commentary

from other pens...

Terrorism added to governors' concerns

By Will Lester

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON—The nation's governors, whose time normally is absorbed by education, transportation, health care and the like, now have a new and equally pressing concern: terrorism.

Three governors — in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania — got firsthand experience responding to terrorist attacks over the past 10 days. On Thursday night, one of them — Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania — was named by President Bush to head the nation's homeland defense.

The extent of the attacks, and the types of targets, raised the possibility that any place in the country could be hit.

"For the first time since the Civil War, governors are going to be in the middle of war," said Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, who had his own experience with terrorism six years ago. "It's an entirely new and frightening dimension."

Governors had to focus on homeland defense in World War II, although there were few instances when states were actually attacked, outside of Hawaii and Alaska.

After the 1995 bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City, Keating faced the burdens of re-examining his state's security, consoling victims and their relatives and coping with repair costs. But he concedes the new wave of terrorism could offer new challenges for which no governor is prepared, such as responding to an anthrax attack.

Gov. George Pataki of New York has worked closely with his onetime political rival, New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and has been very visible near the site of the World Trade Center disaster while pushing a package of anti-terrorism laws through the New York legislature and explaining the response to the attack on the World Trade Center.

While Giuliani has become the nation's role model for local officials, Pataki has also drawn praise for his response.

"The governor's presence has been both appropriate and reassuring," said Tom Kelly, a historian at Siena College near Albany, N.Y. "There has been a realistic level of explaining where we are, what's reasonable and what we're likely to be able to do."

Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore was already familiar with terrorism issues, having worked for the last three years as chairman of a congressional advisory panel on terrorism. While Gilmore has worked to review and improve safety procedures in his own state, he's been pushing for more national coordination of federal and state agencies after such an attack.

"There are already strong preparations available in the states," Gilmore said. "But we believe there needs to be a national strategy, including an office in the White House to coordinate it."

After one of the hijacked planes crashed near Pittsburgh, Ridge told appropriate state agencies to improve security and their response to terrorism. He reminded them their response to the emergency must come before all else.

"When state government has an opportunity to help, in a way big or small, then at that moment, there is nothing more important," Ridge said.

Ridge will get a chance to apply this experience in dealing with terrorist attacks on a national level: in a newly created Cabinet-level department, the Office of Homeland Security.

Candidates for governor in New Jersey and Virginia have been conscious of voters' heightened concern for public safety but have approached it cautiously. In New Jersey, Republican candidate Bret Schundler, behind by double digits in the polls, said this week that "the issues that our next state governor will face have changed. The next governor will serve as commander in chief of both the state police and the National Guard '



Let's hope Bush follows through with plan

President Bush seems to have adopted an "Al Queda First" counterterror strategy. Let's just hope it doesn't turn into an "Al Queda Only" plan, but proceeds to the wider goal of conquering terrorism worldwide.

The president has spoken broadly about defeating terrorism, but there's a disturbing tendency in recent U.S. foreign policy history to leave work half-done.

Moreover, there's evidently a dispute within the administration over whether the anti-terror campaign should involve "ending" regimes that support terrorism — notably, Saddam Hussein's in Iraq.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, who has reemerged as a leading force in creating U.S. foreign policy, took a verbal shot last week at the leading advocate of "ending" regimes, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

"We're after ending terrorism," Powell said in a press conference. "And if there are states and regimes, nations that support terrorism, we hope to persuade them that it is in their interest to stop doing that. ..

"Ending terrorism is where I would leave it, and let Mr. Wolfowitz speak for himself," Powell added. The administration has invited several nations on its "terrorist" list, including Iran and Syria, to join its new anti-terror coalition, raising questions about whether they will be pressed to cease aiding groups that use violence, such as Hezbollah or Islamic Jihad.

Evidently Bush's strategy is to obtain whatever help he can from such countries - especially intelligence-to accomplish the initial goal of eliminating the Al Queda, led by Osama bin Laden, large-scale invasion of Afghanistan, but rather silent for nearly half a minute before advising rewhich is believed to have perpetrated the Sept. 11 commando-style raids and possibly air attacks if porters to ask the Justice Department. terror attacks. It's clear that that task is necessary. And unless it's achieved, the United States could than last week's airplane atrocities.



-satisfying as that act would be for Americans would not stop his loose-knit network from carrying out new deadly attacks against U.S. targets, possibly with chemical or biological weapons. So, as Powell said this week, "It's not enough to get one individual, though we'll start with that individual.

"It will not be over until we have gotten into the inside of this organization, inside its decision cycle, inside its planning cycle, inside its execution capability, and until we have neutralized and destroyed it. That is our objective."

The administration evidently has failed in its effort to persuade Afghanistan's ultrafundamentalist Taliban regime to deliver up bin Laden, whose riches help keep that desolate country from collapsing. However, Bush apparently has won a measure of support from neighboring Pakistan, whose military government helped create the Taliban (with U.S. assistance) in the 1980s and has been one of its few international backers.

Pakistan reportedly was offered a combination of U.S. carrots and sticks (lifting of economic sanctions and loss of vital international bank loans) to induce cooperation, which may include limited basing of U.S. forces on its soil and use of its airspace for attacks on Afghan targets.

alive," as Bush put it.

