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FIVE YEARS LATER

By Senator Rick Santorum

September 11, 2006

Monday marks the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th. It is hard to believe that half a decade has passed since that clear Tuesday morning that forever changed our nation. Stories of the heroic actions of our fellow Americans flow as freely today as they did five years ago.

We remember the victims of United Flight 93 who, displaying the first signs of the American resiliency that would define our nation in the weeks and months following the attacks, refused to allow the terrorist hijackers to use their plane as a tool to murder any more of their fellow citizens.

We remember the firefighters and police officers who responded to the attacks with reserves of courage that inspire us still. With fires raging, these brave men and women ran towards danger, not from it, their actions saving so many more Americans from a tragic end to that fateful day.

We remember the doctors, nurses, and medics who worked tirelessly to heal the wounded, they too saving American lives. We remember the lines at the blood banks, Americans across the nation lending a hand in any way possible. We remember the donations to charities, to food banks, to shelters.

We remember the emotions—the anguish, the anger, the overwhelming feeling that as Americans, we were all in this together. And the flags, flown proudly from homes, from cars, in storefronts.

The events of that day were so profound, they so altered each of our lives that they come back in an instant, even five years later. And each time they do, we know that we don't want any American, this generation or the next, to experience such a day ever again.

September 11th alerted every American to the fact that our homeland can no longer rely on the

defenses of the past to keep us safe. No longer are oceans a serviceable barrier, protecting us from those who wish America harm. No longer does "mutually assured destruction" deter our enemies-- how could it, when their own deaths are seen not as a tragic consequence but a desired objective?

Bearing that in mind, new measures must be taken if we are to remain safe in this post-9/11 world. While some of these necessary steps have been taken, some, unfortunately, have not. A great deal of our national security depends on our border security, and quite frankly, our borders today are not secure. We need to know who is coming into the country, where they are from, and what they are doing here. And with thousands pouring illegally across our borders, both north and south, we just don't. That has to change.

The President has termed our actions overseas the "War on Terror," but I believe this is a misnomer. A nation cannot fight a war against a tactic, and terror is not a state or an ideology but a brutal tactic of war. No, instead, we are at war with Islamic fascism, the attacks of five years ago being but the most devastating incident of that war. It is a war that we did not ask for, but was instead thrust upon us. Every major Islamic fascist leader has openly identified the United States as their prime target, and repeatedly promises the creation of a new, global, "caliphate" where Islamic fascism will rule mankind. This, now, is the great threat of our generation.

So as we take time this September to reflect on the events of five years ago, we remember all of those things--the heroes and the heartache, the shock we felt and the strength of our nation in response, and what the events of that day, and those since, mean for the future of America. And most importantly, we keep those who lost their lives on September 11th, and their friends and families that survived, forever in our thoughts and prayers. God Bless.

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