



Press Briefing to the Pool By Ari Fleischer

Aboard Air Force One

1:47 P.M. EDT

MR. FLEISCHER: While on the ground at Barksdal, the President spoke to the Vice President several times -- the Vice President, of course, being at the operations center at the White House.

He spoke with the Secretary of Defense; he spoke to Senator Schumer; he had spoken to his wife prior to landing in Louisiana.

Q Do you know where she is?

MR. FLEISCHER: She's at a secure facility.

Q And his daughters?

MR. FLEISCHER: They're also at a secure location.

Q Are they with her or ?

MR. FLEISCHER: No, no, they're at their respective schools.

So he spoke to several members of the national security team, and I mentioned Senator Schumer. And he has been receiving information ? information will continue to come in and it'll continue to be evaluated. There will be a National Security Council meeting later this afternoon, in which the President will participate via teleconference.

And, needless to say, all elements of the United States government are now doing their part, not only to help those who have been hurt, but to collect information, to analyze it and to provide it to the President.

Q Does the President now know anything more about who is responsible, the coordinated attack, and whether this is it or --

MR. FLEISCHER: That information is still being gathered and analyzed. And I anticipate that will be an ongoing process for a little while. Often, at a time like this, information comes in, it turns out not to be true. The proper procedure is to carefully, thoroughly evaluate all information and do so in a ?

Q Had there been any warnings that the President knew of?

MR. FLEISCHER: No warnings.

Q Does the President ? is he concerned about the fact that this attack of this severity happened with no warning?

MR. FLEISCHER: First things first: his concern is with the safety of people who have lost their ? the health and security of the American people and with the families of those who have lost their lives. There will come an appropriate time to do all appropriate look backs. His focus is on events this morning.

Q Has he been given any estimate of what the American casualties may be?

MR. FLEISCHER: I don't believe so, Ann.

Q Has he spoken with Mayor Giuliani or Governor Pataki?

MR. FLEISCHER: He spoke with Governor Pataki. He plans to speak with Mayor Giuliani.

Q Who is with him on the plane?

MR. FLEISCHER: Chief of Staff Card, Karl Rove, Dan Bartlett, myself, Gordon.

Q -- that's it?

MR. FLEISCHER: Yes, as I indicated, we've pared everything back so that we can ?

Q And does the President feel hunted or in jeopardy? I mean, he is kind of trying to stay out of ?

MR. FLEISCHER: The President is looking forward to returning to Washington. He understands at a time like this, caution must be taken; and he wants to get to back to Washington.

Q What's he doing right now?

MR. FLEISCHER: He's talking to people on the phone from his cabin.

Q In his cabin?

MR. FLEISCHER: Yes.

Q Thank you for bringing us whatever you can, in terms of information on what he's doing.

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