belief in self-government—those are the values we believe in and they are the values that those we remember today believed in as well.

This is a day to keep in mind that there is a great and profound difference between the use of force to liberate and the use of force to enslave.

And this is a day to recommit ourselves to our love of our country. Let us join together and appreciate America's history and stand firm in support of our institutions and the duties of citizenship. This is a day to look to the future.

A great deal of learning in our nation has traditionally taken place when families gather around the kitchen table at mealtime. I hope that beginning tonight all American families will take time to discuss today's events around the dinner table. Talk together about what it means to be a citizen of this great nation. Share your thoughts with each other about what the events of today mean to you, your family and friends.

John Winthrop, one of the Pilgrims who came to this new world, described it as a ''shinning city upon a hill.''

Today, with our prayers, we remember those who are gone. Let us also direct our efforts to ensure, for our sake and for the sake of those yet to come, that this shining city on a hill will remain a beacon of freedom and hope that will forever reach out to embrace the aspirations and dreams of all the people of the world.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, a radical, Islamic terrorist group seized four aircraft, turning them into deadly weapons and killing thousands of defenseless people. Today, we continue to mourn the loss of those victims, and honor those who, with great bravery and instilled sense of duty, risked their lives to protect our people.

Yet while we reflect on this day, one year ago, we cannot look back. Throughout the history of America, we have been a forward-looking Nation, striving for excellence and finding strength in our love of country. America is a God-fearing land, and because of this, our Nation has been blessed mightily.

These attacks have been compared to December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was also struck from the sky. At the end of that day, America was devastated and struck with the great sorrow of this tragedy. Yet as history so aptly tells us, America's resurgence brought forth the liberation of the world, and global peace for decades.

Today, as we look out across our land, we will see America at its most glorious hour. We will see the spirit of America at every ceremony, in every city and on the face of all Americans. It was the spirit of America that got us through that fateful day one year ago, and it will be this spirit that will carry us through for years to come.

It is contagious, this American spirit. Last year, as our firefighters, police officers and rescue workers sacrificed to save lives, the American spirit shined. As our military men and women headed overseas to defend our country, the American spirit shined. As Americans across our land joined together in unity and with a renewed sense of patriotism, the American spirit shined.

This is America, and faith and freedom will always be our call. That is what makes us unique. That is what makes us a people of great pride and resiliency. And that is what makes us a target. Yet in the end, America endures.

Today the war on terrorism is progressing, but it will take time. As the President has said many times—this is a faceless enemy that we fight, and determination and perseverance will be our keys to victory. In the end our victory will once again bring about global peace.

So as we reflect on that tragic day, one year ago, and mourn the loss of so many of our fellow Americans, be rest assured that our brave military men and women overseas are getting the job done, and making America proud.

I commend and thank our military men and women for their sacrifices and bravery as they protect the Homeland. They are picking up where the heroes of September 11th left off—defending America, and fighting for the freedoms that we are willing to die for. The terrorists who attack us operate out of hatred—hatred of our freedom, hatred of our faith, and hatred of our liberty. Yet in the end, it will be our faith, freedom and love of liberty that will ultimately defeat them.

May God Bless the United States.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the concurrent resolution.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMEMORATING 9–11

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business, under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, today America is reflecting on the events of 9–11, as we should; and it is a time to remember. It is a time to remember those who lost their lives and to remember those, like the firemen and the police, who gave their lives trying to save others. It is a time for rage, as we have heard, and a time for reflection, a time for pride and a time for anger. What it is not, however, is a time for mourning. That time is over.

Today, I join with all of those who solemnly commemorate this anniversary. Heartfelt commemoration, I suggest, is not enough. We must consider not just what happened a year ago, as we have been hearing for the last hour; but instead we must find and discover and talk about and we must make determinations about why 9–11 happened.

As a Nation, we are now engaged in a historic global conflict with a vile enemy who slaughters innocent people by the thousands and then makes sanctimonious references to God. Talk about blasphemy. I do not know if bin Laden is dead or alive; but I do know that when he dies he will burn in hell, and it is our job to get him there as quickly as possible.

Our President laid down a battle plan that brought the liberation of Afghanistan and will soon rid the world of threats like that of Saddam Hussein. This is a result of 9–11 one year ago, but it did not start one year ago.

The first order of business is for us to recognize that the murderous attack on us in New York and at the Pentagon was not an act of God, nor was it a natural phenomenon. It did not just happen; nor, let me add, was it just a case of bad luck.

The slaughter of our fellow citizens need not have happened. It was something that would not have happened had certain people done things differently, had certain government policies been different, had certain Federal agencies and Departments been given different marching orders. In short, 9–11 need not have happened, and it is imperative that the American people look closely at the policies, the systems, and yes, the people which led to 9–11 to ensure that something like this never happens again.

