

Hope for occupied Lebanon: Bush to preemptively strike terrorist states and seek out the roots of terrorism.

WASHINGTON – June 2, 2002.

In an address to 1,000 graduating cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point, President Bush said that ***the United States was ready to make preemptive strikes in the war against terrorism***, and warned that traditional military deterrence alone would not keep Americans out of danger.

"We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge," Bush said. ***"In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act."*** The president also said ***Americans were at risk not only from bands of terrorists*** - who, he said, are searching out new opportunities to strike the United States - but also from ***"weak states and closed groups" seeking chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.***

Bush was clearly referring to ***several nations that are listed by the State Department as sponsors of terrorism*** when he said: ***"They want the capability to blackmail us or to harm us, or to harm our friends - and we will oppose them with all our power."*** Bush appeared to be setting the stage for a time when a military strike against Iraq might come. And ***he pointedly, and repeatedly, said the United States has to take the offensive if it is to adequately protect itself.***

Bush told the graduates that the war against terrorism would not be won solely with defensive measures, because they were entering a world of new dangers, which required different approaches. In the past, he said, potential adversaries needed large armies and industrial might to challenge the United States. But the attacks of Sept. 11, he said, "required a few hundred thousand dollars in the hands of a few dozen evil and deluded men. All of the chaos and suffering they caused came at much less than the cost of a single tank."

A White House official said the speech was part of an emerging effort to lay out a ***three-part policy*** that includes:

- ***A more assertive military policy,***
- ***Increased cooperation among the great nations, and***
- ***A greater emphasis on human rights around the world.***

The president further emphasized that the United States had to defend and promote human rights abroad so that it might project an image of standing for "more than the absence of war." Bush also said the United States has an opportunity "to extend a just peace by replacing poverty, repression, and resentment around the world with hope of a better day."

This new emphasis on addressing root causes of terrorism, in addition to a direct and preemptive offensive against terrorist groups and states that support them, is seen by analysts as consistent with the President's vision for the post-September 11 era. If interpreted correctly, this new emphasis will put the administration to task to resolve festering sores such as the Syrian occupation of Lebanon and Syrian sponsorship of terrorist groups, both in occupied Lebanon and in Syria itself, as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In a direct warning to countries that are sponsors of terrorism, the President added: **"All nations that decide for aggression and terror will pay a price." "We will not leave the safety of America and the peace of the planet at the mercy of a few mad terrorists and tyrants. We will lift this dark threat from our country and from the world."**

The United States, he said, **"cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties, and then systematically break them."** The administration has been openly discussing means to unseat Iraq's Saddam Hussein, although Bush appeared to be retreating from immediate action when he said he had "no war plans on my desk" when met with demonstrations and warnings from European allies during his visit to the Continent last month. Even as he spoke of possible preemptive action in his address to the cadets, he emphasized that **the battle against terrorism would not be won through military efforts alone.** He promised **efforts among major nations and a renewed commitment to building free, open, and prosperous societies.**

Bush said the globe was at a crossroads, "More and more civilized nations find themselves on the same side, united by common dangers of terrorist violence and chaos," he said. "This government and the American people are on watch."

The United States must seek out terrorist cells in more than 60 countries, he said adding that this war would take twists that could not be predicted.