

Looking to the Future: a Post 9/11 Pledge

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On this 12th day of September, 2011, we call on religious and secular people alike to join together to rededicate ourselves to a vision of peace and justice for our country and for the world.

On September 11, 2001, the United States of America suffered the worst terrorist attack in its history. Ten years later our nation still grieves the losses we suffered on that dark day. The heinous actions of the terrorists and their supporters cannot be justified or tolerated. We must be resolute in the face of such malicious crimes, using the appropriate legal measures to hold the guilty accountable and to prevent future attacks.

However, we cannot allow the actions of violent extremists to breed more prejudice in our society. Acts of anti-Muslim discrimination—like other forms of bigotry—tear at the fabric of our nation. We lament the fact that such behavior continues to surface in our country a decade after 9/11.

As representatives of America's diverse religious traditions, we are committed to working together to achieve the enduring vision of "a more perfect union." To fulfill this dream, we must invest in relationships with people who are different than we are, humbly sharing our wisdom and personal stories, listening to the insights and questions of others, offering respectful critique when necessary. We do not seek uniformity, but dignity for all people.

In making this commitment, we are well aware of the fact that religion has too often been used to oppress, to degrade, and to injure—9/11 being but one painful example. We also know that religion can be a powerful force for healing and transformation in the world. It is incumbent upon us to promote visions of our respective traditions that honor difference and call for the wellbeing of all existence.

In this spirit, we also recommit ourselves to work together across religious and secular lines to address issues of injustice in our country and throughout the world. While we hold different religious beliefs, we share in the conviction that we must all participate actively in caring for the needy and mending the wounds of our shared planet.

Finally, we call on the leaders of our country to join us in working to strengthen bonds among diverse groups of people at home and abroad, using our nation's vast resources to help reduce violence and corruption, and to promote peace and prosperity for all. We urge our elected officials to exercise our political, economic, and military power with wisdom and care, remembering the inestimable value of every single human life.

Today, on this 12th day of September 2011, we look to the future and pledge to fulfill the promise of this great nation, ever striving for a more perfect union.