What policies am I talking about? Let us start with the fundamentals or, if you will, the fundamentalists. Of the 19 hijackers on 9–11, 16 were Saudis or held Saudi passports. America's relationship with Saudi Arabia is complex but not as unfathomable as some would have us believe.

In the Cold War, we worked closely with the Saudi royal family; and to be fair, they were our loyal allies. They helped us finance anti-Communist projects that were of immense importance to our national security in the days when the Soviet Union was spending billions of dollars to bury us. Saudi help was vital on a number of fronts so there was reason for us then to be grateful; and, yes, there is reason today for us to be grateful.

What they did to help us in the past, however, does not excuse what they are doing today that threatens us. Times have changed, and dramatically so. If our policy towards Saudi Arabia does not change significantly, there will be a heavy price to pay in the future, if we have not already paid enough.

Relying on low oil prices and on Saudi largesse for special Cold War projects left us dependent upon them, and who is them, who are we talking about? We are talking about the royal family, the royal family of Saudi Arabia that is autocratic and over the years has become fat and incompetent and in many ways cowardly. However, again, they helped us defeat an enemy intent on destroying us, Communism. So we paid special attention to the Saudis.

Instead of pushing for democratic reform and human rights, we let the Saudis, and because of their influence much of the Muslim world in general, we let them off the hook in our push for democracy and human rights.

In the short term, it makes sense. In the long term, it has had a dramatically bad impact, negative impact. Young people in that part of the world have suffered under despots and crooks; yet we Americans in that part of the world continually talk about stability, when what we should be pushing for is democratic reform and the opening of closed societies.

Entrenched regimes, royal and secular, have been brutal and corrupt. Is it any wonder that young people in a large chunk of the world turn to Islamic fundamentalism as their idealistic alternative? In their corrupt world, radical Muslims have been the only ones offering a morally based alternative, but radical Islam is not a positive force. It is tyrannical, arrogant and malevolent.

Right here we should note that most forms of religious extremism are equally reprehensible and that radical Islam should not be singled out. Although limited to a few loud voices, a drumbeat started right at September 11 to paint all Muslims as the enemy of the United States and of the West. That drumbeat started the moment those planes hit the World Trade towers; but thanks to our wise President, we did not succumb to a strategy of hate.

bin Laden wanted us to retaliate against Muslims in general, which would have polarized hundreds of millions of people against us, many of whom would have ended up supporting bin Laden and his terrorists as their saviors. As I say, we did not fall into that trap.

By the way, just to put things in perspective, in the decade leading up to 9–11, Muslim people saw their fellow Muslims being ethnically cleansed, raped and murdered in Bosnia by thugs calling themselves Christians. They saw their fellow Muslims repressed and murdered by the tens of thousands in Kashmir by people who called themselves Hindus and cut down in the Middle East by the Israeli Army. Hundreds of thousands of non-combatant Muslims have lost their lives due to the actions of governments controlled by people of other faiths. So from their perspective, Islamic people are no more terrorists than others.

In the West, all we see is the frightening picture of planes flying into buildings and suicide bombers blowing up Pizza Huts in Israel. So the first policy we need to change is that which has us tolerating dictatorship and corrupt governments in Muslim countries in order to maintain stability. Working with Russia, which is now our friend and trying to build a democratic society, let us break our dependency on oil from unfriendly and democratic and undemocratic anti-Western governments. Let us seek out reformers in the Arab and Muslim world. Let us demand free elections and freedom of speech and press as well as religious tolerance in those Muslim countries.

Back to Saudi Arabia. Over the last 2 decades, the Saudi establishment has dealt with the rise of their homegrown religious extremists by ignoring them, giving them a free hand overseas and by sending them to Afghanistan.

□ 1530

Their extremists are called Wahabis. Those folks are on the outer limits of Islam. They are the ones who insist that women must cover themselves from head to foot. Now, that is okay if women voluntarily accept this religious mandate. Instead, however, the Wahabis act as if they have the right to control everybody, even those who do not accept their particular view, claiming to have an infallible insight about the wishes of God. They beat women with sticks if so much as their ankles are showing. They feel free to commit violence against people of other faiths and to prevent anyone with a different belief in God, even other Muslims, from worshipping and living their lives as they see fit.

This is the most radical of all Muslim sects. Instead of standing up to this religious gangsterism, the Saudi royal family allowed them to establish their base of operations in Saudi Arabia and to export Wahabi radicalism throughout the world, with the help, of course, of billions of petrol dollars.

One of the places not just influenced but under the control of the Wahabis was Afghanistan. The Taliban was not an indigenous religious sect of Afghanistan. That is the mistake so many people make. They represented a transplanted Wahabism. Transplanted from? Where else. Saudi Arabia.

