

The President Thanks the Agency Workforce

The Commander-in-Chief Visits CIA

Editor's Note: On September 26, 2001, President George W. Bush visited CIA Headquarters to thank the Agency workforce for its efforts in the war on terrorism. In view of the horrifying events of September 11, and their profound impact on the intelligence arena and, more broadly, on the entire nation and its allies and friends around the world, we are including the text of the President's remarks, along with an introduction of the President by the Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet.

The other articles in this edition were written prior to September 11.

DCI Tenet:

Mr. President, the exceptional men and women of the Central Intelligence Agency and our entire Intelligence Community—the wonderful patriots with whom I'm honored to serve—welcome you back at this turning point in the life of our nation.

On September the 11th, the forces of terror issued a brutal challenge to civilization itself. And under your leadership, the American people are responding with unity, resolve, and enormous strength.

All of us here and at places of duty around the world know that the present fight will neither be short nor easy. But our shared determination to see that fight through to victory—the victory of life and freedom— could

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not be greater. That is what we pledge to you today, Mr. President. Our greatest service in this greatest of causes.

Now, it is my high honor and privilege to introduce our great Commander-in-Chief, the President of the United States, The Honorable George W. Bush.

President Bush:

Thank you all very much. Well, George, thank you very much, and thanks for inviting me back.

There's no question that I am in the hall of patriots, and I've come to say a couple of things to you.

First, thanks for your hard work. You know, George and I have been spending a lot of quality time together. There's a reason. I've got a lot of confidence in him, and I've got a lot of confidence in the CIA. And so should America.

It's important for America to realize that there are men and women who are spending hours on the task of making sure our country remains free: Men and women of the CIA who are sleeping on the floor, eating cold pizza, calling their kids on the phone, saying, "Well, I won't be able to tuck you in tonight," because they love America. And I'm here to thank everybody who loves America in this building. And I want to thank you for what you're doing.

We are on a mission to make sure that freedom is enduring. We're on a mission to say to the rest of the world, come with us—come with us, stand by our side to defeat the evil-doers who would like to rid the world of freedom as we know it.

There's no better institution to be working with than the Central Intelligence Agency, which serves as our ears, and our eyes, all around the world.

This is a war that is unlike any other war that our nation is used to. It's a war of a series of battles—sometimes we'll see the fruits of our labors, and sometimes we won't. It's a war that's going to require cooperation with our friends. It is a war that requires the best of intelligence. You see, the enemy is sometimes hard to find; they like to hide. They think they can hide—but we know better.

This is a war that not only says to those who believe they can disrupt American lives—or, for that matter, any society that believes in freedom; it's also a war that makes a new declaration that says if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists; if you provide safe haven to a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist; if you fund a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist.

And in order to make sure that we're able to conduct a winning victory, we've got to have the best intelligence that we can possibly have. And my report to the nation is, we've got the best intelligence we can possibly have thanks to the men and women of the CIA.

The cooperation with Capitol Hill is unique and, I hope, lasting. I can't tell you how much I appreciate the work of Senator Daschle and Senator Lott, Speaker Hastert and Leader Gephardt. There's deep concern amongst Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill to do what's right for America—to come together to provide the necessary support for an effective war.

And that includes making sure that the CIA is well-funded, well-staffed, has the latest in technology. I believe we can work together to make sure that that's the case. After all, as America is learning, the CIA is on the front line of making sure our victory will be secured.

I intend to continue to work with Congress to make sure that our law enforcement officials at home have got the tools necessary—obviously, within the confines of our Constitution—to make sure the homeland is secure; to make sure that America can live as peacefully as possible; to make sure that we run down every threat, take seriously every incident. And we've got to make sure, as well, that those who work for the nation overseas have the best available technologies and the best tools and the best funding possible.

There's a good spirit in Capitol Hill, because Americans want to win. They want to win the first war of the 21st Century. And win we must—we have no choice, we can't relent. Now, there's going to be a time, hopefully, in the near future, where people say, "Gosh, my life is almost normal, my life is almost normal; September 11th is a sad memory, but it's a memory."

But those of us on the front lines of this war must never forget September 11th. And that includes the men and women of the CIA. We must never forget that this is a long struggle, that there are evil people in the world who hate America. And we won't relent.

The folks who conducted the attacks on our country on September 11th made a big mistake. They underestimated America. They underestimated our resolve, our determination, our love for freedom. They underestimated the fact that we'd love a neighbor in need. They underestimated the compassion of our country. I think they underestimated the will and determination of the Commander-in-Chief, too.

I was having coffee with George and Michael—I said I think I'd like to come out to thank people once again; I'd like to come out to the CIA, the center of great Americans, to thank you for your work.

I know how hard you're working. And I hope all the Americans who are listening to this TV broadcast understand how hard you're working, too.

You're giving your best shot, long hours, all your brainpower, to win a war that we're going to win. And I can't thank you enough on behalf of the American people.

Keep doing it. America relies upon your intelligence and your judgment. America relies upon our capacity to work together as a nation, to do what the American people expect. They expect a 100-percent effort, a full-time, no-stop effort, on not only securing our homeland, but on bringing to justice terrorists, no matter where they live, no matter where they hide. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

Thank you very much. May God bless your work, and may God bless America. Go back to work.

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