

ATTACK ON AMERICA

F-16s patrolling skies over U.S., source says

ARMED FORCES In a message to U.S. troops worldwide, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warns of the difficult task ahead in fighting terrorists.

By JOHN DIEDRICH
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWS SERVICE

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Air Force fighter jets are flying constant patrol missions over some of the nation's metropolitan areas in response to Tuesday's terrorist attacks, a military source told *The Gazette* of Colorado Springs on Wednesday.

The F-16s, which are flying high enough to be heard but not always seen, will continue operating what the military calls "combat air patrols" for the "near future," the source said. It wasn't clear how long the missions will continue, the source said.

The source declined to say how many fighters were flying the missions or which cities were being patrolled.

At Naval Air Station Fort Worth, F-16 pilots from the Air



POOL PHOTO/DOUG MILLS

An F-16 escorts Air Force One on Tuesday as the presidential jet flies back to Washington.

Force Reserve's 301st Fighter Wing have been on standby in their cockpits since Tuesday, scrambling at least three times to intercept small civilian planes and force them to land.

A base spokesman said the F-16s over North Texas are carrying live missiles, an extraordinarily rare occurrence, and are responsible for intercepting any

unauthorized aircraft in the area.

In Washington, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told U.S. troops worldwide Wednesday that "in the days ahead" they will be added to the long history of American military heroes.

"We face powerful and terrible enemies, enemies we intend

to vanquish," Rumsfeld said in a videotaped message to all Defense Department employees worldwide.

"The task of vanquishing these terrible enemies — and protecting the American people and the cause of human freedom — will fall to you," he said.

At a news conference, Rumsfeld told reporters that an American response must be "sustained and broadly based," though he did not refer specifically to military retaliation.

Also Wednesday, a Navy aircraft carrier sailed into the waters off New York's Long Island, and other warships stood guard off the East Coast as the U.S. military remained on high alert against further terrorist attacks.

The F-16s — used in air-to-air combat and air-to-surface attacks — and other aircraft supporting them are flying at the direction of Air Force Gen. Ed Eberhart, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command. Norad has its operational center inside Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station and its headquarters at

Peterson Air Force Base.

The domestic patrols appear to be unprecedented, veterans of the command said.

Norad, the heart of the nation's early warning system, has always had fighters and other jets on alert to respond to invasion by air.

In the Cold War, hundreds of jets dotted the nation's borders, set to intercept enemy fighters. They were ready to go in five to 15 minutes.

But the number of fighters on alert for Norad has steadily dropped. Today, the typical number on standby is about 20, the source said.

"I think you will find that number significantly greater," the source said, referring to a response to Tuesday's attacks.

Norad workers in Cheyenne Mountain knew of the hijacking 10 minutes before the first airliner struck the World Trade Center, sources said. But since a hijacked plane had never been used as a weapon against a civilian target, the question is what could have been done, especially in such a short time.

"Are you going to send some-

one to shoot it down with innocent Americans on board? I don't think so," said one officer who worked in Cheyenne Mountain 10 years ago. "It is an extraordinary challenge."

The aircraft carrier USS George Washington was standing watch off Long Island on Wednesday, and the carrier USS John F. Kennedy was at an undisclosed location farther off the East Coast. The Navy was also moving several cruisers and destroyers out of port in Norfolk, Va., headquarters for the Atlantic Fleet.

The USS Carl Vinson and its battle group were patrolling the Persian Gulf, and the USS Enterprise — which the Vinson had just relieved after six months at sea — was ordered to remain in the area instead of heading home, officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet had a number of ships in the Pacific Ocean, a Navy official at Pearl Harbor said.

Staff writer Chris Vaughn contributed to this report, which contains material from The Associated Press.

Bush response could define his presidency

By DANA MILBANK
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — President Bush grimly faced Wednesday what could be the defining moment of his young presidency.

After an hourlong meeting with his national security advisers in the Cabinet Room, Bush consulted with leaders of the House and Senate and received their pledge to provide \$20 billion for the effort to aid victims and punish perpetrators.

Members of the Texas congressional delegation expressed confidence in Bush's ability to lead the nation through the crisis, but some said it's too early to tell how history will judge his response.

"I've seen his statement on television, and I thought it was very appropriate," said U.S. Rep. Martin Frost, D-Dallas. "Congress will support whatever reaction he wants to take. I hope he takes strong action."

Rep. Joe Barton, R-Ennis, agreed.

"He's being very level-headed," said Barton, who was on a flight from Dallas/Fort Worth Airport to Washington, D.C., when the attacks occurred.

Recent polls have shown that many Americans remain skeptical about Bush's leadership abilities, his work ethic, his command of the issues and his overall demeanor.

