NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

THE NEW YORK POST, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2001

CITY WRAPPED IN



BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY: A National Guardsman inspects a van yesterday on the Queens side of the Midtown Tunnel before allowing the driver to proceed into Manhattan. AP

Troops to patrol train stations & bus depot today

By MARIANNE GARVEY, WILLIAM J. GORTA and CHRISTOPHER FRANCESCANI

Thousands of cops and National Guard troops on high alert fanned out across the city yesterday — wrapping Manhattan's highest-profile landmarks in a thick web of security and cautiously filtering traffic through bridges and tunnels.

Starting at 6 a.m. today, the web will be drawn even tighter — as more members of the National Guard join Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials eyeing commuter trains and buses pulling into Penn Station, Grand Central Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Mayor Giuliani cautioned New Yorkers to be prepared for even stronger security measures in the days ahead.

"We're going to be a lot more cautious right now, so if people see buildings being evacuated or traffic stopped at checkpoints, they should realize we're being extra careful because of the times we live in," he said.

Giuliani said bridges and tunnels could be shut down if a specific threat to the city materializes.

In all, 4,500 National Guard troops have been called in to assist the NYPD's 41,000 officers.

Walking a tricky rhetorical tightrope, public officials such as Giuliani and Gov. Pataki have been urging New Yorkers to go about their lives as normally as possible, even as unprecedented security measures grip the city.

"We're not aware of any specific threat against any site or New York specifically, but we just believe, as the whole country has to take these enhanced security measures, that we should certainly be doing that in the city and other parts of the state as well," Pataki said. "We'll be continuing to look literally hour by hour at the situation to determine whether other security steps may or may not be appropriate at the time."

Security was visibly stepped up at major landmarks around the city.

At the New York Stock Exchange, where plain-clothes security walked bomb-sniffing dogs around the perimeter yesterday morning, feelings were mixed.

One trader described the mood on the floor as "calm and confident," while another balked.

"Everybody hates it here," the trader said, declining to give his name. "They're think they're going into a coffin every day. Everybody knows we're a target."

At the Empire State Building, tourists flocked to the newly reopened observation deck.

"This city has to turn itself around, and I've come despite what happened," said Kathleen Bickers of Oregon. "There are so many million of us, we have to look bin Laden in the eye and show him we're not scared."

Daniel Winters, who works at Tatica International on the 74th floor of the Empire State Building, said that "just having fear in general is annoying.

"I'm not worried about another attack, but I'm worried about bombs coming into the building. I feel security is doing a decent job with the ID checks and machines, but I need more because I sure can't run down 74 flights of stairs."

All roads leading to the United Nations were blocked off yesterday, and security checkpoints were set up on every available entrance along First Avenue between 42nd and 46th streets to veteran U.N. employees walking to work.

At Grand Central Terminal, Alexander Lamar Brown of Brooklyn said he's spooked.

"It's not predictable. Deep down in the subways, anything is possible," said Brown, a 40-year-old courier. "I think about safety all the time. My wife just wants me to stay home."

With additional reporting by Neil Graves, Zach Haberman and Lorena Mongelli

Truck searches still jamming traffic

By WILLIAM J. GORTA, DAVID SEIFMAN and DAN MANGAN

Get out of your cars and onto mass transit if you want a smooth commute today, officials warn.

Police are continuing to separate trucks and vans from regular traffic at crossings and inspecting rear compartments, as fears of terrorism continue. Those checks have jammed traffic.

"We're reminding commuters that in areas where there are inspections, there are going to be delays," said Dan Bledsoe, spokesman for the Port Authority, which manages the Lincoln and Holland tunnels and the George Washington Bridge.

"We continue to urge, now more than ever, the use of mass transit."

But Manhattan is set to return to some degree of traffic normalcy this week — Mayor Giuliani said alternate-side parking regulations will resume Thursday. The rules had been suspended after the World Trade Center tragedy.

"We really think we have to start getting the streets more open, so we can start going back to normal," Giuliani said.

But the ban on single-occupant vehicles entering Manhattan via river crossings south of 63rd Street from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday is continuing indefinitely.

Despite Sunday's attacks on Afghanistan, many of the security checks appear perfunctory.

At the Henry Hudson Bridge yesterday at 2 p.m., Manhattan-bound traffic was backed up for a mile as police winnowed vehicles down to one lane so they could stop trucks.

Bronx traffic near the Broadway Bridge was crawling after police did the same thing.

The ban on single-occupant cars remains in effect. Private cars entering Manhattan via river crossings south of 63rd Street from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. weekdays must have two or more people in them.

Alternate-side-of-the-street parking regulations are suspended until Wednesday, but they resume Thursday.

All private and non-emergency vehicles are banned south of Canal Street, east of Broadway from midnight through 7 a.m. Saturday.

The Holland Tunnel is open only to westbound cars and buses. The Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel is closed to all but commuter buses and emergency vehicles.

