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## THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON AMERICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

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Terrorists most likely associated with Osama bin Laden not only killed thousands of innocent people in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania this week; they attacked our economy and our way of life as well. Their objective was to undermine our confidence in our own capabilities and the world's confidence in us. They certainly hoped to break our resolve. Ultimately, they will succeed only if we allow ourselves to forget what happened and go on as if nothing has fundamentally changed.

Something *has* fundamentally changed. The sight of smoke rising from the Pentagon, of Liberty Island in New York being turned into a morgue, and of small children huddling in bushes at school makes it crystal clear that business as usual cannot go on. This time, liberty and life are at stake. And America must begin acting on that basis.

The terrorist attack on September 11 was a crime against humanity; but even more, it was an act of war directed against the United States. Punishment for those well-planned attacks on U.S. soil will require strong and resolute responses that cannot be meted out in some international court of justice. The United States must respond to these acts of war by waging a systematic and comprehensive military campaign to rid the world of international terrorism. This will require a resolute President with the solid support of both the U.S. Congress and the international community.

**Vigilance.** We have been far too forgetful. When terrorists killed hundreds of Marines in Beirut in

the 1980s, we were shocked. Slowly, we forgot that horror and went back to business as usual. When terrorists associated with Osama bin Laden attacked the World Trade Center in the early 1990s, we were outraged, but soon we forgot. When terrorists suspected of being associated with bin Laden attacked U.S. troops in their barracks in Saudi Arabia, and even U.S. sailors on the USS Cole in port at Yemen, we were again outraged, but we forgot those terrors too. And when terrorists associated with bin Laden attacked the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing hundreds of people, we allowed ourselves to forget again. Each time that Americans have been targeted or killed, the nation has too quickly become complacent, let down its guard, and made it possible for terrorists to attack again.

This time, it would be folly to ignore the warnings. This is not the last act of terrorism that will target America and Americans. We must not allow ourselves to sink into the kind of complacency that made our nation vulnerable to the most deadly for-

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eign attack ever on U.S. soil, which claimed more lives in a single day than were lost in combat during the American Revolutionary War, and many more than were lost at Pearl Harbor. It would also be foolish to waste time trying to set inappropriately high standards of "proof" that are ill-suited for the battlefield.

President Bush and the U.S. Congress must quickly take steps to mobilize the nation to meet whatever threats to peace, security, and freedom today's terrorists pose.

**A Declaration of War.** First, the President should ask Congress to pass a declaration of war against any international group and/or state that participated in this horrendous attack on America. Such a declaration should demonstrate America's resolve and eliminate any confusion about the methods that America may consider necessary to solve the problem.

**A Diplomatic Initiative.** Responding to the attack is the job of U.S. military, intelligence, and security forces, not the United Nations or international courts. The United States must demand support for its response to terrorism from its allies as well as from countries that wish to be known as civilized states. These include Russia and China, as well as Arab states that have depended on the United States for their security but have not been as cooperative as they should be in destroying common enemies. Complete and close international cooperation is necessary to root out terrorist organizations no matter where they may hide.

This means finding hidden enemies who have waged war against America and destroying them, as well as their supporters and the infrastructure that enabled them to attack. It means holding accountable any states that harbored or supported the terrorists in any way. One goal of U.S. policy should be the removal from power, by any means, of the regimes that harbored or supported the terrorists. States that may have supported them indirectly should be punished as well and forced to change their policies.

**A Military and Domestic Response.** The means to be used to respond to these acts of war must be chosen by the President and the Secretary of Defense in consultation with Congress. Leeway must be given to military commanders to decide the exact methods that will be used. The military response must be decisive and effective, not one that merely "sends a signal" or retribution per se. It must demonstrate that we want to solve the problem, not merely express our outrage. It must root out the networks that support the terrorists, not just retaliate against individuals.

To be effective, Congress must give the President whatever he asks for by way of funding for military and security operations, intelligence assets, and building up the armed forces to meet palpable threats long discounted or ignored. It means beefing up intelligence capabilities sorely neglected in recent years and vastly improving our technical capabilities to monitor terrorist activities and analyze what is found. It also means providing better guidance to U.S. airports to increase security, which will require Americans to be more patient and understanding.

And it means creating a comprehensive homeland defense policy. The military must be able to defend against the kind of terrorist attacks that occurred this week as well as attacks on electronic and computer infrastructure, financial systems, and communications, transportation, water, and fuel networks or supplies. They must be prepared to defend against ballistic missiles, the weapon of choice for terrorist states that want to inflict massive, irreparable damage. Already, some 20 nations are developing or deploying ballistic missiles, including North Korea, Iraq, and Iran.

**Conclusion.** This week's horrendous acts are yet another warning. Americans must not permit the type of complacency and self-delusion that made this week's atrocities possible ever to return. Freedom and civilization are at risk. Business as usual is not an option.

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