Mr. President, I remember September 11, 2001, as if it

were yesterday. I was here in my office at my desk when the unthinkable

happened. I remember driving to the Senate that morning thinking it was

such a beautiful day. It was a crisp fall morning with a remarkable

blue sky. Over the years, I have often wondered how such resplendence

could occur amid such evil and suffering. I take solace in knowing that

nearly 3,000 innocent victims, including 3 Utahns, hopefully touched

the face of God that day.

Yet since that horrible day, Americans have once again risen to the

challenge. As President George W. Bush said 3 months after the attacks:

But 10 years on, Americans have shown, once again, our resolve can

never be broken. When confronted by evil, we will not yield.

I remember on that day I came over here to the Senate, and we were

told to evacuate the Capitol. As we walked out--some running as fast as

they could--and walked down the steps of the Senate side of the

Capitol, I turned around and saw that Senator Helms was back up on the

veranda, and he was having difficulties, as he did in his later years,

with ambulation, and I walked back up the steps, and he leaned on my

arm as we came down the steps and were among the last to leave the

Capitol at that time. We were warned there might be a plane flying into

the Capitol or into the White House, and it was a matter of great

concern to everybody.

But 10 years later, as I have said, Americans have once again shown

the

resolve that is necessary. We have confronted evil, and we will

continue to do so, and we will never yield.

We, as a nation, continue to stand up to this threat and we have done

much to overcome it. But we should never become complacent.

As the 9/11 Commission's recent report card on the implementation of

its recommendations clearly shows, we have made important advances in

securing the homeland, but a lot of work needs to be accomplished.

Some of the most profound changes, and also some of the least

understood, have occurred in our intelligence community. For example,

the 16 different agencies which constitute our intelligence community

are collaborating as never before. Part of that is because of the

PATRIOT Act, which requires that type of collaboration. The PATRIOT Act

has worked very well, and even though there are some on the far right

and the far left who do not accept the PATRIOT Act, I have to tell you

it has worked amazingly well in helping us to protect our homeland.

As the Commission pointed out, collaboration in the intelligence

community was essential to the success of the raid which killed Osama

bin Laden. That was 10 years later, but it sent a message to the world

that we are not going to quit until we find these people, root them

out, and get rid of them.

In addition, I also believe our Nation is much safer due to the

Terrorist Surveillance Program. The Terrorist Surveillance Program

enables our intelligence agencies to monitor international

communications from al-Qaida. This initiative has been the subject of

much debate in Congress. However, the legislative compromise which was

reached, I believe, strikes a proper balance by permitting our

intelligence agencies to operate in an efficient manner while

strengthening the oversight role of the Foreign Intelligence

Surveillance Court, which has worked amazingly well.

However, the need for improvements still remains. The Commission

notes that over the past 6 years we have had four Directors of National

Intelligence. As many managers would agree, such leadership changes

will disrupt the implementation of any organization's modernization

strategy. Yet in the realm of counterterrorism, the slightest misstep

could be exploited by our foes to launch another attack.

Other areas which require immediate attention include securing our

borders. An important tool in helping us verify the identity of

visitors to the United States is our biometric entry system, called US-

VISIT. Unfortunately, the security offered by this system is

incomplete. As the Commission pointed out, US-VISIT does not yet have a

fully operational system to record when visitors leave our Nation. Such

a capability is not only useful in tracking terrorists but is also an

important capability in stemming illegal immigration.

That is why I have introduced S. 332, the Strengthening Our

Commitment to Legal Immigration and America's Security Act. This bill

requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to create a mandatory exit

procedure for foreign visitors to our country, the United States of

America. Unfortunately, my optimism regarding Afghanistan, the planning

ground and safe haven for those who plotted the attacks of September

11, has somewhat receded.

The surge of forces has led to great gains in the southern Afghan

provinces of Helmand and Kandahar. This is the heartland of the

Taliban. According to GEN David Rodriguez, who until recently was our

Deputy Commander in Afghanistan, the Taliban

of these areas as recently as 2009. Moreover, our additional

forces enabled the implementation of a robust counterinsurgency

strategy. This means we had sufficient forces not only to clear an area

of the Taliban but to hold it. As a result, we were able to provide

security to the local population, assist in the development of the

primarily agrarian economy, and train Afghani security forces.

Unfortunately, the President's arbitrary decision to reduce the

number of our forces deployed to Afghanistan by approximately a third,

and instructing the reduction to be completed by next summer, only adds

to the burden of our forces that remain.

In fact, this summer I was fortunate to host former Director of the

Central Intelligence Agency, GEN Michael Hayden, at a speaking event in

Utah. I found his insight on this matter most illuminating. General

Hayden did not quarrel with the notion of reducing the number of troops

in Afghanistan. However, he was troubled by the timing of the drawdown.

Specifically, the general stated he would have kept the troops in place

until the conclusion of the 2012 summer fighting season.

That being said, I have absolute confidence in our new commander, GEN

John Allen. He succeeds General Petraeus, with whom I met over there in

Afghanistan, and have met on other occasions, and who has done a

tremendous singular service for our country. I have great respect for

him. But I expect General Allen to be just as good. General Allen was

one of the vital catalysts in the Sunni awakening in Iraq. The Sunni

awakening and our counterinsurgency strategy are considered by many to

be the driving forces for our success during the Iraqi surge. And, of

course, we all remember what General Petraeus did there as well. I am

confident General Allen will maintain the hard-won momentum our forces

have achieved in Afghanistan, despite the reduction in resources.

In addition, our troops will be assisted by an even greater number of

Afghan troops. In this month's edition of Foreign Affairs, General

Rodriguez wrote that the Afghan Army by the end of 2010 had increased

in size to 143,000, which surpassed that year's goal by 9,000 troops.

In addition, the Afghan Army ``has quickly become one of the country's

most respected institutions.'' The general also writes:

In conclusion, much has been accomplished, but more remains to be

done. The memory of that day--and those we lost--will be forever with

us. We must never forget the hard lessons we learned on September 11.

We must not become complacent or believe the threat is over or has

gone. We have done much to mitigate the threats posed against us, but

we always must be on guard for anything in the future.

The hallmark of our democracy consists of the principles of liberty

and equality, cherished by our citizens. The terrorists who attacked us

on September 11 saw the civic virtues of our peaceful Republic and

wrongfully concluded that we were weak. As others have been reminded in

the past, it is a mistake to underestimate the courage and resolve of

Americans when our constitutional ideals come under attack or when our

lives and liberties are threatened.

Even on that first day, the example of police and firemen charging

into burning buildings at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and

civilians fighting back above the skies of Shanksville, PA, showed to

the world that America had not lost its resolve. To this day, we remain

vigilant in our commitment to protect the natural rights to life and

liberty announced in our Declaration of Independence and guaranteed by

our beloved Constitution.

Ten years have followed since that day, but I remain proud of the

example that America has set for the world as it continues its

relentless pursuit of those who would kill innocents and plot mass

terrorist attacks on civilian populations.

President Roosevelt called the attack on Pearl Harbor

Similarly, September 11, 2001, remains a day of

remembrance and resolve. We will always remember those who were killed

that day and the loved ones they left behind, and we resolve to secure

justice for those victims by bringing justice to those responsible for

the attacks and who continue to plot against us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.