

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. BOND pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 655 are located in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

COMMEMORATING SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, it is important that we commemorate today, the seventh anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. This Nation and the world should also remember that the first battle of the war against terror started in the skies over this country, and it was started not by the military but by an average group of American citizens who, by fate, found themselves on Flight 93, which had taken off from New Jersey, headed to San Francisco, CA. When they, as a group, figured out their plane had been taken over by terrorists who planned to use that plane and the passengers in it as a weapon of mass destruction against the Capitol of the United States, they did an extraordinary thing: This group of average citizens made a battle plan and executed that plan against America's enemies. This exceptional group of Americans knew they were risking and sacrificing their lives to stop an attack on America, which, in fact, was on the White House or this very building we are in today—this very building, the U.S. Capitol. The passengers of Flight 93 faced their enemies without hesitation and brought that plane to the ground in Shanksville, PA. That action was the opening battle in the war against terror.

Today, people are gathering in New York City at Ground Zero, where the World Trade Towers once stood so proudly. People will gather here in the Nation's Capital. This morning, the President observed a moment of silence on the White House lawn and then joined those gathering at the Pentagon, at the site where Flight 77 crashed, to dedicate a memorial to those who died in that building—a building that symbolizes the American military, the greatest fighting force in the world.

This remembrance is not just taking place in New York and in our Nation's Capital, it is taking place all across our Nation. Certainly, we are not alone in mourning the 2,975 people—citizens from more than 90 nations—who died in the terrorist attacks. So our allies and friends mourn with us.

These attacks carried out on September 11 changed the way we view our world. Many Americans, for the first time, felt vulnerable. While it was not the first terrorist attack on America, it was the largest on our soil since Pearl Harbor. So it is critically important to note that this attack wasn't an

isolated incident but a carefully planned operation that was part of al-Qaida's war on America. Bin Laden had already declared war on America publicly. It was, at its foundation, an attack based on a belief that America was corrupt, decadent, and lacked the courage or the will to vigorously defend its very existence.

They were wrong. The attacks that led up to that day—I will just make a note of them—the attacks that led up to that event were:

In 1983, there was an attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, that killed 241 American servicemen.

In 1985, the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* was hijacked by terrorists, and a 70-year-old American passenger was murdered and thrown overboard in his wheelchair.

In 1985, TWA Flight 847 was hijacked at Athens, and a U.S. Navy diver trying to rescue fellow passengers was murdered.

In 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 was bombed, leaving 270 dead.

In 1993, al-Qaida operatives attacked the World Trade Center and bombed it, killing 6 people and injuring 1,042. In June of 1996, 19 American servicemen were killed, with 372 wounded, in the Khobar Towers barracks attack in Saudi Arabia.

In 1998, the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed, killing 223 and wounding thousands.

On October 12, 2000, while a warship of the United States of America, the USS *Cole*, was harbored in the Yemeni port of Aden for a routine fuel stop, a small craft approached and detonated their payload, putting a 40-by-60-foot gash in the ship's port side, killing 17 American sailors.

All of that occurred before the hijacking of those four planes on September 11, 2001. Since that day, while there have been attacks on England, Spain, and around the world, there have been no further successful attacks on the United States.

Even though we are in an election campaign, it is important for us not to forget that the failure of al-Qaida to launch another attack on us is not due to the terrorist organization's relinquishing their objective, renouncing their goal of killing Americans and disrupting our lives and economy, but it is a testament to the vigilance of our law enforcement and military officials and President Bush's bold decision to stop sitting back, stop being on the defensive, and to treat these attacks for what they were—part of a war against the United States. He firmly declared that we should go after these terrorists and any who harbor them and utilize deadly force where necessary. This strategy has worked. No successful attacks have occurred since that time on our homeland. I don't think any of us would have felt that was likely the case, or would be the case, on September 11, 2001, even though I think all of us, as a nation, agreed it was time to move on the offensive. That is the best way to defend our great country.

Since September 11, 2001, 19 attacks have been thwarted in various stages of preparation. This chart is difficult to read, but the red lines across it indicate some of the successful interventions and defeats of terrorist plans. I will just mention those.

