

President Blocks More Assets in Financial War On Terrorism

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Remarks by the President on Financial Aspects of Terrorism
The Rose Garden

2:47 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be joined by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury. The Secretary of Treasury will stay over afterwards, to answer any questions you have on this particular initiative that we'll be announcing today.

This is the 100th day of our campaign against global terrorism. And in those 100 days, we've accomplished much. We've built a broad international coalition against terror, and I want to thank the Secretary of State for his hard work. We broke the Taliban's grip on Afghanistan. We took the war to the al Qaeda terrorists. We're securing our airways. We're defending our homeland. And we're attacking the terrorists' international financial network. And I want to thank the Secretary of the Treasury for his hard work.

Today I'm announcing two more strikes against the financing of terror. We know that al Qaeda would like to obtain nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. And we know that oftentimes they do not act alone; al Qaeda has international supporters, and some of those supporters hide themselves in the disguise of charity.

Last year a former official of the Pakistani Atomic Energy Commission set up an organization known as the UTN. UTN claims to serve the hungry and needy of Afghanistan. But it was the UTN that provided information about nuclear weapons to al Qaeda. So today I'm adding UTN, and three of its directors, to our list of terrorists supporting financial organizations and individuals. We're issuing orders to block any of their assets within U.S. jurisdiction, and putting the world on notice that anyone who continues to do business with UTN, and its principal figures, will not do business with the United States.

Since September the 11th, we've witnessed a series of terrorist attacks aimed at the United States and our friends around the world: anthrax mailings here at home, suicide bombings against Israel; and only last week, an armed attack on the Indian Parliament. The legislature of the world's largest democracy, a nation founded on the principles of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, was ruthlessly attacked. The terrorists killed eight innocent people. If their mission had succeeded, they would have kidnapped and killed many of India's elected representatives.

Last week's attack was only the most recent terrorist assault on the institutions of Indian democracy. More than 30 people were killed in a car bombing of the State Legislative Assembly in Srinagar on October the 1st. These attacks on India's Parliament buildings remind us that whatever grievances or causes the terrorists may cite, their real target is democracy and freedom.

The United States condemns these terrorist attacks against India. And we extend our sympathies and friendship to the families of the murdered.

American power will be used against all terrorists of global reach. So today I'm adding another terrorist organization to the list of those whose assets are blocked by my executive order. Lashkar-e-Tayiba is an extremist group based in Kashmir. LAT is a stateless sponsor of terrorism, and it hopes to destroy relations between Pakistan and India and to undermine Pakistani's President Musharraf.

To achieve its purpose, LAT has committed acts of terrorism inside both India and Pakistan. LAT is a terrorist organization that presents a global threat. And I look forward to working with the governments of both India and Pakistan in a common effort to shut it down and to bring the killers to justice.

I'm optimistic about the future of our struggle against terror. I know we've accomplished a lot so far, and we've got a lot more to do. Over the past 100 days, we and our British allies and others in the coalition have destroyed at least 11 terrorist training camps inside Afghanistan, terrorist factories that produce thousands of trained operatives. We've also destroyed 39 Taliban command and control sites.

Senior al Qaeda and Taliban officials have been captured or killed, and potential escape routes for the survivors are constantly being blocked to prevent the cowards from running.

American, Australian and German aid workers held hostage by the Taliban have been liberated. We've dropped some 2.5 million humanitarian rations to the hungry people inside Afghanistan. Our attack on terrorist finances is progressing. The assets of more than 150 known terrorists, their organizations and their bankers have been frozen by the United States.

One hundred forty-two countries have issued freezing orders of their own. The result: more than \$33 million in terrorist assets have been blocked inside the United States; more than \$33 million more have been blocked abroad by our partners in the international coalition.

At home, we've created a new Office of Homeland Security under my friend, Tom Ridge; and worked with Congress to provide more than \$20 billion to safeguard our territory. New airline security legislation has been signed into law. Our law enforcement agencies are protecting our safety, while respecting the constitutional rights of our citizens.

We listed the 22 most wanted foreign terrorists. We're reorganizing the INS so it can more effectively prevent the entry into the United States by those who want to threaten our national security.

We arrested one of the murderers of the September 5, 1986 hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73, showing would-be terrorists and current terrorists that we have a long memory, that we're patient -- that if you think you can hide, we'll come and find you and bring you to justice.

We made the first indictment against the terrorists, those murderers of September the 11th. We and our coalition have done much in the past 100 days. And with the help of freedom-loving countries around the world, we will do much more to rid the world of evil and of terrorists.

Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us where you are, sir, on your deliberations over John Walker, and have you ruled out a charge of treason?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm heading into the Oval Office --

END 2:58 P.M. EST

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