

of 9/11 to a healing, restorative process of truth and reconciliation.

Before the Congress adjourns, I will bring forth a new proposal for the establishment of a National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, which will have the power to compel testimony and gather official documents to reveal to the American people not only the underlying deception which has divided us, but in that process of truth seeking set our Nation on a path of reconciliation.

We suffer in our remembrance of 9/11, because of the terrible loss of innocent lives on that grim day. We also suffer because 9/11 was seized as an opportunity to run a political agenda, which has set America on a course of the destruction of another nation and the destruction of our own Constitution. And we have become less secure as a result of the warped practice of pursuing peace through the exercise of preemptive military strength.

It is not simply 9/11 that needs to be remembered. We also need to remember the politicization of 9/11 and the polarizing narrative which followed, locking us into endless conflict, a war on terror which has wrought further terror worldwide and which has severely damaged our standing worldwide as an honorable, compassionate nation. As we were all victims of 9/11, so we have become victims of the interpretation of 9/11.

Our government's external response to 9/11 was to attack a nation which did not attack us. Indeed on the first anniversary of 9/11, the Bush administration issued a well-publicized stern warning to Iraq which was part of a campaign to induce people to believe Iraq had something to do with 9/11.

The deliberate, systematic connection of Iraq with 9/11 has led America into a philosophical and moral cul-de-sac as over one million Iraqis and over 4155 U.S. soldiers have died in a war which will cost over \$3 trillion. Additionally, soldiers from 23 other countries have died in the Iraq war.

We attempt to unite Iraq by further dividing it. We talk about restoring Iraq while taking steps to place control of its vast oil wealth in the hands of U.S. oil giants. And we intend to impose upon the Iraqi people the cost of rebuilding a country which our government ruined, keeping a once prosperous nation lashed to debt and poverty for a long, long time. Iraq has paid for 9/11. We all continue to pay for 9/11.

The heartbreaking loss of the lives and injuries to America troops further binds us to the Administration's illogic of the Iraq war: We remember our troops' sacrifice by demanding more sacrifice; we support our troops by continuing the war.

The dominant color of our new national security since 9/11 is neither red, white nor blue. Every day is orange. Everyday reminders of fear of 9/11 become banal. Yet we no longer hear the airport announcements nor see the orange-colored warnings because they have commonplace standards in our new national security state, as is the PATRIOT Act, wire-tapping, and a host of invasions of privacy and diminution of civil liberties. The Constitution has been roundly attacked by the very people who took an oath to defend it.

There is a powerful desire across America for change, not necessarily from control by one political party to another, but a change from living with lies to living with truth.

Over two dozen nations, facing peril within and without, deeply divided by politics and war

have travelled down a path of restoring civil society through a formal process of reconciliation. At some point within each of those countries it was understood that the way forward is shown through the light of truth. This process is not without pain because it requires a willingness to study evidence to which eyes had been averted and ears had been closed. But in the process of truth and reconciliation, nations found new strength, new resolve, and new commitment.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation enabled that nation to come to grips with its past through a public confessional, bringing forward those who committed crimes and having the power to grant amnesty for full disclosure of crimes against the people. Of course, our path may necessarily be different: High U.S. government officials stand accused in impeachment petitions of violating national and international law. Our continued existence as a democracy may depend upon how thoroughly we seek the truth. I will call upon the American people to join me in supporting this effort.

The truth can move us forward, as a unified whole, so that we can one day become a re-United States. September 11 is the day the world changed. It is the day America embraced a metaphor of war. If we are open to truth and reconciliation, we may one day be able, once again, to embrace peace.

HONORING MARY HIGLEY'S 110TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2008

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Mary Higley, a Southeastern Pennsylvania resident who recently reached a very special milestone.

Mary celebrated her 110th birthday on Aug. 10, 2008 during a ceremony with her fellow residents at Meadowood Retirement Community in Worcester Township, Montgomery County.

Mary was born in Burrville, Rhode Island in 1898. She was the first of five children in her family. She pursued a career in the sciences after graduating from Mount Holyoke College with a degree in biology. Mary worked as a Bacteriologist for the State of Rhode Island in the Public Health Department testing water systems until she married. She and her late husband have three children, two boys and one daughter who lives nearby in North Wales, Pennsylvania.

Mary stays active at Meadowood, rising each morning at exactly 6 A.M. She is an avid reader and enjoys walks through the gardens. Known for her jigsaw puzzles, she always has one in the works in her room. Mary has been a resident at Meadowood since 1996 and continues a very busy and stimulating life there.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Mrs. Mary Higley a very happy 110th birthday. She is an inspiration to all.

IN MEMORY OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I would like submit the following editorial published today in the Times and Democrat newspaper of Orangeburg, South Carolina on September 11, 2008. It eloquently conveys the dedication we all feel on this seventh anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th. I appreciate their sentiment, and believe that we must never forget those who lost their lives on that terrible day, never forget the enemy we face, and never lose faith that our nation will prevail in this Global War on Terrorism.

SEVEN YEARS LATER: "WE WILL NOT FORGET"

Today is Sept. 11, 2008, seven years after the worst attack against America in its history. Second District Congressman JOE WILSON has since that day made a point of referencing remembering 9-11 in every speech before lawmakers. He's offered more than words, too, with his children serving in the war on terrorism and the congressman being an active supporter of the war and the military waging it.

The Times and Democrat's continuing series of memorial posters today focuses on 9-11. "We will not forget." The message has not changed.

Innocent people in the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon, and aboard an airliner in Pennsylvania, died when terrorists brought their hatred for our nation and its people to our shores. The images of airliners crashing into the very symbols of our Nation are forever etched into Americans' minds.

On this anniversary date, our Nation remains under attack. We continue to be the target of terrorists, either directly or through attacks on our allies. Extremists contending they are acting in the name of Islam continually vow to punish our nation for its perceived evil role around the world.

Defeating the threat, on the surface, appears impossible. We cannot score definitive military victories against forces that are committed only to recruiting soldiers to die while killing as many Americans as possible. There seemingly always will be another recruit.

Our forces fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan face constant threats. Our enemies boast of killing the American invaders who have come to seize holy lands. Thousands have died. Their deaths must not be in vain. The sacrifices of the thousands on Sept. 11, 2001, must not be forgotten. Our nation will stand tall, we will determine where and how to continue the fight against terrorism. Just as older generations passed the test in World War II and wars before, the generations of our time are facing their tests. We cannot afford to fail.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2008

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was delayed in reaching the floor yesterday and missed rollcall vote No. 581. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."