In December 2001, Richard Reid attempted to blow up an airplane headed to Miami from Paris, using explosives in his shoe.

In May 2002, Jose Padilla, who was charged with conspiring with Islamic terrorist groups, planned to set off a dirty bomb in the United States.

In September 2002, the Lackawanna Six from Buffalo, NY, were arrested and charged with conspiring with terrorist groups.

In May 2003, Lyman Faris, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Kashmir living in Columbus, OH, was arrested for plotting the collapse of the Brooklyn Bridge.

In June 2003, a Virginia jihad network, involving 11 men from Alexandria, was arrested for conspiring to support terrorists.

In August 2004, members of a terrorist cell were arrested for plotting to attack financial institutions in the United States and other sites in England.

In August 2004, two men were arrested for plotting to bomb a subway station near Madison Square Garden in New York.

In August 2004, two leaders of an Albany, NY, mosque were charged with plotting to purchase a shoulder-fired grenade launcher to assassinate a Pakistani diplomat in New York.

In June 2005, a California father-son terrorist team was charged with supporting terrorism.

In August 2005, four men in Los Angeles were accused of conspiring to attack National Guard facilities in Los Angeles and other targets in the area.

In December 2005, Michael C. Reynolds was arrested by the FBI and charged with being involved in a plot to blow up a Wyoming natural gas refinery.

In February 2006, three men from Toledo, OH, were arrested and charged with providing material support to a terrorist organization.

In April of 2006, Atlanta natives were accused of conspiring with terrorist organizations to attack targets in Washington, DC.

In June of 2006, seven men were arrested in Miami and Atlanta and charged with plotting to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago, as well as FBI offices and other buildings.

In July 2006, 10 people were arrested after the FBI discovered a plot to attack underground transit tunnels in New York.

In August of 2006, British authorities stopped a plot to load 10 commercial airliners with liquid explosives and attack sites in New York, Washington, and California. Fifteen men were charged.

In March 2007, a senior operative for Osama bin Laden already in custody

confesses to have planned September 11 attacks and said he also planned attacks on Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and other sites.

In May of 2007, six men were arrested and charged with plotting to attack soldiers at Fort Dix, NJ.

In June of 2007, four men were charged with plotting to blow up jet fuel in a residential neighborhood near JFK Airport in New York.

It is quite clear that it is imperative this Nation continue to be vigilant and keep these terrorist groups off balance, to keep our homeland and our allies secure.

I believe as the years go by, history will view the efforts of the U.S. Government favorably in keeping its citizens safe after the attacks on September 11, 2001.

President Bush made a bold decision. He took decisive action. A reorganized intelligence community that Senator BOND talked about was put in high gear and has dramatically improved our intelligence concerning terrorist groups. We were not where we should have been. We are still not, but we are dramatically improved. The FBI has dramatically changed its mode of operation from mere investigation after an attack to preventing further attacks. Unprecedented cooperation with and assistance from State and local law enforcement has raised our defensive capabilities and our intelligence-gathering networks manifold. It is tremendous the improved relations we have with State and local law enforcement, and there are many more of those officers than there are Federal officers.

For 7 years, we may thank the Lord and the hard work of so many that this Nation has remained free from terrorist attack. Will it continue? We may all pray that it will, but we know we remain at risk. We know for decades to come there will be some in this world who are willing to even give their lives to attack free nations around the world.

We must remain vigilant. We must not forget what we have done wrong in the past, how we refused to recognize the reality of the threat, as the 9/11 Commission so clearly reported. But we must also not forget how going on the offensive, destroying the bases of operation of the radical Islamic networks, of attacking their military infrastructure, of attacking their soldiers, of capturing thousands and killing thousands of their operatives has made us safe and have put the terrorists on the defensive.

Despite what some say, these efforts have gained worldwide support. The terrorists are losing support throughout the world. Al-Qaida made Iraq the central front against the United States and poured people into that country. But they made a bad decision to challenge the magnificent, courageous, and lethal U.S. military.

