

Mr. Speaker, today our nation pauses to remember another September morning very much like this one, bright and sunny, which began as usual for most of us but ended with nearly 3000 of our citizens dead and our nation once again at war. As we do every year at this time, we remember with sorrow and sympathy the lives lost, the families shattered, and the sense of vulnerability many still feel. But we also remember the heroism of the first responders in New York City, Virginia and Pennsylvania, and we remember the heroism of the passengers of Flight 93, who saved countless others by overpowering the hijackers of their plane before it could cause more tragedy in Washington, DC.

We also remember the determination and unity of purpose we all felt in the days and weeks immediately after those attacks, a determination that has led to the effective dismantlement of Al Qaeda and the imprisonment or death of those responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Our determination to remember can be seen in the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, which is located on the former site of the Twin Towers and which we dedicated last year. Our determination to rebuild can be seen in the Freedom Tower, now known as One World Trade Center, that is steadily rising above the Manhattan skyline right next to the memorial and museum.

There are no words that I or anyone else could ever speak that will assuage the grief and sense of loss sustained by so many, including 700 in my district alone. What we can and must do is remember those lost and rededicate ourselves to rebuilding the country they loved, which in the end is the greatest tribute we could give them.

Each of us may never confront a vicious hijacker, but each of us can confront bigotry and division even in our own communities that destroy our commonality of purpose. Let us hope and pray that we can find within each of us the kind of courage as those Americans showed that day.