

Since our world changed on September 11, 2001, there has been a flurry of activity as the world responds to the threat of terrorism. After the attacks, professional sports was cancelled and the stock market closed until September 17, also the date that Major League Baseball resumed its regular season schedule. The Dow dropped 684.81 points closing below 9,000 as the Nasdaq dropped 115 points to close at 1,579.55.

On September 20, President Bush rallied an already united nation to a war against Usama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network as he addressed a joint session of Congress. However, it was not until October 7 that military action began in Afghanistan against al Qaeda and the Taliban government that sponsored it.

On October 4, the first confirmed case of anthrax was diagnosed in West Palm Beach County, Florida. At first this was believed to be an ill timed, but isolated incident until a second employee of a Florida tabloid office tested positive for anthrax, raising a national suspicion of second wave of terrorist activity.

Fears of a bio-terror attack were confirmed by October 15 as anthrax-filled letters were received by members of the media and Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, shutting down Capitol Hill as Congressional office buildings underwent security sweeps (although Congress found time to give themselves an 11% pay raise on October 26). In the midst of the anthrax panic, the country was on edge as several general alert warnings were given for possible terrorist attacks.

On the political front, President Bush signed into law an Anti-terror Bill that expanded wiretapping powers given to law enforcement agencies as well as an Airline Security Bill that federalized all security screeners.

The City of New York received another airline-related disaster on November 12 as American Airlines flight 587 went down in Brooklyn. The FAA insisted there was no evidence of a terrorist attack although several eyewitnesses claimed to have heard an explosion before seeing the plane go down.

In the Middle East, Israeli/Palestinian conflicts flared up again as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared Israel's own war on terror, and officially cut ties with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Meanwhile, the war in Afghanistan ended much rapidly than even the Pentagon and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had expected. The Northern Alliance began routing Taliban forces before mid-November and entered the capital city of Kabul on November 13. After the Alliance also had a hold of the remaining Taliban strongholds of Kunduz and Kandahar, the military effort was centered around the cave complexes of Tora Bora in an attempt to find the one-eyed Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar and send Usama bin Laden to hell. As of the time of this writing, there are conflicting reports on the whereabouts of bin Laden. ABC News has reported that bin Laden somehow escaped the landlocked country of Afghanistan by sea, a report that the CIA has denied. As for Omar, there are rumors suggesting a deal made with the Northern Alliance allowing him to leave Kandahar and escape capture.

As of the time of this writing, it appears that the Philippines will be the next target in the war on terror as 600 American troops are currently in the country rooting out an extremist group linked to al Qaeda. However, the list of other possible future targets includes, Somalia, Syria, and Iraq.