

# Anti-terrorism coalition in the offing: Powell

AFP, Washington

Foreign leaders were to start arriving in Washington Tuesday for a flurry of talks on US efforts to mount a global anti-terrorism campaign aimed initially at Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the coalition was "coming together" ahead of the arrival Tuesday of President Jacques Chirac, who was to meet US President George W. Bush.

Top US officials are also set to meet in the coming days their counterparts from Britain, Germany, Italy, the European Union, South Korea, China, Russia and Saudi Arabia, as they press traditional friends, allies and rivals for support.

In addition, Washington will look to Indonesia -- the world's most populous Muslim country -- for help in the new war on terrorists sparked by the devastating September 11 attacks in New York and Washington. US officials call exiled Saudi militant Osama bin Laden their main suspect.

Powell on Monday spoke by telephone with UN chief Kofi Annan and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to discuss the coalition, and said Saleh had told him that he and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who is

now in Sanaa, would issue a joint statement condemning the strikes and pledging their help.

The backing of both countries is of particular interest to Washington, as the State Department lists Syria as a "state sponsor of terrorism" for support of anti-Israel activities, and Yemen was the site of last year's suicide attack on a US warship, the USS Cole, which is also blamed on bin Laden.

"I am pleased that the coalition is coming together," Powell told reporters. "I think everybody recognizes that this challenge is one that went far beyond America."

The coalition "will be conducting a campaign that will have many parts to it: legal, political, diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence collection and military as appropriate," Powell said.

His comments came as this week's diplomatic push was set to begin in earnest, with efforts to shore up support in Europe. Some Europeans are concerned about the scope of possible US retaliation for the strikes against bin Laden and his hosts, Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia.

Though most of the meetings were scheduled long before the attacks, US officials said there was little doubt talks would center on terrorism.



PHOTO: AFP  
Afghan refugees wait in line to receive rice from the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) during food distribution at Jalozi refugee camp, some 15 km from Peshawar on Tuesday. With the threat of US military strikes on Afghanistan looming large, authorities fear an influx of Afghan refugees, which will swell the ranks of 2 million already living in Pakistan.

## Arson attack on UK mosque

AFP, Manchester

British police appealed for witnesses Tuesday after a fire described as "suspect" broke out overnight at a mosque in Bolton, northwestern England.

Police said they were treating the fire, which they described as minor and caused no injuries, as suspicious, and appealed for calm.

They said they were investigating to see if the fire was linked to tensions following last week's terrorist attacks against the United States carried out, according to Washington and London, by Islamic fundamentalists.

Bricks have been thrown at mosques in Belfast, Manchester, south London and Southend, southeast England.

London's central mosque was evacuated after a bomb alert and women wearing the Hijab, or Islamic headscarf, have reported racial abuse.

Meanwhile a taxi driver of Afghan origin was in hospital Tuesday, paralysed from the neck down after a dispute about last Tuesday's carnage.

There are around two million Muslims in Britain, out of a total population of some 60 million.

## Afghans confined to Pak refugee camps

AP, Peshawar

Pakistan virtually shut down its border with Afghanistan on Monday, halting the flow of everything but food and calling in police to implement a new order to confine Afghan refugees to dozens of camps in Pakistan.

About two dozen supply trucks were stopped at Torkham, a border town in northern Pakistan, unable to cross. On the Afghan side, thousands of refugees fleeing hunger, drought and the possibility of a US military strike also tried to cross, but were turned away.

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have amassed new troops and weaponry along their 2,500 KM anticipation of a possible US assault, officials said.

Nothing was allowed to enter Afghanistan on Monday except for a few trucks carrying food, such as wheat and flour and people with valid travel documents, said Farooq Shah, border official at Torkham, the Pakistani border town.

In New York, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said he was traveling to Washington to urge

US policy makers to take into account the humanitarian consequences of any possible retaliatory attack on Afghanistan.

Rudd Lubbers told reporters after a day of meetings at UN headquarters that he hoped to meet US officials on Tuesday. He said no meetings had been scheduled, and he did not identify those he hoped to meet.

Afghans, fearing a US strike, have been lining up at a barbed wire fence at Torkham and other crossings trying, mostly unsuccessfully, to get into Pakistan.

The closure of the border was one of several requests made of Pakistan by the United States. Other requests include use of Pakistan's airspace and soil, and an exchange of intelligence material all in preparation for a possible retaliatory strike against Afghanistan for the deadly terrorist attacks on US soil.

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia has harbored Osama bin Laden, the leading suspect in the US attacks, since 1996 and for that Afghanistan is considered a likely target of a US assault.

Saddam also accused the US

## 19 militants may have entered Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Authorities are on the lookout for 19 Islamic militants who may have entered Japan in early September, some of them from the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in Afghanistan, a report said Tuesday.

