President Bush talks homeland security in campus speech

Watches first response scenario utilizing GTRI technology
Michael Hagerty
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The gymnasium in the old O’Beirne building hasn’t seen an audience this raucous since ... well, maybe ever. A packed house of about 2,000 invited guests greeted President George W. Bush with thunderous applause, nearly drowning out the music that signaled his entrance. In town for a fund-raiser on behalf of his fellow Republican, Congressman Saxby Chambliss, the President stopped at Georgia Tech to watch a first response scenario and give a speech emphasizing the importance of preparedness and vigilance in the face of new terrorist threats. The speech did nothing to diminish either the enthusiasm of the crowd or the esteem with which they held him. During his 20-minute address, President Bush expounded on the themes that have to this point defined his presidency: homeland security, the war on terrorism and the unifying strength of the citizenry. “The American people understand the cause,” Bush said, speaking from a raised platform behind a large banner bearing the Georgia Tech name. “They understand the need. They understand that history has called us into action, and we must not blink. And we must not grow weary. Because, I repeat, we fight for freedom. We fight for values we hold so dear and precious.”

In familiar homespun fashion, the President also joked that those who orchestrated terrorist attacks against the United States may have underestimated the country’s resolve. “You know, when they hit us, they must have thought we were so self-absorbed and so materialistic, that we would sue them,” he said to peals of laughter and applause, adding, “They’re wrong.” The audience was mostly made up of emergency responders — police, fire and medical technicians — and their families. Local and state officials, as well as Governor Roy Barnes, were also in attendance. The remainder consisted of students, faculty and staff from Georgia Tech.

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'Totally new' engineering college pays visit to GT Lorraine
Created by students, Boston school now looks to study abroad
Larry Bowie
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Take a look at the recruitment material for the “totally new” Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering near Boston and you realize this isn’t a typical school. “You Can’t Get Into Our College ... Because We Don’t Exist — Yet,” a pamphlet screams in bold red. Apparently aliens stole the school’s glossy recruitment brochures, according to a tabloid-style newspaper included in the student recruitment packet.

“The truth is, things here at Olin change so quickly that most anything we write is outdated before the ink dries,” said Duncan Murdoch, Olin’s vice president for external relations and enrollment. “So we didn’t bother with a viewbook this year.”

The Olin College of Engineering has yet to graduate a student or hold a class. The campus is still being built. But last fall, 30 students — all on full scholarship — came to Olin College as “partners” to help design the curriculum, campus layout and honor code system.

This fall, those partners as well as 45 additional students will begin classes at Olin College, a private, undergraduate engineering school that has big ideas about changing the landscape of engineering education. The concept has caught on. Scores of articles have been written about the 30 students who turned down prestigious offers to take an opportunity to start a school from scratch. And in Newsweek’s recent “How to Get Into College” guide, Olin College was named one of nine “hot schools” for 2002, alongside Vanderbilt University, the University of Pennsylvania and Public Affairs.

“Eighteen-hundred people per day, in South Africa alone, contract AIDS,” he said. “Just to put Africa into perspective, we all grieve over the 3,100 people who died in the terrorist attacks in the fall that shocked our country. In Africa, that many people die of AIDS every 12 hours.”

Carter emphasized that most of the world is not obsessed by terrorism and suggested caution in using the word “terrorist or terrorist.”

“There’s a natural inclination to brand as terrorist people with whom we disagree,” said Carter. “The most poignant moment came when Carter described when he, Nelson Mandela, and philanthropist Bill Gates Sr. visited an AIDS clinic in South Africa. He recounted his memory of holding a baby that made him think of his daughter Amy’s baby; then, he realized the baby had a 50 percent chance of developing AIDS. “You know, when they hit us, they thought the country’s resolve. The President also joked that those who orchestrated terrorist attacks against the United States may have underestimated the country’s resolve. “You know, when they hit us, they must have thought we were so self-absorbed and so materialistic, that we would sue them,” he said to peals of laughter and applause, adding, “They’re wrong.” The audience was mostly made up of emergency responders — police, fire and medical technicians — and their families. Local and state officials, as well as Governor Roy Barnes, were also in attendance. The remainder consisted of students, faculty and staff from Georgia Tech.

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Former President Carter provides global perspective during Founder’s Day celebration
Elizabeth Campell
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

President Jimmy Carter’s moving speech crowned an enlightening Founder’s Day Celebration on March 22 for Ivan Allen College. The Founder’s Day planning committee led by Associate Dean Ken Knoespel planned events focused on the theme, “An Open Society in an Age of Terrorism.”

Carter, who had recently returned from a trip to Africa to learn more about the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya and how those countries are handling the health crisis, contrasted the September 11 tragedy in the United States to the current conditions in Africa.

“But the tragedy of terrorism is a wake-up call,” Carter said. “If we just sit back and do nothing, we’re going to see this kind of thing happen often.” He also said the world had to understand that the war on terrorism was a war on poverty and one that had to be fought in the South.

