

recuperating, provided the police with many key details that led to the apprehension of six suspects. Without her input, some of the suspects may have evaded capture. Her bravery and perseverance is an inspiration for others who, for various reasons, fail to speak up for what is right at times.

While I know that their families and the community are going through a trying time, I hope they take comfort in the legacy that these four young adults had created. It can be said that this senseless crime cut short their promise, that their destinies went unfilled. I beg to differ. In the short time that they were alive, their lives epitomized consciousness, fortitude and dedication to family and friends. They have and will continue to serve as role models for the young and old in the city of Newark.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to recognize three lives that ended too soon, and one that is still brimming with possibilities. Let us not remember Terrance Aeriell, Dashon Harvey and Iofemi Hightower for the senseless crime that took their lives, but for the lives that they led. As Natasha Aeriell continues to recover, I commend her for her bravery and conviction. I wish to convey my sorrow and condolences again to their families.

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

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING THE FIRST RESPONDERS OF SEPTEMBER 11

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, 6 years ago today, most Americans were going about their business, and then we woke up to the next day, September 11, 2001. I was not yet in Congress at that time, but I was a judge in Texas. And I was driving to the courthouse when I was listening to country western music, and it was interrupted about an airplane that crashed into the World Trade Center. And a few minutes later, a second airplane crashed into the World Trade Center.

And about that time, as I was driving my jeep, I noticed that other folks on the road had pulled off to the side of the road, all doing the same thing, listening to the radio, hearing the news from New York. And then we heard more news. We heard about a third airplane, where some good folks in Pennsylvania took matters into their own hands. And later we learned why that plane crashed in Pennsylvania; it did not crash in Washington, D.C. at the White House or even this Capitol. And finally, we heard about a fourth air-

plane, a plane that crashed not far from here into the Pentagon.

And at the end of that day, like many Americans, I was watching television and noticed all of the news reports about the World Trade Center and about the Pentagon, and followed that day, as most Americans, intensely observing and being concerned about our country.

As I was watching television that afternoon, over the skies of Houston, Texas, where I'm from, the 147th Air National Guard were flying those F-16s on patrol over our skies and over our refineries, over our ports. But as I was watching television, I noticed that when those planes hit the World Trade Center, that there were thousands and thousands of people, good people, people of all races, all nationalities, both sexes and all ages, when those planes hit the World Trade Center, they were trying to get away from that terror in the sky as fast as they could. They were running as hard as they could. Nothing wrong with that, but that's what they were doing, fleeing that enemy that attacked us on our soil.

But I also noticed that there was another group of people, not very many, but as soon as those planes hit the World Trade Center, they were running as hard as they could to get to that terror that had crashed into our buildings in New York City. Who were they? Emergency medical technicians, firefighters and police officers, because that's what they do; they respond first to terror, domestic or international.

And while today, Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we remember the thousands of people who died on September 11, 2001, it's equally important that we remember the people who lived, that were allowed to live because our police officers, our firefighters and our emergency technical folks were on the job, saving those lives of those people who were in the World Trade Center. Amazing Americans, those individuals, many of whom lost friends that were trying to get into the World Trade Center, people that they had known all their lives, but they did it because it is their duty and because it was the right thing to do.

Of course we have to remember and need to remember the plane that crashed into the Pentagon as well. And across the street from the Pentagon is Arlington National Cemetery, where we bury America's warriors from all wars since the war between the States. And on duty that day, when that plane came low across this land and crashed into the Pentagon, at Arlington National Cemetery, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, those soldiers were on duty. They did not leave their post. They stayed there throughout the entire episode. Amazing people, our military.

So it's incumbent upon us not only to remember those that died, those that lived because of our first responders, but we need to remember that we did not ask for this war, and we must deal

with it wherever it takes us throughout this world.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING THE SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS AND THE NEED TO REFOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks 6 years since America experienced its worst foreign terrorist attack. I send my solemn prayers to the families of the victims and the survivors of the September 11 attack, where nearly 3,000 persons lost their lives.

Although no amount of time can ever bring back the ones you cherish or erase the memories of the tragic event, it is my hope that their wounds have begun to heal.

While the world and the United States mourned the loss of innocent lives that day, we also sought answers as to who had attacked us and what would be our next steps. Rather than focusing on those responsible for organizing these attacks, President Bush and his administration diverted our efforts and refocused our resources to fight the global war on terror by waging war against the regime of Saddam Hussein via a preemptive strike. The administration presented its erroneous case by drawing on allegations that Iran had weapons of mass destruction, that it was a clear threat to the United States, and that it was connected with al Qaeda.

While failing to gain the support of the global community, this administration continued on with its ill-conceived stance on Iraq, convincing the majority of the Congress to vote in favor of entering a war where only 5 years later we continue to pay heavily.

And what exactly has been the cost? It has cost over \$450 billion in taxpayers hard-earned dollars, according to the Congressional Research Service. It has left families of servicemembers and the larger population mourning the deaths of over 3,750 servicemembers, 69 of those being from the great State of Maryland. It has resulted in a strained family situation for those who endure multiple deployments, and has led to strikingly low levels of recruitment and retention of our mid-career armed servicemembers.

