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A NEW DAY OF INFAMY

A shell of what was part of the facade of one of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center rises above the rubble created when the towers collapsed. More than 300 firefighters and more than 80 police officers were missing as of late Tuesday night.



A fireball erupts as a hijacked jet plows into the south tower of the World Trade Center at 9:03 EDT Tuesday. The tower collapsed 47 minutes later. CARMEN TAYLOR / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'Evil, despicable acts of terror' stun nation, kill untold thousands

Combined wire services

NEW YORK — In the most audacious terrorist attack in American history, hijackers rammed jetliners into each of New York's World Trade Center towers Tuesday morning, toppling both in a hellish storm of ash, glass, smoke and leaping victims.

The deadly calamity was witnessed on televisions across the world as another plane slammed into the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed outside Pittsburgh.

There was no official count, but President Bush said thousands had perished.

Even as rescuers continued the grim search of the rubble for survivors, investigators focused on finding clues to the identities of those responsible and federal officials worked to beef up security across the country.

"Today, our nation saw evil," President Bush said in an address to the nation Tuesday night. He said thousands of lives were "suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror."

Said Adm. Robert J. Natter, commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet: "We have been attacked like we haven't since Pearl Harbor."

Death toll not yet known

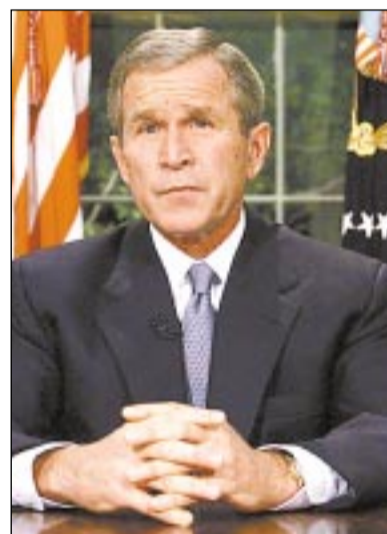
Establishing the death toll could take weeks. The four airliners alone had 266 people aboard and there were no known survivors. Officials put the number of dead and wounded at the Pentagon at about 100 or more, with some news reports suggesting it could rise to 800.

In addition, a union official said he feared 300 firefighters who first reached the scene had died in rescue efforts at the trade center — where 50,000 people worked — and dozens of police officers were missing.

"The number of casualties will be more than most of us can bear," a visibly distraught Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said.

Police sources said some people trapped in the twin towers managed to call authorities or family members and that some trapped police officers made radio contact. In one of the calls, which took place in the afternoon, a businessman phoned his family to say he was trapped with policemen, whom he named, the source said.

Because of fires and unstable debris, no rescue attempts were going on Tuesday night at the site of the towers, however.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Bush addresses the nation Tuesday. Bush said: "Freedom itself has been attacked this morning by a faceless coward."

Case made against bin Laden

No one took responsibility for the attacks that rocked the seats of finance and government. But federal authorities identified Osama bin Laden, who has been given asylum by Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, as the prime suspect.

Aided by an intercept of communications between his supporters and harrowing cell phone calls from at least one flight attendant and two passengers aboard the jetliners before they crashed, U.S. officials began assembling a case linking bin Laden to the devastation.

U.S. intelligence intercepted communications between bin Laden supporters discussing the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, according to Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The people aboard planes who managed to make cell phone calls each described similar circumstances: They indicated the hijackers were armed with knives, in some cases stabbing flight attendants. The hijackers then took control of the planes.

All of the planes were bound for California and thus loaded with fuel.

At the World Trade Center, the dead and the doomed plummeted from the skyscrapers, among them a man and woman holding hands.

Please turn to **ATTACK / A2**

Nation grieves, searches for answers

Authorities narrow list to most likely suspect — Osama bin Laden.

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials began piecing together a case linking Osama bin Laden to the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history, aided by an intercept of communications between his supporters and harrowing cell phone calls from victims aboard the jetliners before they crashed on Tuesday.

U.S. intelligence intercepted communications between bin Laden supporters discussing the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, according to Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"They have an intercept of some information that included people associated with bin Laden who acknowledged a couple of targets were hit,"

Hatch said in an interview with The Associated Press. He declined to be more specific.

Hatch also said law enforcement agencies have data possibly linking one person on one of the four ill-fated flights to bin Laden's organization.

But *The New York Times* quoted one intelligence official who said the information was not as clear-cut as Hatch had suggested. "It is not definitive, but there certainly are a lot of indicators pointing at bin Laden," he said, referring to the Saudi exile living in Afghanistan who authorities have long identified as the chief architect of anti-American terror.

"There is information developed after the crashes that strongly suggests bin Laden," the official added. "I wouldn't be surprised if there were other, surrogate groups used by his organization as well, since this clearly required large-scale planning."

In other developments late Tuesday

Please turn to **INVESTIGATION / A2**



ERNESTO MORA / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two women hold each other as they watch the World Trade Center burn.

FAA shuts down U.S. airspace

Minutes after two hijacked jets hit New York skyscrapers, the FAA halted commercial aviation in the U.S.

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Palestinians cheer attacks

Yasser Arafat offered his sympathies, but Palestinians in the West Bank and Lebanon cheered the attacks.

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Scene of attack like a war zone

Lower Manhattan resembled a war zone Tuesday following the attacks that leveled the World Trade Center.

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Crashed plane may offer clues

The wreckage of a crashed plane in Pennsylvania may provide clues that help authorities find who was responsible.

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"If he's there, he's dead"

Across Kern County, local residents waited, prayed and phoned to find out whether friends or relatives survived.

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Local Muslims decry terrorism

Muslim leaders in Kern County decried Tuesday's violence. Some said they fear possible recrimination.

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Blood donors line up for cause

Hundreds of local residents gather to donate.

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