



## The President's Perspective



### Lest We Forget

I remember vividly exactly where I was on 9-11, 2001 when I first heard of the terrorist attacks on our country. I had just taken the final speaker, from our northwest "MEN WITH A MISSION" conference, to the Portland airport. As I pulled away from the curb to exit the airport, I turned on the radio to hear the President speaking. The first words I heard were, "This was a deliberate terrorist attack!" My initial thought was that he was speaking of something that happened overseas. However, the longer I listened, the more tragically aware I became of exactly what had happened.

In the five years that have followed the life-altering events of 2001, we seem to have forgotten the nature of the attacks on us. Even today, a notable television personality questioned our President about, of all things, the torture of terrorist prisoners, and that on the five-year anniversary of horrible crimes committed against us. While some seem insistent on making us forget, I pray that we never do so. In fact, there are three things we dare not forget about those tragic events.

First, we must never forget the HORRIFIC NATURE OF THE ATTACK. Never will I forget the still photos, shown to me by a FBI friend who was there, of scores of "jumpers" who chose to die by falling rather than to die as a result of the 2400 degree temperatures inside the twin towers. Never will I forget driving around the Pentagon, two months after the attacks, and seeing fire hoses still spraying water into a gaping hole in that beautiful facility. Never will I forget visiting that sacred spot in Shanksville, PA where flight 93 nose dived into the ground. Never will I forget the myriad of flags, notes, jewelry and assorted items left at a make-shift memorial at the United 93 crash site. Never will I forget the surge of patriotism that engulfed our nation just after the attacks. Never will I forget our President speaking to exhausted fire fighters at Ground Zero, promising justified retaliation for destruction of American lives and structures. May we never forget these graphic images. To do so would be dishonoring to those who died so innocently.

Second, we must never forget the HEROIC ACTIONS OF THOSE WHO DEFEND US. While some may criticize those who wear the uniform of the United States military, I am certainly not one of them. I have nothing but the highest respect for and allegiance to those who keep us safe, here and abroad. May I encourage you to thank those military men and women when you see them at the mall, service station or grocery store. May I exhort you to pay for their meal when you see them at a restaurant. May I urge you to honor them with special tributes at church and

community events. They are sacrificing more than just time away from home. Many have already made the ultimate sacrifice to defend this blessed nation and others will do so in the future. Others will carry physical scars, emotional scars, or both the rest of their lives. We owe them more than just casual expressions of gratitude. We owe to them a debt of gratitude for our very existence as a free people.

Finally, we must never forget the HOSTILE NATURE OF THE ENEMY. As our President stated emphatically from the outset of this global war on terrorism, "this will be a long struggle." We still have a foe intent on destroying us as Americans, as well as our way of life. We still face a determined enemy, in spite of the enormous advances that have been made to disrupt global terror networks. May God grant us the resolve to see this war through to its conclusion. Failing to do so will leave no legacy to our children or to the free world. It's never been more true, that "those who refuse to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it." I pray that cataclysmic events, that exceed the ferocity of 9-11, are not necessary to keep us eternally vigilant.

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