

Eshoo Statement on the Fifth Anniversary of the 9/11 Attacks

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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, issued the following statement in the Congressional Record regarding consideration of House Resolution 994, Expressing the Sense of the House of Representatives on the Fifth Anniversary of the Terrorists Attacks Launched Against the United States on September 11, 2001.

"Mr. Speaker, today we join together to honor the nearly 3,000 people who perished in the heinous attacks on our country five years ago. The images of that day remain vivid in our minds, as do the emotions we all felt -- the shock, the grief -- as we realized that a handful of terrorists plotting halfway around the world were capable of destroying so many innocent lives on American soil. September 11, 2001, shattered the illusion that our homeland would always provide safe sanctuary from those who would do us harm.

"Five years later, we also remember how the events of September 11 brought our country together. As we did after Pearl Harbor, America showed its true colors. After the twin towers fell, we put aside our political differences to unite behind a pledge to make our country safer and to track down and punish those responsible for the attacks. With the world on our side, we had a unique opportunity to marshal our vast resources to destroy the al Qaeda terrorist network for good.

"We made a good start. At home, we moved quickly to tighten airport security and to reorganize our homeland defenses and intelligence infrastructure to close gaps that enabled the terrorists to use our own commercial airliners as weapons against us. Overseas, working with our allies, our military took the fight to al Qaeda and the Taliban, who had provided safe harbor to the terrorists and their training camps in Afghanistan for far too long.

"Today, however, it is clear that we have failed to finish the job we needed to do. Instead of committing our forces to pursuing al Qaeda's leaders -- including Osama bin Laden, who is still at large -- we embarked on an unnecessary war of choice in Iraq that has squandered our resources and the world's goodwill without making us measurably safer.

"Domestically, we've spent billions to secure our airports, but we've neglected the security of our ports and the cyber security of our technological infrastructure and communications networks. Chronic underfunding and lax security standards have left our nation's ports and cargo containers a soft underbelly, and the President's ongoing failure to appoint an Assistant Homeland Security Secretary for Cyber Security has created a leadership void in this critical sector, leaving us vulnerable to a telecom disaster on the scale of an 'electronic Pearl Harbor.'

"It's not too late to change course to do what must be done to prevail in the real war against terrorism.

"We must recommit to finishing the job in Afghanistan, to fully funding our counterterrorism intelligence programs at home and abroad, to increasing the size of our Special Forces, to improving our human intelligence capability and to securing nuclear materials around the world.

"Only then will we truly be able to say that we have fully honored those who lost their lives on September 11."

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