These crazies did not represent the character and/or the values of the Afghan people. The Afghan people are devout in their faith but they are not fanatic. They pray and are grateful to God, but they do not feel compelled to have everyone else pray, much less feel compelled to compel that everyone else pray just like they pray.

I have seen this tolerance firsthand, even in the most desolate regions of that distant land. Years ago, 14 or 15 years ago, actually, I was in Afghanistan with a mujahedin unit, the mujahedin being the fighters against the Soviet occupation. During long treks across the desert, the small group of mujahedin fighters I was with would stop and pray five times a day. They would get on their knees and they would pray, and they would thank God for everything that they had. I might add that they had little. We did not even have a good clean glass of water, much less the provisions of food that could keep people healthy. Yet these people were grateful for everything.

It caused me reason to pause to think that here in the United States we have so much and how rarely people think about how grateful they should be for what we have. But here were these people, under attack by the Soviets, on their knees praying. But there were many other people in the surrounding area and with our group. About half of them were not part of the praying during those prayer sessions. They stood there.

What impressed me is that those who were praying felt perfectly comfortable. They were fulfilling their obligations to God but did not feel threatened by these others who were not praying and who were not compelled to participate. That was the essence of the Afghans. Grateful to God, devoted to God, but not fanatics who were trying to suppress other people into some sort of religious dictatorship.

The Taliban in Afghanistan, of course, was totally different than the type of attitude I am talking about. And it was not a result of the susceptibility of the people to the Taliban's form of Islam as much as it was a result, meaning the Taliban's ascension to power, was not a result of what is naturally in the Afghan people's hearts, but instead, I believe, the result of a deal between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and, unfortunately, the United States.

It, of course, goes back to the Cold War, when the United States was helping the Afghan freedom fighters in their struggle against the Soviet army that occupied their country. The Saudis were helping, too. Now we helped, and we can be proud of that. The Saudis were also helping, but as I discovered, it was not quite that simple.

As I was hiking through Afghanistan with that mujahedin unit heading towards the battle of Jalalabad, which was one of the last battles the Soviets participated in in Afghanistan, we came across an encampment of white tents. These were very expensive tents. There were off-road vehicles there. The people were well fed, well clothed. And I was told by my mujahedin fellow freedom fighters to keep my mouth shut and to speak no English because this was an encampment of a crazy psychopathic killer, a Saudi named bin Laden, and bin Laden would kill all of us if he knew there was an American with the group because he hated America as much as he hated the Communists.

And much of the support that the Saudis gave to the Afghan freedom fighters was right there. It was actually bin Laden and his group there fighting against the Russians. And that was their contribution to Afghanistan in the fight against the Soviets.

Well, after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, after the mujahedin victory, instead of helping these people rebuild their country, and we can be proud we helped them fight off the Soviets with giving them the weapon systems they needed, but we did not help them at that point rebuild their country. In fact, America simply walked

away and let them sleep in the rubble. We did not even help them dig up the land mines that we had given them to defeat the Soviet army. And so little young kids, little kids from Afghanistan have been blowing off their legs ever since. And they cannot even treat their young people because they do not have the medicines to do so because we have not been there to help.

There was an agreement, however, as we left. It was probably not a formal agreement; probably just an understanding to let Saudi Arabia and Pakistan oversee that region. So we walked away from Afghanistan and the entire region. Instead of insisting on a government that reflected the will and values of the Afghan people, we left them in the hands of the Saudis and the Pakistanis.

For several years, there was chaos and fighting. Not as bad as before, but there was fighting that continued, and the Saudis then unleashed their ace in the hole. We had left, but the Saudis had been preparing for this eventuality. The term Taliban means student and refers to those who spent most of the war against Soviet occupation not fighting the Russians. That was a whole different group of guys. That was the mujahedin. No, the Taliban were in schools, so-called religious schools, in Pakistan. Later, they emerged from these schools seemingly out of nowhere, but in fact trained, armed and financed by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Within 6 months, they had conquered over two-thirds of the country, including Kabul, the capital city. But just as it was in Orwell's Animal Farm, vicious dogs were surreptitiously nurtured and then suddenly unleashed to do the bidding of pigs.

Just a reminder: Many pundits fail to understand the difference between the mujahedin and the Taliban. The former fought the war against Soviet occupation troops. That was the mujahedin. The latter, the Taliban, arrived on the scene much later. And in the end, the same mujahedin who helped defeat the Soviets were our allies in this last year in driving the Taliban out of power. The mujahedin, the good people of Afghanistan, have stood with us twice. Let us pledge that we will not walk away from them again. Let us help them rebuild their country.