US intelligence passed the information to their Japanese government, and notified other Asian countries to be on the lookout for the 19, Kyodo News reported.

Spokesmen from the foreign ministry and national police agency would not comment on the reports nor confirm whether an investigation was underway.

## Zimbabweans accept land deal

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe's top politicians have endorsed a land deal brokered in Nigeria which aims to end the country's land crisis, the state-owned Herald reported Tuesday.

The politburo of the ruling ZANU-PF party met Monday, endorsed the agreement signed in Abuja, Nigeria, earlier this month and called for its speedy implementation, the Herald said.

Osama joke lands Indian pilots in trouble

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian pilot sparked an alert when he jokingly left a phone message for a friend offering him a fabulous sum to join Osama Bin Laden's camp, the Hindu daily said Tuesday.

The call, dialled to a wrong number, evoked a prompt response from the receiver who immediately alerted police "that he had received a message on his mobile phone suggesting that he join the Osama camp as a pilot."

Police swung into action and discovered the call was meant for a pilot with a private airline. He and the caller were grilled by police for more than nine hours before police were finally convinced it was just a sick joke.



PHOTO: AFP  
India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (R) and Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani (L) stand during their Cabinet meeting to observe a two-minute silence on Tuesday in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. India observed a two-minute silence to mourn those killed in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

## India calls for global extradition pact to fight terrorism

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Home Minister Lal Kishan Advani called Tuesday for a global treaty to facilitate the extradition of suspected terrorists.

"Terrorism is more dangerous than war," Advani was quoted by the United News of India as telling an election meeting in the western Indian city of Ahmedabad.

"If the world had an extradition treaty, terrorism could be wiped out," Advani said, adding it had taken last week's attacks on the United States to wake up the international community to what India has been saying for more than a decade.

Referring to Pakistan and its alleged sponsorship of Muslim militant groups fighting Indian rule

in Kashmir, Advani said India had been engaged in a "proxy war" for years but its pleas to the world had gone "unheeded."

India accuses Pakistan of funding, training and sheltering militant groups active in Indian-controlled Kashmir since 1989.

Pakistan denies the charge but extends open moral and diplomatic support to what it describes as an indigenous Kashmiri struggle for self-determination.

Advani said US President George W. Bush did not refer to the Kashmir issue when he spoke with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee by telephone on Sunday.

The home minister said India would support the United States in "every possible manner" to eradicate terrorism.

## NY tries to resume life

AFP, New York

New Yorkers struggling to resume their lives were Tuesday heading back to their stores and offices exactly one week after kamikaze hijackers reduced the World Trade Center to rubble, while hope of bringing anyone alive from the debris was all but extinguished.

Monday saw the world's largest stock exchange spring back to life after its longest closure in 70 years, with thousands of financial workers braving security cordons, clouds of dust and the anxiety of witnessing for real the still-smouldering ruins of the WTC's 110-storey twin towers.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average slid 681.81 points, or over seven percent, marking its largest ever point loss in a single day. But it avoided meltdown and many traders said they were relieved just to get back to work and find their colleagues still alive.

Wall Street's opening Tuesday remained unpredictable, however, with some analysts fearing a further slide as emergency, coordinated rate cuts the day before by the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank faded under renewed trading.

Just three blocks away from the

stock exchange, rescue workers were sifting carefully through the wreckage of the World Trade Center in the hope of finding the 5,422 people believed buried in the smoking mass of concrete and steel.

Only 201 bodies have been recovered so far. Of those, 135 have been identified.

Relatives of the missing continued to hope and pray, but they also lined up in increasing numbers to give DNA samples in case their loved ones could be identified from the lumps of charred flesh being collected by firemen.

Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose unflinching direction of recovery efforts and human touch at the scene of the disaster have earned him acclaim, even from critics, tried Monday to prepare his city for the inevitable.

"We want everyone to prepare themselves for the reality that we're not going to recover a significant number of people," he cautioned, after attending a ceremony for the 300 firemen and 67 police officers who died when the WTC collapsed as they tried to evacuate the building.

## Two-minute silence to mourn US victims

AFP, New Delhi

India observed a two-minute silence Tuesday to mourn the thousands killed in last week's terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

The day was observed as "anti-terrorism" day by the federal government, led by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Vajpayee and his cabinet colleagues also observed the silence at 10:30 am (0500 GMT). The cabinet was in session at the time.

Traffic at most busy intersections in New Delhi was halted by policemen for the two minute period.

Staff at the US embassy in the capital also joined in the mourning.

The two-minute silence was observed in government offices in Indian-controlled Kashmir, but was largely ignored on the streets of the Muslim-majority state which has

been driven by a separatist Muslim insurgency since 1989.

