

CAPITAL UNDER SIEGE

TERROR HITS HOME

Louisiana lawmakers are safe after terrorist attack in D.C.

Opinions vary on what nation should do next

By Bill Walsh and John McQuaid
Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — A terrorist attack at the Pentagon transformed the nation's capital into a bunker Tuesday morning as tens of thousands of workers fled the city and law enforcement officials, some wielding automatic weapons, cordoned off

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REP. JOHN COOKSEY
Monroe Democrat

streets and shut down government buildings. Steel barriers blocked access within two blocks of the White House. Sentries posted on nearby rooftops used long-range binoculars to monitor the skies for signs that the hijacked commercial

airliner that slammed into the Pentagon about 9:40 a.m. wasn't the end of the siege, which began with a similar attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

"We were trying to cross the

street, and some guy with a gun yelled at us to get back," said Jacob Trejbal, 24, a Czech tourist who had been walking toward the White House. "I said, 'What's going on?' and he just yelled again, 'Get back!'"

Within an hour of the Pentagon blast, streets in Washington were jammed with traffic as workers tried to get out of the city. Sirens filled the air, and emergency vehicles used side-walks to get around the gridlock in the downtown business district. Jet fighters could be heard roaring around the Pentagon. Billowing smoke from the nation's military headquarters could be seen for miles.

"This is all very frightening"

Bonnie Livingston, wife of former Rep. Bob Livingston, R-Metairie, said the blast shook the walls of her home in northern Virginia and she soon heard helicopters overhead and saw tanks being trucked toward the Pentagon from a nearby military base.

Throughout the morning, cell phone circuits were intermittently jammed and lines formed at public telephone booths as people tried to reassure loved ones that they were OK.

"This is all very frightening," said Cerilla Trujillo, who had been evacuated from her office at a federal courthouse. "I have family that work at the Pentagon and relatives in New York, and I can't reach any of them."

A local high school teacher said several of her students were in tears because they couldn't reach parents who



Rep. William Jefferson
"We have to make sure the right people are punished"



Sen. Mary Landrieu
Says attacks reveal shortcomings of security system

worked at the Pentagon. Jeff Brooks, a lobbyist with the Washington office of Adams & Reese, said the staff was shaken with fear as they tried frantically to locate colleagues and relatives.

Louisiana lawmakers, whose offices are on Capitol Hill, were pulled from meetings, and their morning schedules were canceled as news spread quickly about the catastrophe and congressional leaders were hustled to safety.

Sen. John Breaux, D-La., was in a Democratic leadership meeting in the Capitol building when news broke about the World Trade Center attack.

"We were watching what was happening in New York on CNN," Breaux said. "That's when they told us to get out of the building as quickly as we could."

The blame game

Rep. Billy Tauzin, R-Chackbay, compared the attack with the surprise raid on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and said "the signs

are there" that fugitive terrorist Osama bin Laden was responsible.

Although no one immediately claimed responsibility and groups associated with bin Laden denied involvement, some members of the Louisiana delegation issued calls for quick and decisive retaliation. Rep. Richard Baker, R-Baton Rouge, said, "We interpret these events as an act of war."

Rep. John Cooksey, R-Monroe, called for "the most absolute, serious retribution possible."

"We need to take the war to them, use full force, every bit of our military is able to use," Cooksey said. "Once we take them out, go back and bomb again."

Rep. William Jefferson, D-New Orleans, cautioned against anything but a measured response.

"You can't change the character of America just because something terrible has happened," Jefferson said. "We have to make sure the right people are punished. Otherwise, we'd be no better off than the people who did these terrible things."

Some anger heard on the streets of Washington was directed at the U.S. government.

Shafik Kassin, who handles cargo at Reagan National Airport, asked, "Where was the FBI? Why didn't they hear something about this? Why wasn't there some warning?"

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., agreed that the attacks revealed a failure in the systems

designed to protect the nation from such attacks.

"It's been clear, at least to most leaders, that these kinds of threats were possible and probable, and the country has been trying to prepare and put systems in place," Landrieu said. "We have been successful in recent years in thwarting terrorist attacks as they were being planned or executed. Obviously, our system was not appropriate or robust enough to identify this particular threat."

By mid-afternoon, the streets in downtown Washington were eerily vacant save for police stationed on street corners and light traffic. But the fear had not been entirely lifted.

Bonnie Hymel, a lobbyist with the Louisiana State University Medical School, was in Washington on business Tuesday and said she was eager to get back to Louisiana. A bomb scare temporarily closed her downtown hotel, and a taxi driver told her rather ominously, "You can leave Washington, but you can't get back in."

Hymel was checking train schedules for leaving Washington and was considering renting a car, if necessary.