Let the record show that I had spent a year trying to prevent the Taliban from coming to power at that time. My goal right after the end of the war with the Soviets was to try to bring the old King Zahir Shah back from his exile in Rome. Zahir Shah was one of the most beloved and pro-western of his people. He was anxious to serve as a transition leader that would lead his country to a new political system that was based on democratic elections; on ballots instead of bullets. As I say, he was an honest, kind man, with a good heart, and respected by all the people of Afghanistan.

Instead, the king was pushed aside, or should I say he was kept on the sidelines. And I might add that our own State Department played a major role in ensuring that this positive alternative did not come to power. Instead, the Taliban assumed power with the acquiescence if not the support of the Clinton administration. Knowing there was nothing more I could do, I hoped for the best. I tried my best to try to prevent the Taliban from getting into power. Now they were there, our government seemed to be going along with it, so all I could do is sort of hope for the best.

However, within a month or so, the tyrannical ways of these religious kooks made it clear to me and to everyone that they had to go. Yes, it was clear to me, but I take that back, it was not clear to everyone, because the Clinton administration could never seem to come to that conclusion, that the Taliban had to go. In understanding who should be accountable for 9–11, we must understand that the State Department, under President Clinton, was never anti-Taliban. Our State Department, probably under the President's direction, undermined those efforts aimed at undermining the Taliban. So those of us who were anti-Taliban found ourselves the target of the State Department rather than having the State Department target the Taliban for their misdeeds.

In several personal instances I was involved with helping obtain medical and humanitarian support for people in the areas of Afghanistan that was not yet under Taliban control. I was thwarted by our own government. I was thwarted by our own State Department. NGOs with aid for Afghans who were in areas that were controlled by the Taliban, on the other hand, had no trouble with our government. They had some other troubles that, of course, the Taliban gave them themselves, but our government was perfectly happy to have NGOs operating in Taliban-controlled areas but stopping people like myself who were trying to help those people in areas that were opposed to the Taliban.

In mid 1988, however, even with this tacit support from the Clinton administration, the Taliban were incredibly vulnerable. They had overextended themselves in an invasion of the northern part of Afghanistan, and many of their best, if not most of their best, fighters were captured, along with huge amounts of war supplies. The road to Kabul was open. And who interceded to prevent the collapse of the Taliban at this pivotal moment? Who pulled their chestnuts out of the fire? President Clinton, personally.

At this moment of maximum Taliban vulnerability, the White House dispatched Assistant Secretary of State Rick Inderfurth and Bill Richardson, then our United Nations ambassador. They flew to northern Afghanistan and convinced the anti-Taliban forces not to attack and not to retake Kabul, but, instead, to accept a cease-fire and an arms embargo.

This is at the moment, and I cannot stress this more forcefully, it was at a pivotal moment. The Taliban could easily have been defeated. The Northern Alliance was willing to accept a return of King Zahir Shah to lead a transition government. Instead, under the direction of the Clinton White House, these two top U.S. Government officials, Assistant Secretary of State Rick Inderfurth and U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson, arrived on the scene to convince the anti-Taliban forces to stand back. And we thus saved this fanatical, anti-western regime from being destroyed and being defeated.

This later led to a dramatic defeat of the anti-Taliban forces. The cease-fire lasted only long enough for the Saudis and the Pakistanis to fully rearm the Taliban. And the arms embargo that Bill Richardson and Rick Inderfurth talked about, was only effective against the anti-Taliban forces, which are the people called the Northern Alliance. Think about that. We talked them into a cease-fire, which lasted only long enough for the Taliban to rearm. We talked them into an arms embargo, which was only an arms embargo against them.

Again, this was one of the major turning points that led to 9–11. Later, the Taliban, with their supplies replenished, went on the offensive and turned their country into a staging area for terrorism. So the Taliban ended up, with the Clinton administration's somewhat blessings, of taking over all but a sliver of Afghanistan. That portion, of course, that little sliver, was under the command of Commander Massoud, who stood alone in the Panjir Valley, a hero against the war on the Soviets. Now he was all that was left to resist the tyranny of the Taliban.

□ 1545

This is where bin Laden makes his official entrance. Behind the scenes, his foreigners, his radicals, had been there and been the Taliban shock troops for a long time. They murdered anyone and everyone who got in the way and ran roughshod over people all over Afghanistan. bin Laden had already declared war on the United States, and had already killed military personnel and bombed U.S. embassies. The Taliban permitted them to use their country as a base of operations.

Yes, the Clinton administration repeatedly demanded that bin Laden be given up or at least kicked out of Afghanistan. Yet there they were using all of these words making demands, yet they never seemed to care enough to help Massoud or help any of the others who wanted to resist the Taliban.

