

Afghanistan rulers say bin Laden not responsible

Attack Palestinians hand out candy in streets

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sands of Palestinians celebrated, chanting "God is Great" and handing out candy. The United States has become increasingly unpopular in the Mideast in the past year of Israeli-Palestinian fighting, with Washington widely seen as siding with Israel against the Arab world.

At the Pentagon, the symbol and command center for the nation's military force, one side of the building collapsed as smoke billowed over the Potomac River.

The first airstrike — on the trade center — occurred shortly before 8:45 a.m. EDT. A burning,

47-story part of the trade center complex, long since evacuated, collapsed in flames just before nightfall.

Emergency Medical Service worker Louis Garcia said initial reports indicated that bodies were buried beneath the two feet of soot on streets around the trade center.

"A lot of the vehicles are running over bodies because they are all over the place," he said.

Said National Guard member Angelo Otchy of Maplewood, N.J., "I must have come across body parts by the thousands. I came across a lady, she didn't remember her name. Her face was covered in blood."

For the first time, the nation's aviation system was completely shut down as officials considered the frightening flaws that had been exposed in security proce-

dures. Financial markets were closed, too.

Top leaders of Congress were led to an undisclosed location, as were key officials of the Bush administration. Guards armed with automatic weapons patrolled the White House grounds and military aircraft secured the skies above the capital city. National Guard troops appeared on some street corners in the nation's capital.

Evacuations were ordered at the tallest skyscrapers in several cities, and high-profile tourist attractions closed — Walt Disney World, Mount Rushmore, Seattle's Space Needle, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.

The Federal Reserve, seeking to provide assurances that the nation's banking system would be protected, said it would provide

additional money to banks if needed.

In Afghanistan, where bin Laden has been given asylum, the nation's hardline Taliban rulers rejected suggestions he was responsible.

Bin Laden came to prominence fighting alongside the U.S.-backed Afghan mujahedeen — holy warriors — in their war against Soviet troops in the 1980s. But former followers say he turned against the United States during the 1991 Gulf War, seething at the deployment of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War campaign to oust Iraq from Kuwait. He has repeatedly called on Muslims worldwide to join in a jihad, or holy war, against the United States.

Abdel-Bari Atwan, editor of the Al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper, said he received a warning from

Islamic fundamentalists close to bin Laden, but had not taken the threat seriously. "They said it would be a huge and unprecedented attack, but they did not specify," Atwan said in a telephone interview in London.

Eight years ago, the World Trade Center was a terrorist target when a truck bomb killed six people and wounded about 1,000 others. Just the death toll on the planes alone could surpass the 168 people killed in the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

This is how Tuesday's mayhem unfolded:

At about 8:45 a.m., a hijacked airliner crashed into the north tower of the trade center, the 25-year-old, glass-and-steel complex that was once the world's tallest.

Clyde Ebanks, an insurance

company vice president, was at a meeting on the 103rd floor of the south tower when his boss said, "Look at that!" He turned to see a plane slam into the other tower.

"I just heard the building rock," said Peter Dicerbo, a bank employee on the 47th floor. "It knocked me on the floor. It sounded like a big roar, then the building started swaying. That's what really scared me."

The enormity of the disaster was just sinking in when 18 minutes later, the south tower also was hit by a plane.

"All this stuff started falling and all this smoke was coming through. People were screaming, falling and jumping out of the windows," said Jennifer Brickhouse, 34, from Union, N.J.

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Travelers grounded in Columbia

BY EMILY STEWART
THE CAROLINA REPORTER

Columbia Metropolitan Airport is feeling the effects of Tuesday's terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center in New York City.

All flights leaving the airport Tuesday were cancelled, and passengers waiting for flights were given reservations at local hotels from airline providers. Airline representatives didn't know when flights would resume.

Lynne Douglas, Columbia Metropolitan Airport marketing director, said the airport has a security plan that involves outlined steps to follow, but she wouldn't comment on what those steps are.

She said the Federal Aviation Administration had advised the airport that all U.S. airports were closed until further notice by order of the Secretary of Transportation.

B.D. Hurley, a Delta Airlines agent, said all aircraft had been secured and that passengers were in safe areas.

"There is no air traffic control as of yet; the system is shut down," Hurley said. According to Hurley, there had been two departures from Columbia to New York City scheduled for 8:20 a.m. and 3:55 p.m.

Phone lines overload with frantic calls

BY ROBERT MCNAMARA
THE GAMECOCK

The terrorist attacks made early Tuesday morning on the United States have created fear throughout the world. But many wishing to voice that concern are finding that communication will take some time to catch up with the increased amount of calls.

The effects of the tragedies are widespread, with many Americans nowhere near the Washington, D.C., or New York disaster sites experiencing the overloaded communication network.

The efforts to gain information about the catastrophes, and people trying to discover the fates of their loved ones, have led to a massive increase in the activity of long-distance phone calls. Due to this rise in traffic, many are finding it difficult to get through.

Vast amounts of calls by customers trying to remedy the situation have forced national long distance telephone providers to issue general phone messages to address the public concern.

The cell phone industry has also been affected by the bloated number of incoming and outgoing calls. Cell phone providers have been forced to use similar phone messages to accommodate the large number of customer concerns.

The USC phone system is not immune to this problem either. In a bulletin issued Tuesday afternoon, the university warned that circuits were overloaded because of the influx of calls. The message said that students may "hear fast busy or siren tones when attempting to dial out of the University."

While no one is quick to give an estimated timetable for how long this problem will last, the jammed lines are expected to clear up as soon as the high traffic dies down. Still, these types of problems are to be expected with such an abnormally large quantity of calls, BellSouth spokeswoman Marcia Purday said.