At the westbound Midtown Tunnel tube, traffic was light, as city police, state troopers and National Guardsmen inspected trucks.

Each stop and inspection took about a minute as the driver climbed out and opened up the back of the truck. One truck had two big bags full of packaging material that police merely glanced at.

At the George Washington Bridge, Port Authority cops inspected some trucks — but not tractor-trailers — and did little more than cursory checks.

The relatively light security contrasted with increased precautions yesterday at the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, which since the World Trade Center attack has been closed to all but commuter buses and emergency vehicles.

Flashlight-toting state troopers boarded every bus and checked under all seats yesterday morning. Passengers, used to the delay at the tunnel entrance, barely lifted their eyes from their newspapers during the inspections.

Bus drivers had to show photo ID to the troopers, and the searches created backups lasting up to 20 minutes in the tunnel despite the lack of regular traffic.

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SECURITY BLANKET



AIR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION: A couple of youngsters skip past two National Guardsmen, who are keeping a close watch on the long check-in line at American Airlines at JFK yesterday. Security has been tightened at airports across the country. N.Y. Post: Nury Hernandez

Fear isn't grounding fliers at JFK

By JOHN LEHMANN and DAN MANGAN

Air travel in the New York area appeared unhampered by the airstrikes on Afghanistan — but travelers maintained a cautious view.

And security was tight at airports as fears continued of further terrorist attacks.

"Everyone is thinking there could be retaliations, and I'll just feel a lot safer when I get on the ground and go home," said Paula Wainwright, 47, a nurse traveling from JFK Airport to San Francisco. "You can't help feeling on edge."

People without tickets were barred by security forces from Terminal 2, where tenants include the Saudi Arabian national airline.

And check-in lines at American Airlines counters at JFK snaked around as long as 200 yards because of heightened security precautions, which include National Guard troops, U.S. marshals and customs agents.

People waited as long as an hour to check in.

"This is the first time I've ever seen it this long," said Henry Alcivar, who works at a cash-exchange booth near the counters.

But he also said, "I couldn't believe how busy it was. Things have changed from the first days after Sept. 11, when this place was like a ghost town."

Major U.S. airlines said the Afghanistan bombing seems to have had little or no immediate effect on peoples' travel plans.

"There's nothing that we're seeing right now that indicates that travel patterns are being affected," said Continental Airlines spokesman Jeff Awalt.

United Airlines spokesman Chris Brathwaite said: "We are operating as business as usual right now. We don't anticipate any changes."

"I've got no Christmas cancellations or anything like that yet," said Martin Rappe, vice president for leisure travel at the Altour International travel agency in Manhattan.

"I've got people going to Italy tomorrow, I've got honeymooners in Bali."

Sunday's "events have not changed anything," said Rappe, who nonetheless added that bookings remain very slow since Sept. 11.

Kerry Sands, a Washington woman who was flying out of JFK to Disney World with her husband and two young children yesterday, said news of the attacks concerned her when she heard it.

"You think, 'Could we be targets?'" she said. "You don't want to put your children at risk, but then you think that it's important to keep doing what you had planned."

She was seconded by a newlywed couple, Fred and Sandy Lee, who were married Sunday.

"Come hell or high water, we were coming to New York to get married," said Fred Lee, 30. "I believe you can't live in fear."

Also yesterday, a small fire in a China Air office in JFK's Terminal 3 caused the terminal to be evacuated for 30 minutes.

The Port Authority said the fire appeared to be accidental.

Major U.S. checkpoints are getting even tighter

By BRIAN BLOMQUIST and CHRISTOPHER FRANCESCANI

America battened down the hatches yesterday in the wake of the bombing attacks on Afghanistan — as a national red alert led to heightened and tightened security at borders, ports, nuclear plants, government buildings and transportation hubs, to name a few.

"We are taking strong precautions and other appropriate steps to protect the American people," said Attorney General John Ashcroft.

Ashcroft and the FBI have been warning for days that additional terrorist attacks on U.S. soil were likely, particularly in the wake of American military action in Afghanistan.

Ashcroft said yesterday that in addition to all 18,000 law-enforcement organizations across the country, 27,000 corporate security managers have been put on "high alert."

Warnings also went out to authorities in virtually every major American industry, including telecommunications, electric power, banking and finance, oil and gas, information technology, water service providers and railroads, Ashcroft said.

The Coast Guard mobilized its largest security force since World War II, and federal Department of Transportation officials reopened a command center to monitor a variety of industry agencies it oversees, including harbors, roadways and railways. The Federal Aviation Administration alerted airports nationwide to the imminent threat of a terrorist attack.

Customs Service officials brought in additional inspectors to check travelers' bags and cargo and Immigration and Naturalization Service authorities stepped up border patrols to the north and the south.

Members of Congress were advised yesterday not to wear their congressional pins when they are not on Capitol Hill.

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