

September 11, 2001

**STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY IN RESPONSE
TO THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001
TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Like most Americans, I was glued to the television yesterday. It was with the eyes and heart of a wife, mother and grandmother primarily that I responded incredulously to the horrific images. Throughout the day, I tried to reach my family back in Illinois, and found myself looking at their pictures. Those of us who did not lose loved ones or know personally someone who perished in this attack could all empathize with the agony of those who do. We all have sent our precious ones off to work or said goodbye to them at the airport, never giving more than a passing thought about their safety. With great anticipation, we have ridden in elevators to the top of the World Trade Center, and as citizens visited public buildings like the Pentagon. In just a few hours, our sense of security as an American family was shattered. It will be a long time before we take ordinary acts for granted again.

Today, our hopes and prayers are with the injured, and we rejoice with each discovery of someone found in the rubble. Today we marvel at the courage of the firefighters, police, military personnel, emergency crews and volunteers, many of whom also perished, who have worked and are working so hard to save lives.

Yesterday I was consumed by unanswerable questions. What kind of people carefully and deliberately plot to brutally murder thousands of innocent men, women and children? How can one imagine individuals celebrating the deadly success of this evil plot? How could any human being have such total disregard for human life? How could anyone be so consumed by hate? It is still hard to get my mind around this.

Today I realize that we must be careful as we answer those questions. I represent a very diverse district that includes people of all races, nationalities and religions. All of them are horrified today. But some, Arab Americans and Muslims and others have another concern-- that they, our neighbors and fellow American residents, will become the targets of anger and frustration. This is a time when, in tribute to the value of tolerance that is at the heart of our democracy, we must embrace one another. Turning against each other will only be a victory for the perpetrators of this evil plot.

As a proud member of the Congress of this great nation, I am working with my staff to assure my constituents that our government is mobilized now to take decisive action to assure that this will never happen again. The full resources of this nation will be expended to find and root out those responsible for this atrocity. We are vigorously engaged in the search and rescue effort and ready to provide any support and comfort we can to those who are grieving.

If the purpose of this despicable attack was to deter our commitment to freedom and our support for our democratic allies, like Israel, it has failed.□

We will have peace and security again in this country and we will continue our efforts to spread peace and security throughout the world. We will pay tribute to our lost loved ones, to those who have responded so bravely, and we will comfort the families that are aching across the nation. And we will stand together in this country and with our allies around the world and all those who consider themselves civilized, and we will have justice. And the commitment to freedom from which this nation was born will continue to flourish.□