

# Forget 9/11 At Our Peril

by Cal Thomas; Thursday, September 6, 2007

Throughout our young history, Americans have been admonished to “Remember the Alamo,” “Remember the Maine” and “Remember Pearl Harbor.” These remembrances — and others — were for the purpose of motivating the public to fight on until an enemy was vanquished. When victory was assured, the memory faded into history.

Now, as we approach the sixth anniversary of Sept. 11, there are suggestions that we should begin to forget the worst terrorist incident in America’s history. Recently, a front-page story in The New York Times suggested it is becoming too much of a burden to remember the attack, that nothing new can be said about it and that, perhaps, Sept. 11 “fatigue” may be setting in.

Charlene Correia, a nursing supervisor from Acushnet, Mass., is quoted as saying, “I may sound callous, but doesn’t grieving have a shelf life? We’re very sorry and mournful that people died, but there are living people. Let’s wind it down.”

Yes, 9/11 forces us to be serious, not only about those who died and why they died at the hands of religious fanatics, but also so that we won’t forget that it could very well happen again and many of today’s living might end up as yesterday’s dead. That is the purpose of remembering 9/11, not to engage in perpetual mourning. The war goes on and to be reminded of 9/11 serves as the ultimate protection against forgetfulness. Terrorists have not forgotten 9/11. Tape of the Twin Towers is used on jihadist Websites for the purpose of recruiting new “martyrs.”

What’s the matter with some people? Does remembering not only 9/11 but the stakes in this world war interfere too much with our pursuit of money, things and pleasure? Serious times require serious thought and serious action. In our frivolous times, full of trivialities and irrelevancies, to be serious is to abandon self-indulgence for survival, entertainment for the stiffened spine.

“Few Americans give much thought anymore on Dec. 7 that Pearl Harbor was attacked,” says the Times writer, who goes on to mention Nov. 22, 1963 (the date of JFK’s assassination), the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970 and the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995. The difference between those tragic events and 9/11 is that Kennedy’s assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, is dead, as is Timothy McVeigh, and the Vietnam War ended long ago. While all of the 9/11 hijackers died, their ideological and religious colleagues are plotting new attacks in a war that is far from over.

“Why didn’t we see 9/11 coming?” was a question frequently asked in the aftermath of that terrorist attack. And the answer should be, because we forgot the attacks preceding that one, or brushed them off as inconsequential aberrations so we could get back to watching the stock market go up.... By not remembering those earlier attacks, the reasons behind them and the intentions of the terrorists and those who trained and incited them, we put ourselves in further jeopardy.

Sept. 11 should not be remembered for maudlin, ghoulish and certainly not for nostalgic reasons. Unlike those other mostly forgotten or no longer observed dates, this one is key to defending ourselves from a future attack and further disasters. Not to remember 9/11, is to forget what brought it about. That can lead to a lowering of our guard and a false sense of security, the conditions that existed immediately prior to that awful day six years ago.

Indiana University history professor John Bodnar is asked in the Times story what might happen on Sept. 11 100 years from now. He replies, “It’s conceivable that it could be virtually forgotten.”

It might be forgotten — or relegated to a “Jeopardy” answer — but only if we win the war against Islamofascism. If we don’t, 9/11 will stand as a day of infamy with consequences to humanity far worse than Dec. 7, 1941.

