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Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in shock, horror, and outrage over the indescribable tragedy that has engulfed our nation.

Yesterday, extremists hijacked our own domestic airplanes and used them as missiles in a horrific terrorist attack against the symbols of American economic and military strength.

No words can fully describe the sense of loss that we and other members of our American family feel. The lives of thousands of families were shattered among yesterday's rubble and we grieve with them.

No American was left untouched by yesterday's quiet heroes who put their own lives at risk. From the employee of the World Trade Center who carried a disabled woman on his back down dozens of floors to safety, to the firefighters and police officers who lost their lives running into burning buildings, to airplane passengers who performed tremendous acts of heroism that will forever remain unsung, to the thousands who gave blood and volunteered to help in any way they could. There are so many examples of selfless acts by Americans who, despite their own crises, looked to ease the tragedy of those around them.

We also cannot forget the courage of tens of thousands of federal employees who reported for work today despite the fear and vulnerability they cannot help but feel.

Yesterday's terrorist attack was an act of pure evil, but the foundations of American democracy remain intact and strong. As incomprehensible as it is to understand how our lives will be changed, one thing is certain -- the United States Government will seek out those responsible, avenge these attacks, and take fierce retribution against the cowards who are responsible.

America is at war. We will remain vigilant and we trust that all civilized nations of the world will join us in our determined fight to uphold democracy and the rule of law.