, land safely wherever the hijacker wanted and generally minimize conflict. Now, given suicidal terrorists who ram jets into public buildings, pilots - many of them ex-military fliers - say they have to be ready to fight.

Last week, the Air Line Pilots Association sent a safety bulletin to its 67,000 members, telling them to consider "drastic aircraft maneuvering designed to keep hijackers off-balance and away from the cockpit," among other measures.

"The cockpits should be protected at all costs, regardless of what kinds of security breaches have occurred, or are occurring in the back of the aircraft," Stephen Luckey, a pilot and chairman of the union's security committee wrote in last week's memo.

If the cockpit is breached, Luckey said, "pilots must be both mentally and physically prepared to take the life of a cockpit intruder . . ."

It's not just talk.

Shortly after last week's hijackings, an airline crew still in flight summoned an off-duty pilot from the cabin to guard the cockpit with an axe in case hijackers tried

to break in, said Mike Polay, an aviation safety professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Ariz. He said a pilot involved told him of the incident.

"I'm sure that was probably (the case) in many aircraft when they were told to go ahead and defend themselves," Polay said. "You know pilots are resourceful."

The pilots' union - whose president is on a new federal cockpit security task force - told members in the memo that the new face of hijacking should make them consider depressurizing the airplane, going into steep dives, climbs or banks to disable attackers.

Such measures "are logical things that an air crew could do very simply," said Eric Doten, a former senior FAA advisor and director of the Center for Aerospace Safety Education at Embry-Riddle's campus in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Depressurizing the cabin could cause people not wearing supplemental oxygen to pass out, Polay said. Drastic maneuvering - sudden climbs, dives and turns - could cause people not strapped in, especially hijackers, to float or be banged against the floor, disabling them, Polay said.