Traffic in the Kashmiri summer capital Srinagar moved as normal despite official requests to pull over as a mark of respect for the victims of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

"We are the worst sufferers of state-sponsored terrorism," said Asiya Andrabi, who heads the women's separatist group, "Dukhtaran-e-Milat," or Daughters of Faith.

"The call was bound to meet the response it got," Andrabi told AFP.

In the eastern city of Calcutta, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, joined the Missionaries of Charity order -- founded by the late Mother Teresa -- in observing the two-minute silence.

## Families say goodbye

AP, Shanksville

Weeping relatives of the victims aboard United Flight 93 left photographs and other mementos Monday on a makeshift memorial of hay bales in the Pennsylvania field where the hijacked plane went down.

Several hundred metres (yards) from the crash site, dozens of friends and family members left candy, baseball caps, a flight attendant's jacket and even teddy bears, said two Salvation Army officials who attended the service.

"All we could do is be there and pray for them," Salvation Army Maj Ed Pritchard said.

The site includes hanging flags representing the backgrounds of the victims. A Japanese woman bowed to the Japanese flag several times, then ran back to the hay bales and picked up her son's photo.

"She was calling out his name. She was in tears," Salvation Army Maj Richard Zander said.

A clergy member told the sobbing family members to remember the words of Winston Churchill,

"Never give up." When the service was over, Zander said, "it was like they wanted to linger there."

The Boeing 757 was the last of four hijacked jetliners to crash last Tuesday. It was headed from Newark, New Jersey, to San Francisco when it made an abrupt turn near Cleveland and veered back across Pennsylvania before crashing in Shanksville, killing all 44 aboard.

A number of passengers were able to make phone calls from the jet, including several who said they planned to storm their captors.

Pennsylvania Sen Arlen Specter has suggested posthumously awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom to passengers aboard the flight. The medal is the nation's highest civilian honor.

On Monday, state police troopers saluted a caravan of six buses carrying the victims' families to the field.

At a second memorial service several kilometres (miles) away, there were vials of soil from the crash site for mourners to take home.

## Laden's tentacles stretch round Asia

AFP, Hong Kong

Asian nations are bracing for a US-led strike to "smoke out" terrorists wherever they are, deeply concerned at just how far the tentacles of the world's most wanted man Osama bin Laden may stretch across the region.

As the FBI leads the biggest manhunt in history, chasing some 40,000 leads to the perpetrators of the September 11 terror attacks, President George W. Bush has vowed no hiding place will be safe.

"Osama Bin Laden is one person but he is representative of networks of people who have absolutely made their course to defeat the freedoms that we understand," Bush said late Monday.

Tracking those networks means finding a path through a murky labyrinth, but the manhunt after the attacks in Washington and New York has already led to Japan, the Philippines and possibly even Hong Kong and Macau.

Just how extensive bin Laden's links are with Muslim militant groups in the region is unclear, with most countries loathe to admit they

may have been infiltrated by his network, al-Qaeda, or The Base.

The Saudi millionaire dissident is known to have financed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the main separatist group in the Philippines.

But Ustadha Zhariff Julabbi, a senior leader of the MILF, has said the money was mainly used for building mosques, schools and health centres in the southern island of Mindanao and that it was a "long time ago."

In the mid-1990s a Muslim non-government organisation, the International Relations and Information Center, set up by bin Laden's brother-in-law Mohammad Jamal Khalifa in the Philippines, allegedly trained members of the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang in explosives. The group plotted to disrupt a visit by Pope John Paul II and attack several foreign airlines.

Although the centre is said to have ceased operations, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said: "We have not yet confirmed if the (bin Laden) cell groups are still there."

## Koreas to reunite more families

AFP, Seoul

North and South Korea agreed Tuesday to reunite more families torn apart by their war 50 years ago as new talks put their faltering peace process back on track.

The two Koreas announced family meetings and further talks next month in a joint statement after the first high-level negotiations since December.

They also agreed to revive other reconciliation initiatives, launched after a historic summit between their leaders last year, which foundered after the communist North froze contacts in March.

The North pledged to make a new attempt to reconnect a railway

and road link through the De-Militarised Zone (DMZ) border and the two vowed to step up sports exchanges and start an anti-flood scheme around the border.

Relatives divided since the 1950-53 Korean War will be allowed to meet in Seoul and Pyongyang from October 16 to 18, said the statement.

It did not say how many people would take part, but the South Korean news agency Yonhap put the number at around 100 on each side.

The next round of ministerial talks will be held in Pyongyang for four days from October 28, the statement added.