So what was the Taliban leadership to think? Well, of course they thought that the United States Government really did not mean what it was saying. They believed it was simply posturing for domestic political consideration. This is like when the Clinton administration went to China and demanded human rights reform and then never

put any type of force behind that demand.

So our government made it clear to the Taliban by our inaction to support anyone who was opposing the Taliban that our demands on them actually were just made for public consumption here, and that we were actually more concerned with our deal, whatever that deal was, with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and that we were more concerned with that than anything going on within Afghanistan, including bin Laden. Why would the tough guys in the Taliban think that we cared about human rights abuses, about their treating women like cattle, about their harboring of terrorists like bin Laden, and about their rejection of even a consideration of free elections of any kind when we were not doing anything about it? We did not, as I say, support Massoud; and, in fact, when several of us tried to help those resisting the Taliban, it was our government, the State Department, that got in our way.

Let us be fair about it. If that is the impression the Taliban got, we should admit it. Our government at that time was not serious about democracy, human rights and such in Afghanistan. We were not serious about their form of government or even their harboring of bin Laden because our government in that administration did nothing.

What all this means is that if we stray too far from our basic principles as a country, it is going to end up hurting us. If we stray too far from the fundamental principles that make us Americans, a love of liberty and justice, a belief in the democratic procedures to guide men, and permit people to guide their own destinies and secure their own destinies through election processes, if we ignore these principles, it will come back to hurt the United States of America.

Over the years, I complained over and over again; and I will submit for the record quotes of mine that warned America that we must act against the Taliban. I did this for years.

Well, obviously there was another policy. I am just a lone Congressman. I do not make policy. I try to influence policymakers. But my warnings, repeated warnings, were not heeded.

Well, who was responsible for the policies that left the Taliban free from domestic rivals, the policy that left them free from outside opposition, that left them free from the pressure to democratize and respect human rights? Who was responsible for these policies? How about Madeleine Albright? How about President Clinton? They could not get themselves to endorse any meaningful action against the Taliban even after we had been attacked in Saudi Arabia, blowing up our military bases there, our military installations, our living quarters there, or the blowing up of U.S. embassies in Africa.

Furthermore, there is ample evidence that in the last administration they passed up promising opportunities to take out bin Laden. I, for example, several years ago during the Clinton administration contacted the CIA to let them know that I had an informant who knew exactly where bin Laden was, that he was out of Afghanistan, and that he was willing to pinpoint bin Laden for them. I gave them my contact's phone number. They never called. After a week, I called my friend back and said, Did the CIA get with you? No.

I went to the CIA again and explained that this person had impeccable credentials of knowing what was going on in Afghanistan. They would get to him, but they did not. A week later they still had not called. Then I went and complained to the chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), whom I respect; and I told him what happened.

The next day he had a meeting in this building with representatives of the NSA, the CIA, and the FBI. It was the bin Laden task force. I told them what had happened and that my friend could pinpoint bin Laden, and that he had been ignored for 2 weeks. They would get to it.

Guess what, a week later my friend still had not been contacted. By then the trail was cold. But when I went to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), it got action and my friend was called. He said it was a lackadaisical call. It looked like it was a pro forma call.

Does that sound like an administration committed to getting bin Laden? No. Let the record show there were numerous opportunities to get bin Laden and not one was exploited. The government of Sudan tried to give the U.S. a complete file on bin Laden and his whole gang. Madeleine Albright personally turned that down.

I know of a situation at the Defense Intelligence Agency where a young analyst felt there was a lack of information about Afghanistan and that lack of information was threatening to our national security. She wanted to get the information. She wanted to go up to Massoud's territory and find out what was going on because we did not know what was happening in Afghanistan. She was denied, and she had the gall on her own time, on her own vacation time, to go there to Massoud's stronghold to try to get that information. I think someone like that should get a medal. Instead, she was fired.

I personally asked the general who then headed up the DIA not to fire her. She got the ax anyway. By the way, there is no indication that the DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, warned anybody about the attack on 9–11, even though the murder of Commander Massoud 2 days prior to the attack in New York should have set off alarm bells. Of course they had fired the one person who was conscientious about Afghanistan. They had fired that person for being too conscientious, over the objection of a Member of Congress who pleaded that that was the type of responsible behavior we needed.

I say this because the death of Commander Massoud had a special significance to me. I had known Commander Massoud for many years, even before I went to Afghanistan in 1988. During my time in the White House, he sent his brother to me; and we continued a communication through third parties over the years. He was a man I deeply respected. He was a hero; not to say he did not make mistakes. Certainly he made mistakes, and he did some things wrong. But over years of fighting, everybody makes mistakes. But Massoud was a hero. He was a giant of a man.