One former high-ranking official suggested "raising the price on his head to \$100 million" to induce some knowledgeable Pakistani or Taliban official to betray bin Laden. Officials say they do not intend to stop with Al Queda. It's just "the first round" in the anti-terror campaign, said Powell. "What we have to do is not only deal with this present instance," he said, referring to the Sept. 11 attacks, "but the whole concept of terrorism — deal with it as a scourge upon civilization and go after it."

One major question is whether that includes attacking and destroying Hussein's regime in Iraq. Many of the president's top advisers were highranking officials in the government of Bush's father, who drove Saddam's army out of Kuwait in 1991, but left him in power.

Since then, Hussein has rebuilt his army, escaped economic sanctions, expelled international inspectors and, evidence suggests, proceeded with plans to develop nuclear, biological and chemical weapons

Over the past several years, Wolfowitz has been a leading advocate of making the Iraqi strongman's removal a top priority of U.S. policy. Presumably, Hussein's is the primary regime he had in mind when he spoke of "ending" terrorist regimes.

Some links between Al Queda terrorists and Iraqi intelligence have been revealed, though no proof is available yet - or at least has been made public - of evidence that would put Hussein on a WANTED poster.

When Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was asked whether there was evidence of "state The administration wisely does not intend any support" for the Sept. 11 bombings, he remained If Iraq is the state that Rumsfeld was declining to Despite the seeming difficulty of locating a talk about, U.S. strategy should become "Al Queda first, Saddam second."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Will Lester covers politics and polling for The Associated Press.

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Merely capturing or killing bin Laden himself of bringing in the terror mastermind — "dead or

bin Laden-related targets can be located.

suffer more — eventually much worse — attacks single individual in unfamiliar, hostile terrain, U.S. officials are surprisingly upbeat about the prospects

(Morton Kondracke is executive editor of Roll *Call, the newspaper of Capitol Hill.*)

It's been U.S. policy to shun terrorist nurturers

In April, the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism began its report with a statement that is critical for Americans to understand now that we are in a state of war against murderous international fanatics:

"United States policy seeks to pressure and isolate state sponsors (of terrorism) so they will renounce the use of terrorism, end support to terrorists, and bring terrorists to justice for past crimes."

The report named the seven governments the "Secretary of State has designated as state sponsors of international terrorism." And the day after the mass killings of Americans on our own soil, Colin Powell repeated the names of the deadly seven: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba, North Korea and Sudan.

Contrary to some commentators, Powell's angry statement on Sept. 11 that state nurturers of terrorism must be held accountable for acts by those they harbor was not new. It was already American policy.

A closer look at that April State Department Report reveals that Sudan continues to harbor members of various groups - including associates of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization, the Lebanese Hizballah, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, and HAMAS.

Two days after the destruction of New York's World Trade Center, the assault on the Pentagon, and the ruthless, random assassinations of thousands of Americans, Colin Powell, as well as CIA and FBI sources, began to identify associates of Osama bin Laden as among those responsible for these horrors.

Here is how the State Department counterterrorism report from last April described this evilempire: "Established by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s ... its current goal is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems "non-Islamic" and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries.'

Back in February 1998, the State Department summarized bin Laden's declaration of purpose: It is the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens -



civilian or military and their allies everywhere. It is imperative to point out that Osama bin Laden does not speak for the great majority of Muslims. He has twisted that faith into an abomination of its essential teachings. But clearly, he has many allies, hidden in many places, ready to strike. As the State Department noted, his "al-Qaeda (the base) has a worldwide reach.'

Whether or not Osama bin Laden gave a direct order for the attack on America, he has been unequivocally proved to be involved in terrorist acts; and that makes his consistent supporter, Sudan, one of his principal accomplices.

On the very day corpses were buried under the World Trade Center, a conference committee of the House and Senate was about to be appointed to prepare an agreement on the Sudan Peace Act, which would then be sent to the president.

The conference was to decide whether to include an amendment passed overwhelmingly by the House that would ban from the United States' capital markets - including stock exchanges - foreign oil companies that are providing huge revenues to the government of Sudan by investing in its oil fields.

A few days before the terrorist attack on America, the Catholic Bishops of Sudan accused these foreign oil companies of "profiting from gross and systematic violations of human rights," as the Khartoum government uses these revenues to further finance its slave raids against black Christians and animists in the South; the ethnic cleansing of those who remain to get at the oil deposits beneath their lands, and to fuel the helicopters that bomb Christian schools and hospitals. And those oil company funds can also be used to further international terrorism.

In an editorial on Sept. 10, the Boston Globe said

of a report that the president would veto these sanctions against the oil companies: "A Bush policy of protecting oil companies rather than the enslaved women and children of southern Sudan should not be called realism. Its proper name is appeasement."

To effectively war against this cradle of terrorism — Sudan — the president should ban these oil companies from our capital markets by urging Congress to pass the Complete Sudan Peace Act. Osama bin Laden, says the State Department, has a "working agreement" with the government of Sudan.

Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights.

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