## 62 countries lost citizens

AFP, Washington

The more than 5,000 people feared killed in suicide airborne attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon near here included citizens of 62 nations, the State Department said Monday.

"We know of 62 countries now who have lost people (in) the bombings, particularly the World Trade Center bombings in New York," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Among those hardest hit was Britain. Prime Minister Tony Blair said Sunday that the death toll of Britons, probably 200 to 300, would be the highest in any attack since the end of World War II.

## Saddam warns of crusade

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Tuesday warned in an open letter to the United States against a clash between Christianity and Islam instigated by Zionists seeking "world domination" in the aftermath of the US terror attacks.

"Zionism has been planning for world domination since its famous meeting in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897," Saddam said in the message to the peoples and governments of America and the West.

"But up until now, this domination has not been realised. That's why it is now pushing for a clash between Christianity and Islam in order to dominate the world," he said.

Saddam also accused the US

government of not respecting the law and launching unfounded accusations in the search for the perpetrators of the September 11 terror attacks in the United States.

"The United States does not respect the law. It has launched accusations before being sure and without having the slightest proof," he said.

He urged the administration of US President George W. Bush to use "wisdom" in its response to the outrages at the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon outside Washington.

Saddam is the sole Arab leader not to have condemned the kamikaze attacks presumed to have killed more than 5,000 people.

## 'US risks repeating Soviet mistakes'

AFP, Moscow

Russia's Afghan war veterans have warned the United States against repeating Soviet mistakes in its attack on Afghanistan, thought to be one of the most likely targets of a US retaliatory strike after last week's deadly attacks.

"The Soviet Union's example shows that Afghanistan is an impregnable fortress," Yevgeny Zelenov, Russian lawmaker and veteran of the wars in Afghanistan, told AFP on Monday.

The Soviet intervention in

Afghanistan, which was secretly planned by top Soviet officials and disguised as help to a "brotherly people", is now considered one of Moscow's great political mistakes.

The war, which lasted more than 10 years, claimed nearly a million Afghan lives, as well as some 14,000 killed and 50,000 wounded among the Soviet troops, according to Russian sources.

"In crying out for vengeance, the American public seems to have forgotten Vietnam. Once the first US soldier is killed, the tide of public opinion will turn," Zelenov predicted.

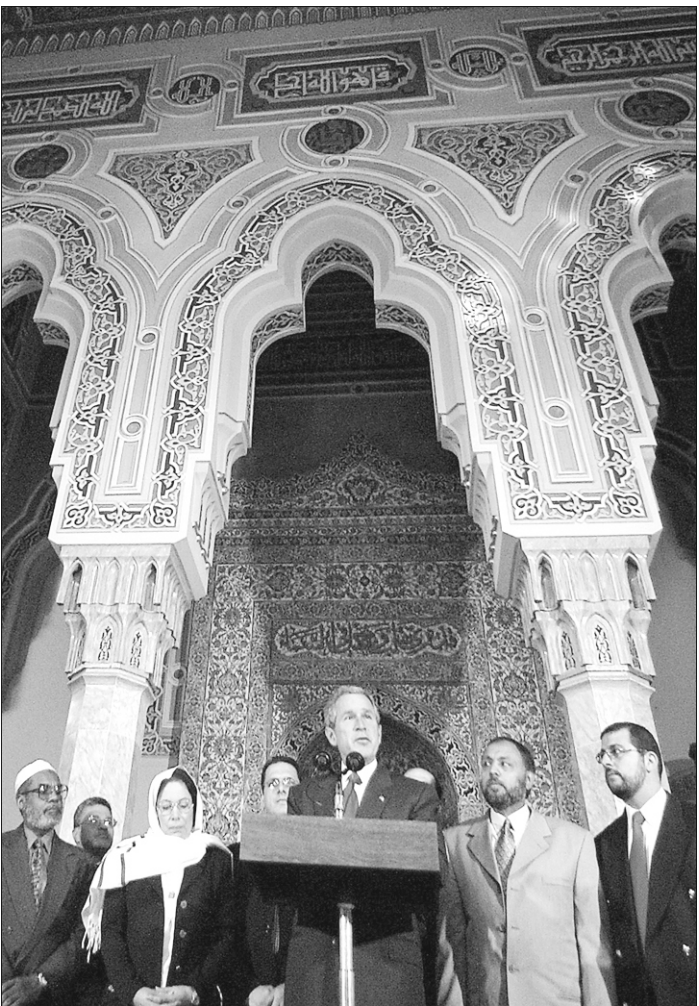


PHOTO: AFP  
US President George W. Bush (R), accompanied by community and religious leaders, speaks during a tour of the Islamic Center of Washington, DC on Monday. Bush called for an end to violence against Muslims in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks saying, "the face of terror is not the true faith of Islam."