Mr. President, I rise today on this most moving and

memorable of occasions after we as a nation joined together to mark the

solemn 10th anniversary of the attacks on September 11, 2001.

Throughout my home State of Maine and across this great land, Americans

are uniting as one nation indivisible as we pause to remember with the

heaviest of hearts the tragedy that befell our nation 10 years ago--a

morning that changed America--and Americans--forever.

We are all a different people in America--no matter our faith or

ancestry--as a result of the horrific events on

9/11 that are ingrained upon the landscape of our consciousness for all

time. We all know where we were and what we were doing at the precise

time they happened. As many of us remember the assassination of

President Kennedy, and some Pearl Harbor, our children will remember

this day.

As we recall, that morning began with such remarkable blue skies, but

ended with a Nation in mourning and stunned disbelief. In Washington,

DC, I watched the images along with the rest of the world. Later, as

the Sun set over the National Mall--still capped by smoke billowing

from the wound in the side of the Pentagon--I will never forget

gathering with my colleagues in the House and Senate on the Capitol

steps to sing ``God Bless America.'' We sang to send a message to the

country and to the world that we would never be deterred--that freedom

would never be crushed by the blunt and remorseless instruments of

terror.

The notes of ``God Bless America'' still reverberate, the resilience

we recaptured as a country remains pressed upon our national psyche,

and the memory of the inspirational sacrifices of so many heroic

Americans who perished that morning will forever have a home in our

hearts and our prayers.

On this September 11 as in all that have preceded it, we mourn the

loss of those eight individuals from Maine who were taken from us all

too soon--Anna Allison, Carol Flyzik, Robert Jalbert, Jacqueline

Norton, Robert Norton, James Roux, Robert Schlegel, and Stephen Ward.

We remember the heroic acts of valor that will always distinguish the

men and women of 115 different nations who went to work that day, or

boarded a plane, or rushed to the aid of strangers whose lives they

believed were as vital as their own--and never returned home. If 9/11

was a snapshot of horror, it also became a portrait of consummate

humanity. If it laid bare the unimaginable cruelties of which humankind

is capable, it also etched forever within our minds the heights to

which the human spirit can rise--even and especially in the face of

mortality.

Each had a soul, and having visited Ground Zero in the aftermath, I

can tell you their presence still triumphed over the twisted

destruction--and it always will. We recall that during one of the

darkest days in our Nation's extraordinary and storied history, we also

witnessed our Nation's mettle and solidarity, the inexhaustible courage

and undaunted bravery that provided us with boundless inspiration and

hope that sustained us then and inspires us today.

And nowhere was that more evident than with the first responders who,

in the face of unspeakable adversity and peril, heroically ran toward

the very dangers others were desperately trying to escape, placing

their lives in harm's way in the most courageous and valiant of

endeavors to save others without regard for their own safety.

As Americans, we are awed by the noble examples of courage and

selflessness that emerged. When the alarm went off in fire stations

across New York, firefighters were changing shifts. If they were on the

way home, they turned around. If they were finishing up at the

firehouse, getting ready to leave, they stayed. Some were retired--

veterans already at home--and they reported in. Many were to find

themselves climbing higher and higher in those great silver towers

toward a fate that must have become clearer with every step.

Their valiant service and sacrifice are also a vivid reminder of the

remarkable men and women exceptional enough to don our country's

uniform to serve and defend our nation. Whether on our shores or soil

here at home or around the globe, their steadfast sense of duty and

love of country are an inspiration to us all, their commitment

fortifies our will, and their professionalism steadies our hands in an

uncertain world.

As I gathered with Mainers across our State, I could not help but

feel that inescapable, palpable sense of patriotism that binds us all

together as Americans. It is also, I believe, a continuation of the

heightened love of country all of us experienced when our Nation's

bravest and finest--in this case our Navy SEALs--achieved what Americas

detractors said was unachievable. They triumphantly rid the world of

public enemy number one, and brought justice to the evil incarnate that

was Osama bin Laden.

In speaking of bin Laden, I have often sounded the refrain that you

can run but you cannot hide. Well, thanks to the combined might of our

military, intelligence, and counter-terrorism professionals, the

message sent to the terrorists of the world with the death of Osama bin

Laden is that America will prevail no matter how long it takes,

whatever it takes, no matter where you are.

Though justice was finally rendered, the unending pain of loved ones

lost does not ease with the passing of years, and yet out of these

atrocities emerged heroes who were then and will forever be shining

testaments to the very best of who we are as a nation. And so, today,

we memorialize those whose lives were stilled on September 11, and at

the same time, we cannot help but extol the courage and indomitable

spirit they exhibited.

It was an unmistakable message to the world that we would never be

deterred--that our freedoms could never be crushed by the cowardly

instruments of terror that are no match against a resilient people

certain in the knowledge that good ultimately triumphs over evil.

What better symbol could there be of our mettle as a people than the

historic National 9/11 Flag initiative. Americans across our country

are stitching together the tattered remnants of one of the largest

flags that flew over the wreckage at Ground Zero. When our beloved

banner of freedom arrived at the U.S. Capitol on July 14, I cannot

begin to convey the sense of honor and privilege I experienced in

contributing to its restoration. And to share in this event with first

responders, 9/11 families, and veterans made this moment one I will

treasure, always.

This expression of love for our homeland speaks to the inescapable

belief that our strength as a nation has always emanated not from

Washington, but from the people themselves--from tireless patriots of

their own volition performing the most extraordinary of deeds.

Patriots like the exemplary Freeport Flag Ladies--Elaine Greene,

Carmen Footer, and JoAnn Miller, who have waved American flags on Main

Street every Tuesday morning, rain, snow, or shine, since 9-11 in

tribute to those who have sacrificed for all of us--our brave

servicemen and women and our first responders. It was the highest of

honors for me to join them early Sunday morning on Main Street in

Freeport to wave flags on the 10th anniversary.

Amid the trials and tribulations that this date in our history

evokes, we take solace in the sacred truth that none of us grieves

alone--that there are no strangers among us, only Americans. Indeed,

out of the rubble rose our resolve, out of despair grew our

determination, and out of the hate that was perpetrated upon us proudly

stood our humanity. And so, we venerate the American spirit that is

stronger than stone and mortar, tougher than steel and glass, and more

permanent than any pain or suffering that can be inflicted upon us.