Mr. Speaker, 2 days before they attacked us, they murdered Massoud. It took the wind right out of my lungs. I had been to his stronghold 5 years before. I visited him in the mountains of Afghanistan. Our friendship was close, and I respected him. We worked out an agreement to have King Zahir Shah return and that Massoud would support that if the King would lead a transition government and have honest elections 2 years later. He was willing to support that, and then the Taliban killed him.

After I had gotten myself together after his death, I knew that it must be because they are going to attack the United States. That is why the Taliban killed him, so we could not have anyone to turn to, to rally behind in our counterattack. So the next day I called the White House. I asked to speak to Condoleezza Rice, and I wanted a meeting with her and the National Security Council because there was an attack that would soon befall the United States of America.

They got back to me, and said, Congressman, we take your opinions on Afghanistan and elsewhere very seriously, but we are very busy. Can you come tomorrow? The earliest we can fit you in is 2:00 tomorrow. I woke up on 9–11 expecting to have a meeting with Condoleezza Rice and the National Security Council at the White House to warn them that there was an imminent attack planned on the United States and to take seriously any possible threat that they saw. Unfortunately, at 8:45, the planes began crashing into the buildings in New York.

So here we are. One year ago our country was blind-sided, attacked without warning, resulting in the slaughter of 3,000 Americans. As I have just discussed, this represents a failure of policy and a failure of the people behind that policy, primarily those in the Clinton administration, not because of politics, but because they happen to be there at the time. Who knows if it would have been a Republican administration. It was George Bush who walked away originally and left the Pakistanis and the Saudis in charge of that region. But it was during the Clinton administration that the Taliban took over, consolidated their power in Afghanistan, and turned that country into a base of operations for anti-American terrorists. The American response is undermining those who oppose the Taliban.

This leads me to my conclusion that our policy was part of an agreement with the Saudis and the Pakistanis to keep the Taliban in power. The attack, however, reflects more than a failure of policy. It reflects more than just that policy. The attack which was carried out by a terrorist organization, a terrorist organization that we had been told over and over again was the number one target of U.S. intelligence, that organization, the number one target of U.S. intelligence, was able to launch an attack of this scope and of this magnitude requiring millions of dollars and the coordination of hundreds of people against the United States. The number one target of U.S. intelligence was able to slaughter 3,000 Americans, to blindside us. This represents a catastrophic failure of America's intelligence system; it is a failure of the DIA, the CIA, the NSA, the FBI, and the rest of the intelligence alphabet soup here in Washington, D.C.

We spend tens of billions of dollars every year, and the number one target of American intelligence is able to organize and pull off an operation of this scale. The magnitude of the screw-up boggles my mind.

Now we know there were warnings. The BBC is reporting that just 2 months before 9–11, the foreign minister of the Taliban was so upset about the terrorist plot that he had heard of that he sent an emissary to an American consulate in nearby Pakistan to warn the United States of a pending attack.

□ 1600

But no one listened to him. Then we know of FBI field agents who were pleading that attention be paid to the terrorist ties of certain students who were being trained to fly airplanes. These FBI agents were chastised for going around channels. They had to go through channels, but they were so concerned that the people in front of them were not acting, they tried to get the attention of Washington but were chastised for not going through channels and they were ignored. The list of failures goes on and on.

I will just say that on 9–11, that something like that happened to me indicates the type of mindset we are dealing with, even after the attack. On 9–11, when the planes had already crashed into the buildings, I realized, everyone realized it was an attack from Afghanistan, based on the terrorists based in Afghanistan, and I called the king of Afghanistan. I wanted to know if there was anyone there protecting him.

''Do you have any police there protecting you?''

''No.''

''Are there any police outside your door?'' Remember, the king of Afghanistan is in Rome, exiled in Rome. ''Are there any policemen outside your door?''

''No, there aren't.''

''Are there any people inside your compound with you protecting you?''

''No.''

I said, ''Is there anyone there with a gun to protect you?''

He said no.

I said, oh, my gosh, our number one asset, the one man who the people of Afghanistan could rally behind now that they have killed Massoud, only the king, Zahir Shah, was someone we could rally the people behind to counterattack against the Taliban, and he was hanging out there in the wind. He was totally exposed.

So I talked to someone, a very high official in one of our intelligence agencies. I told him, and he said he realized the importance of Zahir Shah and he was totally exposed, and he was vulnerable. And, guess what? Five hours later I happened to talk to that same high level official again. I can tell you when I asked him about, well, Zahir Shah, is he under guard now, his response to me was, ''You don't expect us to act that fast, do you?''

Give me a break. Of course we expect our people to act that fast. You are within a phone call's distance of the Marine guards who guard our embassy in Rome. Our ambassador, or whoever was there, could have gone over and picked up the king or sent Marines over to protect him, or the agency has people in Rome, et cetera, et cetera.