"Nothing personal, but this isn't a place I want to be right now," she said.

Washington correspondent Bruce Alpert contributed to this report.

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LEADERS PROTECTED

When the first jet hit the World Trade Center, the nation's leaders were scattered around the nation and the world. But not for long.

Here is a look at the whereabouts of the nation's top leaders at the time of the attacks, and where they were taken in the aftermath.

PRESIDENT BUSH



Flown from Sarasota, Florida, where he was to unveil his education initiative, to Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, then on to U.S. Strategic Command headquarters in Nebraska before returning to Washington.

LAURA BUSH



Was to testify on early childhood learning before a Senate committee. Instead, she was whisked by motorcade from Capitol Hill to an undisclosed secure location away from the White House.

VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY



Was in his White House office. He was moved to a more secure location in the White House.

Although the precise location was not disclosed, Cheney most likely spent much of the time in the National Security Council's Situation Room in the White House basement. The Situation Room actually is a complex of several rooms that bristles with sophisticated communications equipment that sends and receives encoded messages from military and other facilities around the world.

DENNIS HASTERT, R-ILL, Speaker of the house, Rep.



Third in line to succeed the president, Hastert was in Washington and was taken to a secure, undisclosed location.

CONDOLEEZZA RICE National security adviser



Moved to a "secure location" at the White House. Along with Cheney, also likely staying in the White House basement.

COLIN POWELL Secretary of state



Flew from Lima, Peru, where he was attending an Organization of American States conference on democracy, to an undisclosed U.S. location.

DONALD RUMSFELD Secretary of defense



Was in his Pentagon office. He moved to the National Military Command Center, also at the Pentagon.

ALAN GREENSPAN Federal Reserve chairman



In Switzerland attending a banking conference, he was being kept apprised of developments.

"He needs to take every conceivable precaution in the event there are more attacks planned. He is doing what makes sense from a security point of view, based on what he has been advised."

PRESIDENT CLINTON, talking about President Bush making a stop at Barksdale Air Force Base

Bush briefly stops at Barksdale base

Tight security allows president secure operations

By Steve Ritea and Bruce Alpert
Staff writers

BOSSIER CITY — In the first hours after learning of deadly terrorist attacks Tuesday morning in New York and Washington, President Bush made a stop at Barksdale Air Force Base rather than return directly to Washington after Secret Service officials raised concerns about security at the White House, aides said.

Bush was visiting a school in Florida when he learned that terrorists had hijacked airplanes and intentionally crashed them into the World Trade Center in Manhattan.

The President first announced he was returning to the White House, but Air Force One was diverted to Barksdale after news surfaced that a plane also had crashed into the Pentagon.

Reporters accompanying the president said Air Force One was escorted by fighter jets to Barksdale under tight security.

Officials said Barksdale was a logical choice for the president because it has secure facilities in which he could safely communicate with advisers and evaluate the possibility of further attacks.

Sen. John Breaux, D-La., said the Secret Service knew that the president would be safe at Barksdale.

"It's always been used as a world command center," Breaux said. "The B-52 forces there are significant. They felt that was the place he could get as much information as possible."

White House Press Secretary



AP PHOTO

Air Force One is under tight military security during President Bush's stop at Barksdale Air Force Base, where he taped a brief address to the nation. "It's always been used as a world command center," said Sen. John Breaux, D-La. "They felt that was the place he could get as much information as possible."

Ari Fleischer said Bush used the stopover to briefly address the nation on America's resolve to find and punish those responsible for the attacks. He also made several phone calls on secure phones, Fleischer said.

"While on the ground at Barksdale, the president spoke to the vice president several times ... at the operations center at the White House," Fleischer said. "He spoke to the secretary of defense. He spoke to Sen. (Charles) Schumer (D-N.Y.) He had spoken to his wife prior to

landing in Louisiana."

Bush was at Barksdale for about one hour and 45 minutes before flying to Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Neb., to set up operations again in a sophisticated command and control bunker.

He returned Tuesday night to Washington.

Barksdale is the home of three squadrons of B-52 bombers and is a large military installation located inland, which is more secure than a base on the coast, said retired Brig. Gen.

George Peyton Cole, former commander of the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale.

Because the base houses military aircraft, it has a heavy-duty runway that can accommodate a plane the size of Air Force One and has high security measures in place to ensure the safety of the B-52s, Cole said.

Former President Clinton praised Bush for heeding the advice of the Secret Service and flying to the military bases in Louisiana and Nebraska instead of immediately returning to

Washington.

"He needs to take every conceivable precaution in the event there are more attacks planned," Clinton told The Associated Press.

"He is doing what makes sense from a security point of view, based on what he has been advised."

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