

Assault on America: Bush Tours Ruins, Calls Up Reserves

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NEW YORK – Gearing up for war against global terrorists, President Bush on Friday authorized calling to active duty thousands of reservists, then flew here to rally workers digging in the rain-soaked ruins of the World Trade Center.

With U.S. fighter jets roaring overhead, Bush gave a thumbs-up and shook hands with firefighters and volunteers who have removed more than 10,000 tons of debris, but have found few people alive since Tuesday's assault on the twin towers of the center.

Officials estimate that at least 5,000 are dead or missing in New York, while hundreds more were injured. At the Pentagon, also damaged in the attack, the death toll is close to 200.

Bush, accompanied by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., Gov. George Pataki and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, toured the remains of the twin towers that collapsed Tuesday after terrorists slammed two airliners into them. A third plane hit the Pentagon in the nation's capital.

Grabbing an American flag and a bullhorn to thank the rescue workers, Bush said, "The nation sends its love and compassion."

Someone shouting interrupted him with, "We can't hear you."

"I can hear you, the rest of the world hears you," the president responded. "And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon."

The exhausted and increasingly demoralized workers, who had endured a morning of driving rain that turned rubble and dust into treacherous mud, cheered and chanted, "U-S-A, U-S-A," and "Go get 'em, George!"

Those leaving the site a short time later said they needed the encouragement the president brought.

Michael Curley, a retired firefighter from the Bronx, said he had a chance to speak to Bush. He said he may use that line himself.

Curley, resting a fire ax on his shoulder, said Bush took his time shaking hands and thanking rescuers.

"You got a warm feeling from the man," he said. "I needed that little bit, so I'm going to go to my car, change my socks and go back in."

Capt. Pete Romano, of the Newark, N.J., fire department, wept as he recalled Bush's message that the world could hear the workers.

"It was goo to hear that," he said.

Another firefighter said he was grateful to the president and also to the crowds of people who cheer the rescuers on as they enter and exit the site.

"It's been a tough day," he sobbed. "... It's crummy, just indescribable. Nobody should have to do this."

Reassuring a jittery nation while preparing for a war against terrorists that could last years, Bush began his day in Washington by declaring a national emergency and authorizing the Pentagon to call 50,000 reservists to active duty for "homeland defense."

Defense officials said they would call up at least 35,500 reservists initially – 13,000 to the Air Force, 10,000 to the Army, 7,500 to the Marines, 3,000 to the Navy and 2,000 to the Coast Guard.

Both houses of Congress approved \$40 billion in emergency aid to help victims of the attacks and to hunt down those responsible. The Senate also gave its consent for Bush to use force to go after the attackers and those who harbor them. The House is expected to follow suit.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department released a list of 19 hijackers and 100 people they would like to question in the investigation. Bush plans to meet with his national security team at Camp David, this weekend to form a response to the attack.

"I am satisfied that our planning for possible future actions is going on course," he said.

In New York, Friday's rains hampered rescue efforts and caused several injuries as workers slipped in the mud.

"At the same time, they're going on," said Giuliani. "Because there is still a strong hope that we'll be able to recover people."

But the weather further dampened the spirits of families of the missing, who continued to arrive at the armory uptown, carrying toothbrushes and hairbrushes of their loved ones so that medical examiners could take DNA samples to help identify the dead.

Dr. Bob Shaler, director of the city medical examiner's DNA lab, said remains from the World Trade Center had been coming in more slowly than expected, leading him to speculate that work on the site would be grisly.

"There could be 10,000 (DNA samples). There could be a million," he said. "But I think it's becoming clear the samples are going to be pieces, not whole bodies."

Hospital officials said all patients in hospitals around the city and surrounding area have been identified and their families notified, dashing hopes of some that their family members and friends might be unconscious and unable to identify themselves.

But the city was moving on as best it could. New York-area airports reopened. Schools and businesses reopened north of the rubble, as did the Empire State Building, a 102-story tower two miles north of the World Trade Center on the south end of Manhattan island.

Officials said the Staten Island Ferry would resume service on Monday and trading on Wall Street will reopen after trial runs over the weekend.

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