

Senator Susan M. Collins
Statement on Anniversary of 9/11 Terrorist Attacks
Sept. 11, 2018

Dear Friends:

Seventeen years have passed, but the memory of September 11, 2001, remains as vivid as if it were yesterday. Those of us old enough to remember each have our own recollections of where we were and what we were doing as the horrifying attacks began to unfold. We share the still powerful emotions of shock, anger, and grief.

On the evening of that terrible day, members of Congress gathered on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. With tears in our eyes and sorrow in our hearts, together we sang, "God Bless America." The emotions of shock, anger, and grief were joined by unity, resolve, and patriotism.

Today, that moment remains my most enduring memory. The sense of unity, resolve, and patriotism that swept over us as we sang was a source of strength in the challenges we faced.

Here in Maine, we remember Robert and Jackie Norton of Lubec, a devoted retired couple who boarded Flight 11 to celebrate a son's wedding on the West Coast. We remember James Roux of Portland, an Army veteran and a devoted father, on Flight 175 for a business meeting in California. We remember Robert Schlegel of Gray who was celebrating his recent promotion to the rank of Commander in the United States Navy, and still settling into his new office at the Pentagon, an office that is believed to be the point of impact for Flight 77. We remember Stephen Ward of Gorham, who was working on the 101st floor of the North Tower that terrible morning.

On this solemn anniversary, we join all Americans in remembering each of the nearly 3,000 lives lost that day – lives of accomplishment, contribution, and promise. Each loss leaves a wound in the hearts of families and friends that can never be fully healed.

And we honor the heroes of that day. We still are moved by the selfless courage of men and women on Flight 93 who wrestled that plane to the ground, sacrificing their lives so that others might live. We are inspired by the firefighters and police officers at the World Trade Center who continued to climb upward in rescue even as the Twin Towers were coming down. We pay tribute to the first responders, the military personnel, and the civilians who rushed into the smoke and flames at the Pentagon to lead others to safety. We express our gratitude to those who have given so much to defend our nation against terrorism -- the men and women of our armed forces.

September 11th was not just a day of personal tragedy. It was an attack on the United States, an attack on freedom, and an assault on civilization. We must never forget what

was lost and what remains at stake. We must pledge to do all that we can to prevent future attacks. The fundamental obligation of government is to protect its people. Since September 11th, we have done much to meet that obligation.

In what seemed like a moment, September 11th was transformed from a day like any other into one that, forever, will stand alone. The loss we relive reminds us of the value of all that we must protect. The heroism reminds us of the unconquerable spirit of the American people. Our accomplishments remind us that we can meet any challenge with decisive action. As long as we keep the meaning of this day of remembrance in our hearts, we shall meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Sincerely

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator