

George W. Bush Address to the Nation after September 11, 2001 (Excerpt)

3:55 Min.

...On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. ... Americans have known the casualties of war, but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning....Americans have known surprise attacks, but never before on thousands of *civilians*....All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking, "Who attacked our country?"

The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al-Qaida. ... This group and its leader, a person named Osama bin Laden practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics; a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam....The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans with no distinctions among military and civilians, including women and children....the terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack *Islam* itself...

...so I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah.

Americans are asking, "Why do they hate us?"

They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other....These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of

life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us because we stand in their way.

...Americans are asking, "How will we fight and win this war?"

We will direct every resource at our command -- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence and every necessary weapon of war -- to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network.

... Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes visible on TV and covert operations secret even in success. ...We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, and drive them from place to place until there is no refuge or no rest.

...This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is *civilization's* fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. ..We ask every nation to join us.....: An attack on one is an attack on all.

Americans are asking, "What is expected of us?"

I ask you to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here.

We're in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.

...As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror. This will be an age of liberty here and across the world... And in our grief and anger, we have found our mission and our moment...Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us.

...The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. ...Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come.

In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.

Thank you.

President George W. Bush - September 20, 2001