Instead, 5 hours later, after 3,000 of our people, at that time we thought it was 20,000 people had been slaughtered, but you do not expect us to act that fast, do you?

The people in our intelligence community are, by and large, fine and dedicated people. I will tell you that right now. I respect them, but those individuals who may have my respect as people of good hearts and are patriots, they are now part of a bureaucratic behemoth.

We are relying on what has become organizationally incompetent, a system in which individuals get fired for showing initiative, like that young analyst at the DIA, or they get reprimanded, like those FBI field agents, for begging attention on some pressing threat.

We need to reform the system and make it better. To do so we need to hold those accountable who made errors and to change the structure and mindset. Most importantly, we need to change the structure and the mindset of our intelligence organizations. We cannot let the cloak of secrecy be used to shield the consequences of failure and incompetence.

For that reason I voted for an investigation of 9–11, not just that it be done by our Congressional oversight committees. And I have great respect for those leading those committees and members of those committees, but I believe that it should be also the responsibility of an independent commission on the level of the Warren Commission and perhaps the commission we established after Pearl Harbor to get all the facts about this historical failure of U.S. intelligence.

Let me stress again that I have tremendous respect for and trust for the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) and the others in the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence here in the House, but a redundancy like we are calling for with an independent commission looking into the problem as well cannot in any way hurt. An independent commission could do nothing but contribute to the understanding of the idea pool that is needed to reform and to fix the system.

This anniversary is with us today. We must commit ourselves to see that such surprise attacks will never again be successfully launched against the United States. We will accomplish this by making the changes in policy and the changes in personnel that are needed to keep our country secure.

We must change the way we deal with Saudi Arabia. We must evaluate how we dealt with Afghanistan and admit that it was horrendously wrong. The people behind those policies, especially those people who are still in influential positions in the State Department and elsewhere, must understand that they bear a significant share of the responsibility for the death and destruction that fell on America one year ago today.

The arrogant so-called experts, for example, who shoved aside exiled King Zahir Shah for years, they shoved him aside for two decades, claiming that he was too old to play a positive role in bringing about a better Afghanistan and peace in Afghanistan. They were so absolutely wrong. People in the State Department should find out who it was who pushed this idea that the Zahir Shah could not participate, and those people should be talked to, and those people should look in the mirror and think very seriously about what they did to contribute to this loss of American life.

In essence, they kept the Taliban in power, because they prevented us from getting behind a positive alternative, whether it was Massoud or the others fighting the Taliban, or whether it was Zahir Shah. In essence, they kept the Taliban in power until 3,000 Americans were slaughtered by an attack that was launched from Taliban-controlled territory.

We were attacked a year ago today, and over these last 12 months our military has been able to launch a counterattack that has dislodged the Taliban and sent them, along with their terrorist allies, the al Qaeda, running for cover and running to hide their heads.

Our military has done a tremendous job. They did this in a landlocked country halfway around the world. This has been a magnificent victory for our country and for its military. To the degree that we sort of have questions about the need to restructure our intelligence system, we need to praise our military and make sure that we build upon the success of our military. They need certain amounts of changes, too,

but we need to do that with the military. We can see the positive things they have done and build upon that.

This has been a magnificent victory. If bin Laden is alive today, he is in hiding and he is spending all of his hours not trying to launch some attack on us, but instead he is spending his time trying not to be captured. He could be spending his time mapping out attacks on the United States. Instead, thanks to the expertise and bravery and courage and great job our military has done, we have bin Laden and his likes in hiding, looking over their shoulders, freezing their assets, not able to launch another attack of the magnitude that we suffered one year ago today.

We have accomplished all of this, a tremendous accomplishment in a country on the other side of the world, landlocked. We did this with fewer than 50 American combat deaths. We dislodged the Taliban government from power, we destroyed the regime, we dislodged the terrorists, all with fewer than 50 American combat deaths.

Yes, there have been some mistakes, and in every combat situation there are. If accidentally a house or area is bombed, if we bombed some of our friends accidentally, which has happened, we just need to admit that it was a mistake and help those people rebuild. They will understand, because the Afghan people are praising us as their liberators. We have fought beside the mujahedin again, the freedom fighters of Afghanistan again, to free their land from the Taliban tyranny. As I say, there have been mistakes, but compared to what has been accomplished, this mission gets an A.

Let me note that I have two complaints. They are small complaints and the Afghan people will put up with them for now, but I think that we need to pay attention.

Number one, I do not believe Karzai was the right guy to pick. He does not have a wide base of support in Afghanistan. When the loya jirga was held, we should have permitted the king to emerge, as would have naturally happened. I think there was some wheeling and dealing going on that led to Karzai's ascension, and the king could have been there. He was the natural choice.