Recent reports have declared that al-Qaida in Iraq has been decimated. There may still be some left, but the

power of that network that 2 or 3 years ago existed has been decimated today, most experts say.

So let's remember what we have done right. Also, we must keep these efforts up because it may well take decades before we will be victorious in this effort. If we remain firm, if this Nation continues to be smart, determined, and dedicated, their doom is sure. This group cannot defeat us. They may succeed with an attack here, they may succeed with an attack there, but if we have the will, if we have the courage, if we have the maturity, if we have the determination to remember those heroic people who started this war defending this very Capitol Building, who gave their lives in Pennsylvania for us—and we will honor their memory and honor the memory of those in New York City and honor the memory of those in the Pentagon and on the ship, the USS *Cole*—we will honor them by being firm, being faithful. We will be successful.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 9/11 ATTACKS ON AMERICA

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 7 years ago today 19 people conspired to kill nearly 3,000 people in our country. It was by far, as we know, the most deadly civilian attack ever carried out on American soil. The images and sounds from that fateful morning continue to haunt us. As we continue to mourn those lost that day, today flags fly at half-staff in their honor. They were men, they were women, they were children, they were people of various nationalities and faiths. They were firefighters and police officers and emergency medical services personnel. They were investment bankers and convenience store clerks. They were attendants and pilots.

Four of the victims were Ohioans: Wendy Faulkner from Mason; William David Moskal from Brecksville; Christina Ryook from Cleveland; LTC David Scales from Cleveland.

We should remember these names represent lives cut needlessly short. We should remember the families who will forever miss them. We should remember the EMS personnel, the police officers and firefighters who responded to the attack when these names represented perfect strangers—perfect strangers whose circumstances met the simple criteria first responders use to determine when to take action: Someone needs help.

Hundreds of first responders risked and, in many cases, sacrificed their own lives to save others. So many of them died, so many of them were injured, so many of them have suffered illnesses as a result of their actions.

First responders in Ohio and all across this country continue to stand at the ready every day, ready to protect our families, ready to protect our

communities at a moment's notice, and every day in this country they are there when buildings burn, when accident victims need treatment, when expectant mothers go into labor unexpectedly, when citizens need rescue. When other civilians are running away, they are running in.

It is nearly impossible to see today's date and not think back on the attacks of 7 years ago. But let's be sure to do more than to recount the images, the sounds, and the conversations that define our own personal experience of September 11.

Let's also remember and honor the heroic first responders, the innocent victims, and the victims' families left behind. Let's never, Mr. President, forget.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning 7 years to the minute since the terrorist attacks on the Nation, I attended the inauguration and dedication of the Pentagon Memorial. There have been countless personal memorials over the years. The Pentagon Memorial is America's first national memorial to those who died on that heart-breaking day. It is a beautiful, peaceful patch of land on the very spot where American Airlines flight 77 smashed into the west wall of the Pentagon. In that quiet place, there are 184 stainless steel benches, one bench for each of the 184 innocent victims who died at the Pentagon and on that plane that struck it 7 years ago today.

Thousands of people were at that ceremony this morning marking the dedication and opening of the Pentagon Memorial. They, of course, included the President and Vice President, the Cabinet, leaders in Congress, top military leaders, scores of Members of Congress, along with the survivors of the Pentagon attack and rescue workers who were the true heroes of the day. Most poignantly, we were joined by hundreds of husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends of the loved ones who perished at the Pentagon.

While 9/11 comes once a year, for 9/11 families, every day brings painful reminders of what and whom they have lost. Their pain is still heartbreaking.

It was the families of the Pentagon victims who spearheaded the effort to create the Pentagon Memorial. We all hope they can find some measure of peace and comfort in their fine work in the creation of this memorial.

Yesterday afternoon I had a chance to visit in my office with a man with a small company near Chicago, IL, who worked for over a year to finish and polish the 184 stainless steel benches that make up the Pentagon Memorial. He lives and works in Elk Grove Village in Arlington Heights, and his name is Abe Yousif.

Abe came to America 29 years ago from Iraq. Abe's beautiful wife Angela moved to America 27 years ago, also