

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.

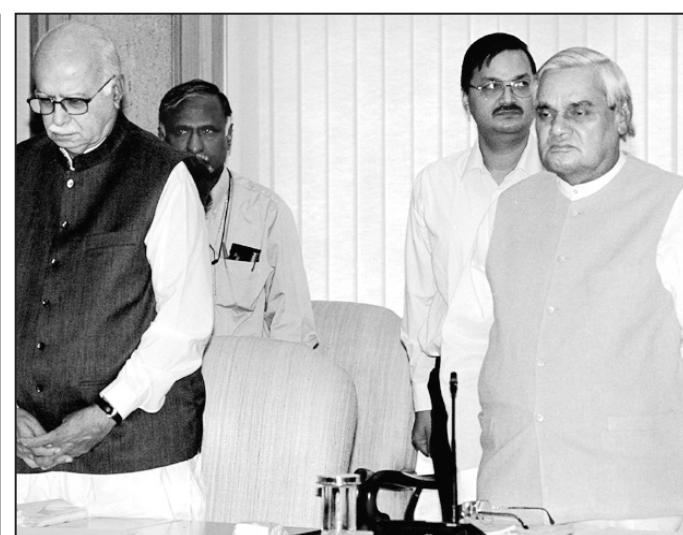
The backing of both countries is of particular interest to Washington, as the State Department lists Syria as a "state sponsor of terrorism" for support of anti-Israel activities, and Yemen was the site of last year's suicide attack on a US warship, the USS Cole, which is also blamed on bin Laden.

"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.



Two-minute silence to mourn US victims

AFP, New Delhi

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.



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 in preparation for a possible retaliatory strike against Afghanistan for the deadly terrorist attacks on US soil.

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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 founded 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 Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) border and the two vowed to step up sports exchanges and start an anti-flood scheme around the border.

Relations 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.

Saddam also accused the US

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.

"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.

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'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

NY tries to resume life

AFP, New York

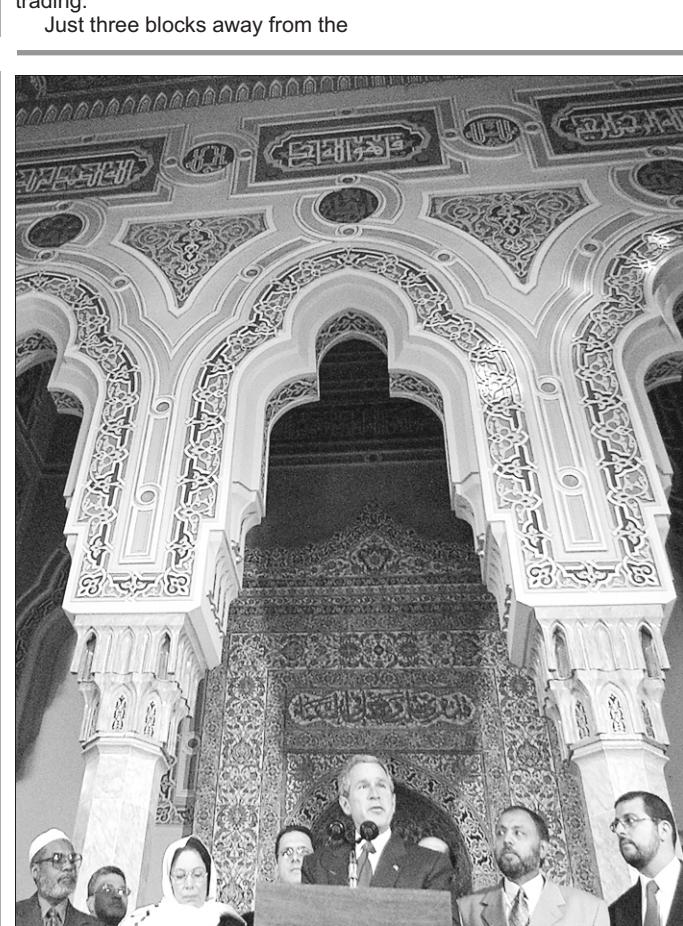
New Yorkers struggling to resume their lives were Tuesday heading back to their stores and offices exactly one week after kamikaze hijackers reduced the World Trade Center to rubble, while hope of bringing anyone alive from the debris was all but extinguished.

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



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."

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 was given 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