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'We're At War'

by Ron Fournier—The Associated Press

President Bush ordered U.S. troops to get ready for war and braced Americans for a long, difficult assault against terrorists to avenge the deadliest attack on the nation. "Those who make war against the United States have chosen their own destruction," he declared Saturday. "We will smoke them out of their holes," Bush said. "We'll get them running and we'll bring them to justice."

But first the nation had to mourn its dead. "This is indeed a sad occasion, one to be repeated thousands of times by our fellow citizens across the country," Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas said at the memorial service for Barbara Olson, wife of U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson.

Four days after hijackers seized commercial airliners and slammed them into the symbols of American military and economic might, Bush said prime suspect Osama bin Laden's days are numbered. "If he thinks he can hide and run from the United States and our allies he will be sorely mistaken."

"This act will not stand," he said. "Everybody who wears the uniform: Get ready," Bush instructed. The White House would not rule out the use of ground troops; Bush himself said "the conflict would not be easy."

The president urged Americans to go about their lives but cautioned the threat might not be over. He said there should be a "heightened sense of awareness that a group of barbarians have declared war on the American people."

Lt. Gen. Russell Davis of the National Guard said combat patrols are guarding the sky above Washington, New York and a few other cities he would not identify.

As Americans struggled to find a sense of normalcy, jarring developments kept them on edge. Recovery workers found many bodies at the Pentagon where officials believe 188 people were killed. Workers toiled in the muck and mess of what was the World Trade Center in New York, finding a small fraction of the thousands of bodies buried beneath tons of rubble. Continental Airlines laid off 12,000 employees and cut its flight schedule by 20 percent because of an expected drop in air travel.

One day after leading the nation in prayer, Bush changed his tone to begin preparing Americans for sacrifices ahead. "I will not settle for a token act. Our response must be sweeping, sustained and effective," he said.

His advisors said that fighting terrorists will expose U.S. troops to severe risk and American citizens to retaliatory strikes. Bush did not speak in such blunt terms, but used his weekly radio address to raise the first words of caution.

Bush sounded a patriotic chord as citizens emptied store shelves of U.S. flags and other American emblems, held fund-raising drives and gave blood.

In a display of unity, New York's two senators—both Democrats—thanked President Bush, Gov. George Pataki and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani—all Republicans for their support. "Underneath our tears is the strong determination of America to win this war," Bush said.