"Today, he's got every Ameri-

THE PRESIDENT In the wake of Tuesday's unprecedented attacks, the chief executive turns to his military chiefs and congressional leaders.

can with him, but a week from today, they will ask, how did he do?" said Calvin Jillson, a Southern Methodist University political science professor.

Bush will have to exhibit "the steel in the back and the glint in his eyes that says, 'This guy can protect me,'" Jillson said.

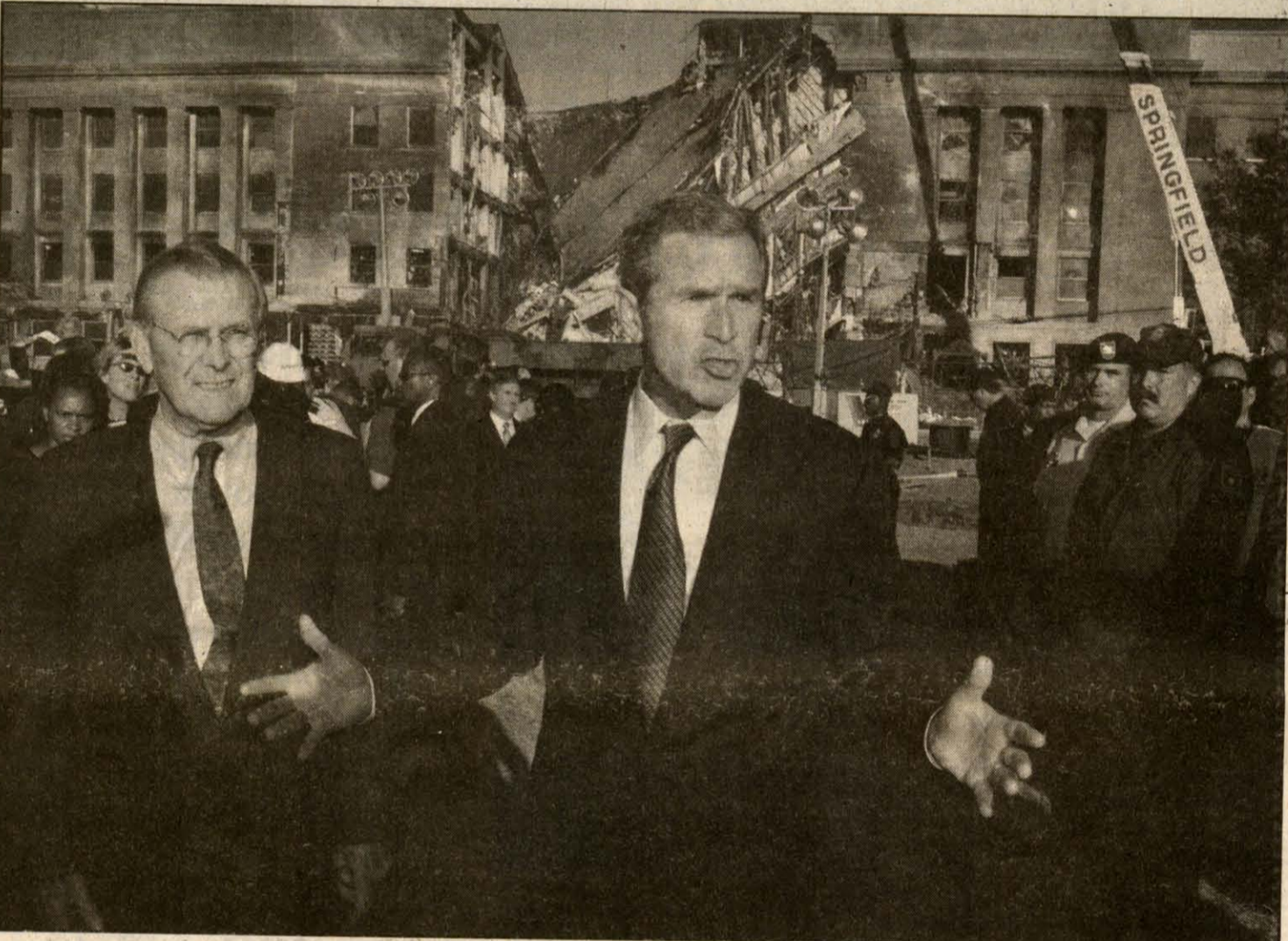
On Wednesday, Bush declared the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center "acts of war."

In the meeting with members of Congress, Bush stopped short of requesting a full declaration of war from Congress.

But Wednesday also brought discord over lawmakers' right to information.

Congressional sources said the White House had moved to block the CIA and FBI from briefing the Senate Intelligence Committee behind closed doors. In response to a request from the committee, both agencies at first said they were eager to do so but later said the White House had "locked them down" and told the agencies that Bush's National Security Council was in charge of all briefings to Congress.

