

**Introductory Remarks of Alice M. Greenwald**  
**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security Field Hearing**  
**September 9, 2019**

Thank you, Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Peters, and Committee members.

On behalf of everyone associated with the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, I want to extend a warm welcome and express our sincere gratitude for your steadfast commitment to securing the safety of our nation. We are deeply honored to have Secretaries Chertoff, Napolitano and Johnson here this morning, and I want to thank each of you for your dedicated service to our nation.

The decision to hold this public field hearing here, within a space defined by the remaining foundational structure of the World Trade Center... at what was, 18 years ago this week, the epicenter of Ground Zero... makes today's program especially meaningful.

I know many of you toured the Museum last night, some of you for the first time. The events we chronicle here, the lives we remember, and the aspirations we embrace for a world free from the scourge of terrorism, are inextricably linked to the work of this Committee and to the topics you will discuss today.

Here at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, we testify to the largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil and the greatest single loss of rescue personnel in a single event in American history.

Our exhibitions and programs recount the collective experience of profound shock, unprecedented vulnerability, and overwhelming grief caused by the attacks.

Yet, visitors take away more than a cautionary tale to remain vigilant to continued threats. By sharing the manifold expressions of courage, compassion, and service in response to 9/11 – this Museum also affirms the best of who we can be as human beings.

From its inception, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum vowed to honor and preserve the memory of all who were killed. And, two days from now, this Memorial will host, as we do every year, a solemn ceremony to mark the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

But, in recent years, our understanding of what it means to remember has had to evolve with the tragic recognition that, for many, 9/11 is not past history at all. For the survivors, responders, recovery and relief workers, volunteers, and community members exposed to hazards and toxins in the aftermath of the attacks, 9/11 is an all-too-present reality.

The massive 16-acre recovery effort at this site lasted nine months, concluding on May 30, 2002, with the ceremonial removal of the Last Column – now standing *here* in Foundation Hall.

During that time, as well as on the day of the attacks, hundreds of thousands—responders and survivors, workers and residents—were exposed to hazards and toxic dust released into the air at and around the World Trade Center site following the collapse of the Twin Towers on 9/11.

In the 18 years since, thousands have died, and tens of thousands more suffer from injuries and illnesses sustained at all three attack sites, ...

... including the Pentagon and the crash site near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The scale of the 9/11 health crisis is almost inconceivable. Over 97,000 people living in all 50 states (*and in 434 of 435 Congressional Districts!*) are currently enrolled in the CDC's World Trade Center Health Program. This tragic situation exemplifies the longitudinal impact of terrorism, its ongoing human toll.

In just two years, we will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attacks.

For the witness generation, it is unbelievable that two decades will have passed; our memories of that day are still *that* vivid.

But there is a new generation, growing up in a world defined in so many ways by a pivotal event they did not experience personally. Some are in college; some are starting their careers. If, as someone recently remarked, the 21<sup>st</sup> century started *here*, we must ensure that the next generation and generations to come understand the significance of the events and legacies of 9/11, so they have the tools and perspective to negotiate the challenges ahead.

National security – the topic of today's hearing – is among the greatest of those challenges.

And, it is a core programmatic focus for the 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

As evidenced by this morning's hearing, the Museum has emerged as a vital convening space in which to explore issues of global security, counterterrorism, crisis leadership, and public service.

We provide specially-tailored, training programs for professionals in law enforcement, intelligence, and the military, and regularly offer public programs on security, defense, and foreign policy.

The Museum also hosts an annual Summit on Security, bringing together leading voices on security matters from across the public and private sectors. Our next Summit will take place on November 12-13 and will kick off with keynotes from former DNI Director Dan Coats and our chairman, Mike Bloomberg.

This year's Summit will also offer an opportunity for attendees to preview our next special exhibition documenting the more than 10-year hunt for Osama bin Laden. If you are interested in attending the Summit or would like to visit this exhibition at another time, please let us know. Standing here, in Foundation Hall—at the heart of Ground Zero—we are witness not only to the remnants of what was destroyed, but to the promise of a better future. This is now the foundation at Ground Zero: a place to build up from and create a safer world for our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you for being here today, and for your dedication in service to this singularly critical goal.