Carter opened his remarks to the capacity crowd in the Student Center Ballroom after receiving the Ivan Allen Prize for Progress and Service. The Prize is named in honor of the College’s namesake, former Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen Jr., who helped to ease racial tension in Atlanta during his two terms as mayor and, among other things, represented Atlanta during his two terms as mayor and, among other things, represented
“QUOTE-UNQUOTE”

“You couldn’t help but feel you were looking at a very well ordered construction site, and it lulled you into thinking that. But suddenly, everything would stop, and a family group would come in, walk up a rubble pile with police and firemen, and a little service would occur. Those injections of private events were what made you realize this is very different.” —Donald Fedor, associate professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, on the time he spent in New York collecting data at Ground Zero. (InformationWeek)

“Fundamentally, we may be in one of those transition periods where we need to rethink not only what functions leaders perform, but also how much of a load they’re supposed to carry.” —Donald Fedor, associate professor in the DuPree College of Management, on the shrinking pool of workers typically considered to be emerging leaders — people aged 35 to 44 — as Gen X begins to replace Baby Boomers in the workforce. (Atlanta Business Chronicle)

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the essence of “the new South,” where my formative years were shaped to a great degree by 100 years of racial prejudice,” said Carter. “There were a few, a very few, courageous people who broke that shell that we had built around ourselves. One of them was Ivan Allen. In Douglas, Ga., and Plains, Ga., the name Ivan Allen was a beacon for us breaking the darkness, and I’m emotionally grateful to him. I probably would not have become President if not for Ivan Allen and Martin Luther King Jr.” Carter also reminisced about his days as a Tech student and how he’s always loved Georgia Tech. He noted his old dorm has been torn down, but he does remember his roommate and remembered how they didn’t get along.

During the question and answer session, Carter discussed his support of Bush’s actions in Afghanistan, discussed his own actions as President during the Iran Hostage crisis in 1979-80, and gave a vision of the future, where his freedom of speech and security has not been affected permanently by recent events.

Security versus personal freedom

That morning, Ivan Allen College and the College’s Student Advisory Board organized a panel discussion on “Civil Liberties in an Age of Terrorism” moderated by Miles O’Brien, a news anchor at CNN. The panelists’ diverse background and personal experiences helped the audience to examine the issues of human rights, personal freedom, profiling, privacy, security and terrorism in new ways.

Honorably Marvin Shoop, Senior Judge, United States District Court, asked, “Is it necessary to abandon our principles in order to survive?”

Shoop expressed concern that the prisoners be treated humanely, but felt the U.S. must take steps to win a war against an unknown enemy – the worst type of war.

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Shortly before his address, the President held as members of the Atlanta and DeKalb County fire departments coordinated efforts in staging an environmental disaster. Travelling with Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, Bush witnessed an emergency response drill involving unknown chemical agents. Rescue workers, equipped with oxygen tanks and wearing biohazard suits, entered the hot zone, performed field diagnostics and transported the mock victims to a decontamination site. From there, medical personnel were able to ascertain the type of hazard using technology developed at Tech.

This scenario was similar to an on-campus exercise conducted by the U.S. Marine Corps and Tech’s Center for Emergency Response Technology, Instruction, and Policy (CERTIP) in November 2000. That scenario was part of a partnership known as Project Atlanta, between the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) and the Marines’ Warlighting Lab in Quantico, Va., designed to help officials develop command and control procedures that would be in place should there ever be a biological or chemical disaster. The devices used involve a mixture of new technology and existing systems.

“For example, the ReachBack system (see sidebar, right) is commercial, off-the-shelf technology,” CERTIP Director Tom Bevan said. “It’s a matter of taking things and putting them together to use for a specific task.”

Bevan also coordinates the Institute’s homeland defense research programs and related initiatives, a position created by President Wayne Clough at the end of 2001. The director is responsible for developing and coordinating campus security policies and procedures, which includes updating existing security procedures put in place when Tech served as the Centennial Olympic Village during the 1996 Olympic Games.

Clough said that when Bush during his visit to campus, the exercise was well received. “The President complimented Tom Bevan and the CERTIP team for the excellent demonstration he had seen and indicated he was the first time he had been able to see such technology at work. The CERTIP team made a great impression on the President as well as Governor Ridge and Congressman Chambliss.”

Clough also praised the campus for its ability to pull off such an event given such a short time line.

“I felt pride in the way the Tech team worked under short notice to put together a great show that made us look good to those who attended as well as on local and national television,” he said. “Not only were the demonstrations impressive, but every thing else went off without a hitch. Within three days, GTRI, parking, physical plant, governmental affairs, communications and development did a remarkable job to cover all of the bases.

When President George W. Bush appeared at Tech last week, the event momentarily put the campus directly in the national spotlight. But Bush’s visit wasn’t the first by a sitting president in the Institute’s 117-year history. These are a few of the U.S. Presidents who have graced Tech’s campus over the past century.

The first President to visit was Theodore Roosevelt, who came to Tech on Oct. 20, 1905. Roosevelt (center) spoke on the steps of the Administration Building about the importance of technological education.

“America can be the first nation only by the kind of training and effort which is developed and is symbolized in institutions of this kind,” he said.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the Institute on Nov. 29, 1935. He attended several Homecoming events and a football game at Grant Field alongside Georgia Tech President ML Brittain. President Roosevelt also signed a "message of greeting" to the students and dedicated the Techwood Homes Project — the first low-income housing project in the nation.