As we mark the 11th anniversary of September 11 terrorist attacks on America, we're undoubtedly safer to flying on a plane – but that's just about it. Sure, a lot has been accomplished since that horrific day — we've patched holes in our faulty methods for sharing intelligence, we've enacted the Patriot Act to boost surveillance and prosecutions, implemented rigorous albeit inefficient TSA checks at airports, plus killing, capturing and interrogating top terrorists overseas. However, in many ways, we're fighting the ***last*** war to protect our homeland. Today it's highly unlikely that our enemies can or will hijack airliners and crash them into buildings – but protecting against such an attack still seems to be the primary focus of our post-9/11 security efforts. The attacks of Sept. 11, much like those at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 only succeeded due to our failures of imagination and inability to connect the dots. Both Al Qaeda and pre-war Japan were known to pose serious threats to American interests, yet we did not believe they were capable of inflicting such devastating blows on U.S. soil. Thus our foes discovered and exploited our weaknesses and then, both times, proceeded to kill thousands of Americans. Prior to the September 11 attacks many experts in our government had dismissed Al Qaeda as a bunch of rag-tag Islamic extremists who were only capable of striking targets overseas like the East Africa Embassy bombings and attack on USS Cole. The same was true for Pearl Harbor: because Japan had over 4,000 miles of ocean to cross to strike the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii, it was hard to believe it could carry out an attack. We underestimated both of those enemies — at our own peril. So what are today's major threats? Today, we know all about Al Qaeda and lone wolf sympathizers. Though Usama Bin Laden is dead, his organization lives on. And the Al Qaeda terror network is always seeking innovative ways to strike at its foes. Iran poses a threat, and increasingly does so via supporters in Latin America. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — who will return to New York later this month for another UN visit has promoted the idea of "imagining a world without the US." He's also called our longstanding ally Israel a "stinking corpse" and threatened to "wipe it off the map." Ahmadinejad talks the talk, and since he's on the fast track to develop a nuclear weapons program, he may also soon walk the walk. North Korea remains a threat, though our missile interceptors based in Alaska and California can shoot down any intercontinental ballistic missiles before impacting the West Coast. We have additional protection from AEGIS Ballistic Missile Defense-Capable Navy ships deployed to Japan and Hawaii. Russia isn't the same foe it was during the Cold War, yet continues to test us. This summer an Akula-class submarine equipped with cruise missiles visited the Gulf of Mexico undetected and two Tu-95 Bear nuclear strategic bombers buzzed Alaska. So much for that "reset" button in US-Russia relations. Though the Obama administration deserves some credit for ordering the SEAL Team 6 raid on Bin Laden, plus increasing drone strikes against Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, it still has left considerable gaps in our homeland defense. Starting with abandoning coercive interrogations, while cynically citing concern for human rights,

the administration has proceeded to simultaneously kill even American citizens abroad without so much as a hearing. Perhaps most importantly, we are vulnerable to missile attacks, particularly along the Atlantic Coast and Gulf Coast. Though the Pacific Coast is well protected, there is no equivalent protection for the rest of our country. This is especially troubling since President Obama halted the Bush administration's plans for basing missile interceptors and radars in the Czech Republic and Poland — then pushed it off by a decade. This was the topic of his "flexibility after my election" whispered comment to Russia's Dmitry Medvedev. And despite efforts by Congressional Republicans to force the Pentagon to install ground-based missile interceptors along the East Coast, the administration dismissed the idea immediately. It's just that sort of thinking led to Pearl Harbor and September 11 disasters. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has just stopped funding the Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Sensor System (JLENS) program — a modern twin blimp apparatus that can detect, track and target incoming cruise missiles from hundreds of miles away. Yet, this is a relatively inexpensive way to deter and defeat missile threats from Iranian Navy ships, or even from terrorists who may approach our shores aboard trawlers or container ships carrying missiles fitted with chemical weapons. Not to mention an Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP) weapon that could knock out our electric grid. Lastly, since tens of thousands of people classified as "Other Than Mexicans" are arrested sneaking across the US border every year — including nearly 500 from DHS-labeled "special interest" countries like Iran, Pakistan and Somalia in 2011 alone, it's reasonable to conclude that terrorist sleeper cells, including Iran's terror proxy Hezbollah, are already in our midst. Even with these looming threats, the administration plans to cut $1 trillion in defense spending over the next decade. Such cuts will turn our military into the hollow force it was during the 1970s. Remember those days? It was this weakness which emboldened Iran to take 52 Americans hostage at our embassy in Tehran. Bottom line on this eleventh anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks: if we cannot learn from our mistakes, we are doomed to repeat them. Read the original article here on Fox News Opinion.