



News Release

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MAYOR LOVERIDGE'S COMMENTS AT RIVERSIDE REMEMBERS: 9/11 – TEN YEARS LATER EVENT

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – I thank members of the City Council who joined us today....

All across the country, we are gathering as nation to remember a fateful, late summer day, September, 11th, 2001. Ten years later, this is a time of national remembrance.

As Mayor, I join with mayors in thousands of cities to remember 9/11 and to commit ourselves to a better future of civic engagement and service for others.

We all remember what happened. In the words of a banner often seen in the days after 9/11, we will never forget.

We remember where we were and what we saw.

Nearly 3,000 people died in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. And for each person who died, there are family stories of grief....yet life goes on. We are a resilient nation.

We saw death, we recognized heroism, especially by firefighters and the passengers of Flight 93. We remember the words, "Let's roll."

And in Riverside, we saluted the firefighters who were members of the City's USAR team that went to New York, to help at ground zero. We remember when they left from March Reserve Base and when they returned for a community welcome home in front of the Downtown Fire Station.

Life changed for us, innocence was lost as we recognized that the seas no longer separated us from enemies who wish to do us harm.

There can be no return to the innocence of September 10th, 2001--and sadly, no end to the vigilance.

We are reminded of this threat every time we go to an airport.

We now have a Department called Homeland Security.

We have not had an act of terrorism completed in the U.S., though several have been attempted and perhaps many prevented.

We fought a war in Iraq and continue to do so in Afghanistan, with high cost in those died or wounded and in billions of dollars spent. As I speak, we have men and women fighting for our country, with courage, skill, and at grave risk to their lives.

Al-Qaeda is seriously wounded, but still remains as a source of terrorism.

Outside of the United States, 9/11 is also remembered. Let me read a letter from the Mayor of Erlangen, Germany. In late October, I go to Germany to sign a Sister City Agreement....

What I most remember about 9/11 was that was a time when everybody was united.

Here in the downtown, we gathered two days after 9/11. If you come to my office, there is a 9/11 picture that hangs in the center of the wall above my desk. It is a picture of Rev Clarke Prescott, Dr. EM Abdulmunim, and Rabbi Harold Camiker with their arms around each other. As they stood before us, there came the loudest and most sustained applause I can remember as Mayor. We embraced each other, as a community and as a country.

The pledge to our flag had a special and powerful meaning. We were proud to pledge allegiance to the United States of America. We said with pride that we were one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

The question we ask today is how have we changed? How are you and I different?

As Mayor of Riverside, I take pride in March Air Reserve Base and the role of that the air force plays in defense of our country.

I take pride in the extraordinary service of our police and fire fighters, not only in emergencies but in their everyday work.

I take pride in this City's commitment to diversity. If you go to the 7th floor, you can read our statement of inclusiveness. It is not a choice, it is who we are. In Riverside, we live, work, and play together.

I take pride in this City's response to emergencies, for Indonesia and Katrina, and most recently for Sendai, Japan, our Sister City for over 50 years. We raised over \$580,000 for Sendai Relief.

Most of all, I take pride that we are gathering here in front of City Hall to remember 9/11 and to commit ourselves to a better future for all people and all faiths in Riverside, and for our children and their children.

It is time to come together as a community, for reflection and remembrance! Today is a time to come together in national solidarity and unity.

Thank you for coming!

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City of Riverside Remembers 9/11 Ten Years Later September 11, 2011

By Omar Zaki

We are here today joined together in solemn remembrance of that tragic Tuesday morning on September 11, 2001.

We remember the victims of this national tragedy, and honor the first responders who risked—and often gave—their lives to save others.

We join with all Americans in reflecting on the sacrifice made by so many on that terrible day and in the years since to protect our country.

The events of September 11th were transformative in many ways. They shook America's sense of security and brought home to every person the danger of extremist violence and the reality of our vulnerability.

