

*Remarks for the
Rally 'Round the Flag Event
September 21, 2001*

Good afternoon and thank you for being here to help us celebrate America!

President Bush last night reported that the state of our union was strong – and we need to keep sending that message around the world to those who would test our resolve.

Ten days ago, America was hit and hit hard, but we are not down. We're bowing our heads, but we've never stood taller.

When we see each other now, we don't see things in black or white. We see them in red, white and blue!

We are all simply Americans – a quality we all share, and one that can't be taken from us. We are “one nation, under God.” Our future is strong because our faith is secure.

Let's stand strong together. Let's recognize that we are all in this together. We have to respect our fellow Americans of Arab descent, and those millions of Americans who practice Islam. They are not the enemy.

We need to remember the words of the Reverend Martin Luther King, who spoke of a day when men were judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

The enemy we are after are those who would terrorize us because of the principles we personify – principles of freedom, equality, and opportunity.

American soldiers are moving now to protect those principles, including members of our own 255th Air Control Squadron of the Mississippi Air National Guard.

Let's keep them in our prayers. Their job will be difficult, it will take a long time, and it will mean sacrifice.

But remember – we're in this together. We may be down, but we're not out. We are the strongest, greatest nation in the history of the world.

We are an ideal for millions outside our borders – we are the personification of the principles of freedom, liberty and justice.

We are going into this new situation with our heads up, our determination strong, our

commitment clear. The United States will fight the good fight, and we will win. Make no doubt about it.

We will defeat those we call “terrorists,” and return peace to our world.

God bless our United States of America.

(after last speaker, return to microphone)

President Bush has ordered that all flags be taken back to the top of flagpoles tomorrow. The symbolism is clear. Since the attacks, we have mourned, and the flags at half-staff have embodied our grief.

Tomorrow, we raise the flag high again; that action will symbolize the collective pride of America, and demonstrate that we cannot and will not be brought down.

I am also announcing today that I am ordering us to stand down from the state of emergency declared on September 11. Now, our focus is on drawing together as a nation – and I know we will be successful.

In times when we look for solace, unity and peace, we often turn to music. We're proud today to welcome a group whose gifts are known around the world, and whose gifts will bring us to a close here. It is my pleasure to welcome our very own **Mississippi Mass Choir!**