But I believe the Afghan people have good hearts and understanding. They know we are there to help them. They know there are political considerations. But they are demanding, of course, free elections in 2 years, and that is what we should be doing, making sure that we keep that pledge and that there are free elections. And if they want to elect anybody, whether it is Karzai or a member of the royal family or whoever it is, they should have a right to do so. We should work with them and help to rebuild their country, and that will be one way to really defeat the Taliban and really defeat al Qaeda. The people of Afghanistan have looked at us as liberators.

The other concern is about drugs. We have not eliminated the drug production in Afghanistan. The poppy crop was not destroyed. We have got to do so next year. That commitment has to be there. That drug money goes into bad hands.

Finally, let us take a look at the challenge we have today and look ahead a year. The President has wisely suggested that now is the time for us to eliminate that threat that hangs over us and has hung over us for 10 years. We did not complete the job in the Gulf War. We left Saddam Hussein in power. That was the gift that George Bush, Sr., gave to us. George Bush, Jr., is going to make up for that. He has committed us to eliminating the dictatorial, fascistic regime of Saddam Hussein.

We should not be weary of this. In fact, we should know that Saddam Hussein has less support in Iraq than the Taliban had support in Afghanistan. Our strategy should be to help the people of Iraq liberate themselves from this monstrous regime headed by Saddam Hussein. The people of Iraq will be waving American flags and dancing in the street because we will help them build a democratic society. We can do so with the same strategy as we did in Afghanistan, work with Special Forces teams and air support. We can support those people who want to fight for their own freedom. It worked in Afghanistan, it will work in Iraq. We should not have fear and trepidation about getting rid of this threat of Saddam Hussein. He is, as George Shultz suggested, a rattlesnake in our front yard, and we should not wait until he bites us to cut its head off.

Now we can move forward in Iraq and eliminate that threat, as we have eliminated the Taliban threat, and we can do so not by sending huge numbers of American forces, but by helping the people in Iraq, as we did in Afghanistan, to liberate themselves. That is what the challenge the President is giving us is. That is why we as Americans should always stand for those people who want to live in a free society and are willing with their courage and blood to fight for their freedom, but need our help logistically, need our air support, perhaps need our advice from our Special Forces teams.

So, as we remember 9–11, let us never repeat that, by being proactive in the future. Where there are dictatorships and fascist regimes, like the Taliban, and if they threaten the West and the United States, we do not have to do with this all regimes that are dictatorial, but if they threaten us, let us work with the people who suffer with a boot on their face and with an iron grip around their necks, let us work with those people to help them free themselves.

We have on the floor of the House of Representatives two pictures, one of George Washington, a great painting of George Washington, and a painting of Lafayette. Lafayette came here during the American Revolution to help us win our freedom. Let us not forget the French helped us win our freedom, and that people like Lafayette were heroes to early Americans.

While we must serve that same role that Lafayette served to us, we must serve that role to those people overseas who long for liberty and justice. If we do so, we will be the light of the world. We will be the hope of all the young people in the Muslim countries who are looking for some people who believe in something, rather than people who are talking about stability and keeping the status quo.

We need to be the ones who offer moral alternatives, and the morality we offer is democratic government and a respect for human rights, treating people decently. Our flag should stand for justice and hope. If we do, rather than the type of things we were doing in the 1990s with Communist China and the Taliban and all of these regimes, where we were not doing anything to make it clear that we honestly and sincerely believed these founding principles of our society, if we do that, we will be free and we will be safe.

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There is a dynamic in this world between peace and freedom. Freedom tomorrow will bring peace. Just as we lived under the threat of some sort of war with the Soviet Union, the Soviet people, the Russian people were never our enemies. It was that system. As soon as we made it a fight between communism and democracy and stopped just supporting any dictatorship that was against the Communists, the Communist system itself began to crumble in Moscow, and no one was more heroic in that fight against the Soviet dictatorship than the people of Afghanistan. They fought and they bled and they gave us a more peaceful and a freer world.

We did not do what was right by them. We did not help them rebuild their country at that time; we did not stick with them. We left it up to the Saudis and the Pakistanis. We have a chance now to make up for that. But we must persevere in helping them rebuild their country; and that will cement peace in that region, because people will believe in us again. We need, again, to make sure that we become the force for liberty and justice and decent treatment for people all over the world, and that is where we will find America's security. Let us have the courage to do so. Our President has charted a wise course, and we should have the tenacity and the courage to follow this through now that we have learned after 9–11 that there are consequences to pay when we do not.

IN SUPPORT OF H. CON. RES. 464, PATRIOT DAY RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of H.Con. Resolution 464,