



September 16, 2005,
Bayonne, New Jersey

Speech at the Dedication Ceremony for the Memorial to the Victims of the Tragedy of September 11, 2001

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN: Dear Mr Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the honour you have shown me, my friends and my colleagues, in inviting us to be here today, here in this place. I would like to thank you for coming today. I would also like to thank the city authorities for providing this wonderful site for the monument. Everyone entering the city will be able to see it.

We are here today to lay the cornerstone of a memorial dedicated to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001. At that time, four years ago, the criminals thought they would plunge America and all civilised humanity into chaos. They were wrong. On the contrary, we became more united than ever and we created an actively functioning anti-terrorist coalition. I fully agree with you, Mr Mayor – just as we vanquished fascism, so shall we defeat terrorism together.

You know that Russia, like America, has been struck by terrorist attacks on a number of occasions. To be honest, I am not sure that we have done everything we could to immortalise the memory of the victims of these crimes.

Hundreds of my fellow citizens have lost their lives at the hands of criminals: in the bombings of apartment buildings in Moscow and other Russian cities, in attacks against infrastructure facilities and transport, and finally, in the terrible crime perpetrated at Beslan.

I repeat, I am not sure that our country's authorities have done all they could to immortalise the memory of the victims. But this is something that we will do without fail, something that both the current authorities and the future authorities will do. I felt bound to give my support to the initiative proposed by Russian and American citizens to build a monument here to the victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York. This is not just because Russia, perhaps more than any other country, sympathises with you and understands you, but also because this monument will always be a testimony to our unity in the struggle against common threats.

This will be an impressive monument, but we should never forget that for all their impressive and grandiose nature, such monuments represent concrete individuals, people who will always live on, not only in stone, not only in monuments, but in our hearts.

Thank you for your attention.