

Bin Laden accuses Bush of ignoring warnings

In a recent video broadcast, the author of the Sept. 11 attacks says Bush is acting out of 'private interests'

BY NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, Egypt — Terror mastermind Osama bin Laden claimed in new video footage that President Bush ignored warnings against invading Iraq because he was dazzled by the country's "black gold" and ended up leading the United States into a quagmire.

The full video, portions of which were broadcast Friday, was posted on a Web site used by Islamic

groups Wednesday. The tape showed the author of the Sept. 11 attacks accusing Bush of acting out of what he calls "private" interests — and allusion to his oil business past.

Bush ignored the warnings because "the darkness of the black gold blurred his vision and insight, and he gave priority to private interests over the public interests of America," bin Laden said in the portions of the tape that the Arab

network Al-Jazeera did not broadcast Friday.

"The war went ahead. The death toll rose. The American economy bled, and Bush became embroiled in the swamps of Iraq that threaten his future," bin Laden said.

Accusing America of oppressing and killing Arabs, bin Laden asked: "Is defending oneself and punishing the aggressor objectionable as terrorism? If it is, then it is unavoidable for us."

Al-Jazeera, which is based in Qatar, published a transcript of the full tape on its Web site on Monday. The transcript matches the video posted on the Islamic Web site.

Analysts say bin Laden issued the tape in a bid to influence the U.S. presidential elections, which took place four days after Al-Jazeera broadcast it.

In another partial portion of the video released Monday, bin Laden vowed to bleed America to bankruptcy, boasting that for every \$1 al-Qaida has spent on terrorist strikes, it has cost the United States \$1 million in economic fallout and military spending, including emergency funding for Iraq and Afghanistan.

"As for the size of the economic deficit, it has reached record astronomical numbers," bin Laden said,

estimating the deficit at more than \$1 trillion.

Actually, the war against terror and other factors have resulted in an expected \$377 billion shortfall for 2003 — the highest deficit since World War II accounting for inflation. The total U.S. national debt is near the \$7.4 trillion statutory limit.

The terror mastermind credited the religiously inspired Arab volunteers that he fought with against the Soviets in Afghanistan with having "bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat." He suggested the same strategy would work against the United States.

IN BRIEF

Board elections, city housing code on agenda

The West University Neighbors association will hold elections for its board of directors at 7 p.m. tonight at the Indigo District on the corner of East 13th Avenue and Oak Street. Anyone who lives in the neighborhood west of the University or is interested in community involvement is encouraged to attend.

Neighborhood landlords will be at the meeting to discuss a city housing code that ASUO Community and Housing Coordinator Scott Lu said the Eugene City Council is expected to pass later this month.

The City Council will hold a public hearing Monday, Nov. 8, to discuss the housing code, which has been an ongoing project for members of the community and of ASUO for many years.

Also on the agenda is an update on the neighborhood mapping project that students in University professor Marc Schlossberg's Applied Geographic Information Systems and Social Planning class are doing. Students are working with neighborhood residents to create a computerized map of the area using hand-held mapping devices.

The West University Neighbors association, commonly referred to as WUN, was formed last year to combat crime in the neighborhood and increase communication in the mostly student-populated area.

— Meghann M. Cuniff

Bush: College Republicans were confident Bush would win

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chair. "The people of America have spoken and the vast majority have cast their vote for George W. Bush."

Warren said the College Republicans were confident by late Tuesday night that their candidate would win, and it was uplifting to get the final confirmation yesterday. He added that unlike his opponent, Bush was the right person to move the nation forward and fight the war on terrorism.

"George Bush is definitely the man who understands the war on terror," Warren said. "His job is to defend the people of America and keep it safe."

College Republican Executive Director Jarrett White said he is happy the president got re-elected. He said the president would continue to pursue his "overall conservative policy of limiting government" as well as his strategies on the war on terrorism, adding that the president did not base his decisions on those of other countries.

"I think he's going to stick to his guns and do what is right," White said.

Freshman Matt Dorsa said he did not think it was wise to change leaders in the middle of a war.

"I'm happy because I voted for (Bush)," Dorsa said. "I know it was pretty close till the end."

The candidates and their supporters battled it out for months, crisscrossing the nation with divergent messages. Their campaigns invested

millions in advertising to sway the voters. And the voters heard their call.

Almost 115 million voters cast their votes in the presidential election, some braving long lines at voting stations all day long. There were record turnouts in many states. In Oregon, about 80 percent of the registered voters made their voices heard, according to the secretary of state statistics. Kerry took the state of Oregon with 51 percent of the vote.

Many voters stayed up late into the night, watching with nail-biting anticipation as the drama unfolded on television screens, the states on the map slowly changing to either red for Bush or blue for Kerry.

At the end of the day, it came down to Ohio, the state that seemingly decided the nation's fate for the next four years. At that stage, it was clear that if Bush got the state's 20 electoral votes, it would be enough for him to keep his job. By early morning the White House had called Ohio and the presidency for Bush, but the Kerry campaign insisted on waiting for provisional ballots to be counted.

But by 8 a.m., Kerry's team decided that even the provisional ballots would not be enough to win Ohio, and it was time to concede.

"The outcome should be decided by voters, not by a protracted legal process," Kerry said later in his concession speech in Boston.

He said he had a good conversation with the president, noting the danger of division in the country

and "the need for unity."

"Today, I hope we can begin the healing," Kerry said.

His voice hoarse and choking up at times, Kerry thanked his family, staff, volunteers and voters.

"I wish, you don't know how much, that I could have brought this race home for you, for them," he said.

However, Kerry said he would keep working for the Democratic Party's ideals, as well as the issues that have been the focus of the campaign, such as the war in Iraq, the economy, health care and education.

"I believe that what we started in this campaign will not end here," he said. "We're Americans and America always moves forward."

His running mate, John Edwards, who spoke first, also believed that the fight will go on, saying that people can be "disappointed, but you can't walk away."

"We didn't start fighting for you when this campaign began, and we won't stop fighting for you when this campaign ends," he said. "Your cause will always be our cause."

For Kerry's supporters, it was hard to believe that the long journey is now — unsuccessfully — over.

"I think that Kerry being elected would have been the last hope for our country," freshman Mari Babinec said.

She said if Kerry had won, it would have shown the rest of the world that Americans did not support current events like the war on Iraq.

Freshman Brittany Moss said she is

against the president because of his policies on reproductive rights, the economy, assault weapons, gay rights, the war in Iraq and the "manipulation of the country through fear."

"It makes me mad that the Democratic Party worked so hard ... then Bush won," Moss said. She added that by re-electing Bush, the nation is showing the world that it agrees with these policies.

"I don't think there's any hope," she said.

Sophomore Brendan Coffin said he is disappointed.

"I am sort of flabbergasted that we could sit through four years of what he's done and still want more," Coffin said.

Coffin said he hopes that in his second term, Bush will be more focused on addressing the issues and allow for more open negotiations and less militarism.

"I'd like him to do what he says he's going to do," Moss said. "I'd like more honesty, a lot more honesty."

With the votes counted and the decision clear, another chapter opens in America's history. What remains to be seen is how Bush's second term will play out.

"A new term is a new opportunity to reach out to the whole nation," Bush said. "We have one country, one Constitution and one future that binds us. And when we come together and work together, there is no limit to the greatness of America."

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