When the committee inquired



President Bush, with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, discusses the devastation at the Pentagon on Wednesday.

with the White House, the reply was the same: that the NSC would handle the briefings. Instead, the White House offered a briefing, given Wednesday afternoon, with 10 representatives from various agencies addressing all 100 senators, without their staffs.

Congressional officials said the White House has never before forbidden the intelligence agencies from briefing the intelligence committees.

Spokesmen for the NSC did

not return several phone calls Wednesday.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld scolded government officials for divulging classified information — interpreted by members of Congress as a reference to Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, who said Tuesday afternoon on CNN that the United States had intercepted communiques with Osama bin Laden's organization about the attacks.

George Edwards, a longtime

Bush watcher and the director of the Center of Presidential Studies at Texas A&M University in College Station, said the president must help the nation mourn — and still avenge those who lost their lives.

"Presidents have to be seen as in command, especially in times like this. There can't be any insecurity," he said.

Bush will have to gather his information and not do anything foolish if he hopes to lead the

country through this trying time, said Mark Baker, a University of Texas in Austin professor and a friend of the president's.

"We're going to find out how he reacts to this kind of pressure. He's a nice enough fellow, but these are times that try men," said Baker, who teaches classes on international law and terrorism.

Staff writers Ginger D. Richardson and Max Baker and Knight Ridder White House correspondent Ron Hutcheson contributed to this report.

"We will chase our enemies to the furthest corner of the Earth." — Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas

Congress unites, resolving to retaliate

By HELEN DEWAR
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — With anger, grief and a few tears, Congress brushed aside partisan squabbles Wednesday and united behind a declaration of outrage and resolve to strike back against those responsible for unprecedented terrorist attacks on the United States.

After evacuating their offices just 24 hours before, when it seemed possible that the Capitol might come under air assault, lawmakers flocked back to work Wednesday morning in what leaders described as a message to the world that terrorism will not scare the seat of American democracy.

Two days ago, party leaders had been sniping over taxes, spending and missile defenses. On Wednesday, they joined in sponsoring a resolution condemning the attacks and vowing support for President Bush and his "determination ... to punish

CONGRESS Emergency spending bills may be rushed through Congress as soon as this week as lawmakers from both parties close ranks behind the president.

the perpetrators of these attacks as well as their sponsors."

Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-N.D., said, "No one should doubt that we will furnish the resources necessary to defend the nation, rebuild the damage and retaliate against our enemies."

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said the first emergency request will be for \$20 billion, but made it clear that more will be needed later. Key members of the money committees said the emergency bill might be rushed through Congress this week.

With National Guard troops patrolling the streets and the Pentagon still smoldering, Bush ordered the government to

reopen Wednesday morning. Federal workers were given the option of returning to work and some were told that they are free to leave at any time to donate blood.

"The federal government and all our agencies are conducting business, but it is not business as usual," Bush said. "We are operating on heightened security alert. America is going forward, and as we do so, we must remain keenly aware of the threats to our country."

Security officers inspected trunks of employees' cars entering government parking garages. Supreme Court officers huddled in groups, checking packages more closely than usual.

A day earlier, the Capitol and nearby Senate and House office buildings had been evacuated, Capitol police calling it the first ever complete and mandatory evacuation of the complex. The senior leaders of Congress were whisked by security

details to Capitol police headquarters, including two men in the line of succession for the presidency — House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., who is president pro tem of the Senate.

Later, officials said, they were moved by helicopter to a secure secret location outside Washington where they received briefings from Vice President Dick Cheney.

On Wednesday, the message from both parties in the House and Senate was the need for national cohesion.

"The world should know that the members of both parties, in both houses, stand united" in response to the tragedy, said Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., in an emotional opening speech to his colleagues.

Speaking with equally intense emotion, Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said: "We must ... find a way to come together and make sure

that this kind of heinous, vicious action will not happen again in America."

Barely contained anger swept through speech after speech.

"We will chase our enemies to the furthest corner of the Earth," Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Sugar Land, said in a statement. "It must be war without quarter, pursuit without rest, victory without qualification. We won't take a single step backward."

In a statement, Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, declared, "I expect America to use all of its power to find these enemies and to eliminate them."

Others spoke in even more personal terms, especially those from the home states of the terrorists' targets.

The day ended with a prayer vigil in the Capitol Rotunda for lawmakers, congressional officers and their families.

This report contains material from The Associated Press and *The New York Times*.

PUBLISHED BY
Star-Telegram Operating, Ltd.

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The Fort Worth Star-Telegram (USPS 206-250) is published daily. Periodical postage paid at Fort Worth, Texas. Postmaster: Send address changes to Fort Worth Star-Telegram, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Worth, Texas 76101.

Circulation: 245,332 daily; 342,353 Sunday.
Readership: 675,700 daily; 856,700 Sunday.