It has undercut our efforts to ensure adequate protection of the home front because much of the needed equipment has been left behind unaccounted for in Iraq, as the National Guard testified before a Senate committee last April.

It has belabored the economy, where the Government Accountability Office, GAO, has reported that the United States simply cannot continue spending at its current rate. And it has, in reality, resulted in the establishment

of al Qaeda in Iraq, as reported by the National Intelligence Estimate.

Mr. Speaker, the GAO testified before the House Armed Services Committee, upon which I sit, last week that only three of the 18 benchmarks established by the Congress have been met. Four have been partially met, and 11 have not been met at all. Specifically, only two of the nine security-related benchmarks were met, two were partially met, and five not met at all.

Furthermore, in a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday, September 6, the Jones Commission made clear that political reconciliation is a key component of resolving the issue of sectarian violence. Accordingly, political reconciliation requires the diplomatic and international support of the global community. Presently, the President and this administration's efforts to gain this pivotal support are less than adequate. The Bush administration, as it has done in the past, continues to try to buy the patience of this Congress and the American people by pulling for excuses.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago I expressed my disapproval of the war by voting against the United States military operations in Iraq.

Today, I still remain unwavering in my support of our troops and the urgent need to make a responsible and timely redeployment of our men and women in uniform as a means to end the continued bloodshed.

I urge my colleagues to support our troops, support saving taxpayer dollars, and support the victims of September 11 by ushering in measures that will ensure diplomatic multilateral and bilateral support for political reconciliation in Iraq. A more focused and more determined strategy that will refocus and better utilize our efforts to fight the global war on terror is necessary to ensure that the victims of September 11 have not died without adequate retribution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, AND JUSTICE WILL REIGN IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the floor today as we commemorated one day early the 6 years since 9/11.

Most of us just came from the steps of the east side of the United States Capitol bringing back memories of how we went together, united, on that day, September 11, 2001, to show the world and to reinforce America's values that we would not be deterred, democracy would reign, freedom would reign, and justice would reign in this Nation.

But I come this evening to again express my deepest sympathy for those families that still mourn and those who still bear the emotional scars and, of course, those who remain injured from that fateful day. I remember being here in the United States Capitol in a meeting. Of course, our minds would never have imagined and could not conceive of what we were about to expect as we heard people running through the Capitol knocking on doors, not being able to explain just what was happening.

Of course, those who wished to continue the day's business did not understand that our lives would never be the same. We finally recognized that there was something out of the ordinary happening. As we, in essence, escaped from this building without much information or understanding, watching over our shoulder the billowing black smoke of the Pentagon, rumors abounded. There were thoughts, suggestions, rumors or facts that planes were heading for a number of places, including the United States Capitol in Washington, DC.

On that day, we saw the loss of lives of those in the Twin Towers and the airplanes in the skies. We are reminded of those souls who steered that plane away from the United States Capitol that landed in the fields of Pennsylvania. We hold all of these souls dear to our heart. Over the weekend, I was able to catch, as I was passing by our television, a documentary on engine 54 in New York. It is my understanding that all 15 of those that were on duty on that day lost their lives.

Today I stand to salute all of the first responders and to highlight the firefighters who went into those buildings and never came out, and all other rescuers who likewise went into the buildings and never came out.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, we vowed, after the creation of this committee, to never have this happen again. Unfortunately, there is much work to be done. We

challenge, and we are challenged, to be dutiful and diligent in making sure that cargo on airplanes does not get unscreened by TSA, that we are assured that airports in the front and the back are secure, and that we are looking keenly at America's transportation system of buses, trains, and highways. We owe that to the American people.

Then, Mr. Speaker, as we listened to General Petraeus and to Ambassador Crocker today, we owe them a real war on terror and that is to be able to join with the world's allies, our allies, and fight the war on terror, fight it and win it in Afghanistan, find Osama bin Laden and bring a political reconciliation to Iraq so that we can bring our soldiers home. Fueling the fires of Al Qaeda and allowing them to come to Iraq in 2005 does not pay tribute to those who died on 9/11.

As I hold in my hand the American flag, I stand here today to recommit myself and to ask my colleagues as they come to this floor to recommit themselves to those lives that were lost, those families that mourn, that we will be a Nation united under truth, fighting the war on terror, making that our number one priority, and that we will pay tribute to the United States military, those who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and places around the world, and make a final and important decision that the political reconciliation for Iraq must be in the hands of a sovereign people and a sovereign nation of Iraq.

It is time now to bring our soldiers home. The war on terror continues. We will never be daunted by that. We stand against the terrorists. But we must do it rightfully and truthfully. We must join together, win the war on terror, bring our soldiers home so that war can be broadened and we can be victorious on behalf of the people of the United States and those who lost their lives in that war.

REPORT ON IRAQ BY GENERAL PETRAEUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentlewoman from Texas who just preceded me stated, we just completed a memorial dedication remembrance ceremony on the steps of the Capitol as Members on both sides of the aisle came together led by our distinguished Speaker, our distinguished majority leader, and our distinguished minority leader. We came together in a very bipartisan way to once again pay tribute to the lives that were lost, indeed, and to their families, and to our first responders and the lives that were lost on their part and, of course, the City of New York on that great tragic day, that