In the last few weeks I have asked myself the question, what have I learned in the last decade as a result of 9/11. How has it changed me as an American and a Muslim?

I find myself having two levels of sorrow. On the surface, I grieve with all my fellow Americans of the senseless and atrocious acts of violence perpetrated against our country.

But on a deeper level there is a great intensity of pain, anger and frustration.

I agonize over the fact that the cuprites of these attacks used the banner of my faith as a rationalizing for mass murder.

There are no words that can describe the heart break that I and millions of Muslims feel when acts of terrorism are carried out in the name of Islam.

Being raised in an Islamic home by wonderful Muslim parents I learned at a young age the importance of my faith. My parents, who immigrated to the United States in the sixties, taught us the importance of good character, ethical behavior, upholding ideals of Justice, respecting people from all faiths and equality in all of God's children.

These are the Islamic values that helped shape me into the person I have become today.

But these are obviously not just Islamic values, these are values most religions adhere to and by-and-large, they are also American Values.

They are woven into the fabric of what makes America unique and special. It is the reason a diverse group of people, of different religious traditions and ethnic backgrounds can stand together on a stage like this and say we are united, we are one, we are American! There is no other place on this planet in which people can do that.

My Friends, we cannot let the acts of extremists and fanatics divide us as a nation. We must stand together and resist those elements that wish to divide us and turn American against American.

We must not allow fear and ignorance to cloud our judgment. We as Americans must stand strong against the temptations of stigmatizing and isolating communities because of their faith, we must resist the urge to profile and discriminate against those whom we think are different from ourselves.

The debates on issues such as border security have often fanned public fear and contributed to an atmosphere that fostered distrust, racial profiling and even hate violence.

Sadly, this has left some in our communities feeling vulnerable and unsafe in their homes, at their workplaces, at religious gatherings, and in public spaces. This has been the case especially for American Muslims, American Sikhs, South Asian Americans, and Arab Americans.

Left unaddressed, these conditions threaten to undermine efforts to promote safety and security.

We know from experience that America's historic commitment to civil and human rights is not an impediment to public safety but rather offers a more enduring and effective approach by ensuring that all communities are not alienated or scapegoated.

Our true enemy today is extremism and fanaticism, primarily driven by self serving individuals who exploit the weak and ignorant to carry out their message of hate and violence.

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, author and expert on religion and public life recently wrote, "There is a long history of hate and violence being done in the name of God, to be clear, this is not about one particular faith; it is about fanatical faith which sees its way- as the only way.

We know today that Al Qaeda has killed more Muslims than people of any other religion — and that list of victims includes innocent Muslims who were killed on 9/11.

After reviewing a 2009 report titled Deadly Vanguard: A Study of Al-Qaida's Violence Against Muslims, Ralph Peters, wrote in New York's Daily Post, "Al-Qaeda does one thing extremely well: killing Muslims."

So my friend's extremism has no faith or religion, extremism knows no God, but a delusion that serves their purpose. Extremism has no values, no adherence to difference of opinion or competing view points. Extremism is the great evil that disguises itself in any form or shape. We have seen it through-out human history.

We pray that God protect us from those forces in whatever shape they may take.

We ask God Almighty our Creator to bless the souls of those who lost their lives on September 11th, 2001, we ask God to bless the families and friends of the victims and to fill their hearts with love and patience and to heal their wounds,

We ask God to bless the soul of **all** the victims of violent extremism around the world, irrespective of their faith, ethnicity or national origin.

We ask God, to bring our troops home safely to their families and to bring a speedy end to our wars abroad,

We ask God to help our nation heal and to unite and bring together all Americans, irrespective of their faith, color of their skin, or national origin.

We ask God to Bless our nation and to always adhere to our values as a country and not to give in to fear and intimidation.

We Thank you God for all the blessings you have bestowed on us, bless our City and please allow Riverside to be the shining example of inclusiveness throughout our nation. Amen

Thank you and God Bless you all.