

want them to take our sincere thanks. I thank Lindsey Beck, Matthew Dinusson, Ashley Gallo, Jennifer Hsieh, Gregory Hyde and Zachary Stanton. I thank them for having the courage and the strength to persevere when others would have given up. I thank them for approaching every day with curiosity and hope, and for encouraging others to do the same.

There is no doubt that these six pages will go on to do great things, and we hope they come back and share their accomplishments with us.

Mr. Speaker, I wish them a lifetime of success and happiness. And now my colleague on the House Page Board, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), would like to speak.

CONGRESS BIDS FAREWELL TO SIX OUTSTANDING PAGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I stand here as the ranking Democrat on the House Page Board, having been appointed to that position by Speaker Tip O'Neill 20-some years ago. I have seen many pages come here. There has been no class better than this class. This class has been outstanding pages, and I am very, very proud of them.

There is a very good program in the country called Close Up, and I always meet with my Close Up students; but no one, no one has seen this Congress as close up as this group of pages has. They have seen us at our best and at our worst, but this year they probably have seen us at our best. They witnessed history that no other generation will hopefully ever witness again, when this country was attacked by terrorists and thousands of people were killed.

I can recall walking with my staff away from the Capitol after the plane hit the Pentagon. I saw a group of pages coming towards the Capitol building. They were supposed to be here they thought, and I said get back to the dorm. Their sense of duty was enormous, although this building could very well have been the target.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of the pages, but particularly Lindsey Beck from Arizona; Matthew Dinusson from Minnesota; Ashley Gallo from Michigan, my home State; Jennifer Hsieh from Texas; Gregory Hyde, New York City; and Zachary Stanton from Michigan. They can be proud of themselves. They will leave here knowing more about government, being able to tell others government is an instrument of good; and hopefully they will always be involved in government, whether they run for office or are a voter. Make government work. They have seen government at work. I thank this group of pages very much, and God bless them.

RECOGNIZING THE BRAVE SAILORS OF THE USS "CARL VINSON"

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity with the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) to fly out on a helicopter and go aboard the *Carl Vinson* as it came through the Straits of Juan de Fuca into Puget Sound into the Bremerton shipyard in my hometown. It was a great honor for the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) and I to have an opportunity to address the crew of the *Carl Vinson*. They had let the air wing off in San Diego, but still over 3,000 sailors, 12 percent of which were women, were coming home to Bremerton, were coming home to meet their families. I believe that the *Carl Vinson*, which was the first aircraft carrier into the North Arabian Sea, performed heroically on behalf of our country in Operation Enduring Freedom.

In looking over their record over this last 111 days when they were fully operational, they conducted 4,200 sorties flying F-14s and F-18s into Afghanistan using the smart weapons like JDAMs and the satellite weapons to destroy Taliban and al Qaeda targets in the area, and helped to contribute to the quick demise of the Taliban government.

I was pleased to be aboard and talk to the crew. They were extremely excited about coming home; but they were very, very proud of the service that they had rendered on behalf of our country. I want Members to know that we assured them that this Congress, this administration, strongly supports what they have done. There was bipartisan support in the Congress for the President's operations in Afghanistan.

I think we should reiterate the importance of these large big-deck carriers, 4.5 acres of American sovereignty. As we all know, we do not always get the bases that we need in any area of the world where we have to have American actions. In this case, we were not able to use airfields, as we were in Desert Storm and Desert Shield, in the region so these aircraft carriers became paramount.

Mr. Speaker, there were 48 attack aircraft coming off these carriers, and those attack aircraft flew these missions, having to have several airline refuelings, which also points out the importance of why we have to have tankers in order to provide the fuel for these planes on their missions, also for the bombers, the B-1s, the B-52s and the B-2s that were all used successfully in this endeavor.

It was also exciting to see the crew of the ship reunite with their families. Seventy-six of the men on board were fathers during the time they were gone, 6 months of deployment. In fact, I saw one woman who had delivered her baby on the day of the deployment, the

first day, so the child was 6 months old. And to see all of them reunited on the pier in Bremerton, Washington, my hometown, is truly something I will never forget.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all should recognize the important contribution of the men and women who serve us daily in the military. This Congress has a responsibility to make certain that we give them the benefits, that we give them the support, that we give them the equipment so that they can conduct these operations in the future.

But those large aircraft carriers were crucial in giving us the ability to make these attacks early on and to win this war decisively with very minimal loss of American life. I also would say that while they were operational, they conducted 37 replenishments while they were underway. This is when another ship comes up and provides supplies to the aircraft carrier when it is operational and moving. I think that is rather remarkable. Over 16,000 airplanes landed and took off on the *Carl Vinson* during this deployment; and they went 51,000 miles, which is almost two times around the Earth.

I was proud to be there, proud as a member of the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, and to see the men and women serving on the *Carl Vinson*.

We also learned in this war, 90 percent of the weapons that were used were smart bombs like JDAMs, and we almost ran out of those weapons. So we have got a lot of work to do here in the Congress to support the President to make sure that we have the equipment for the future. But it was a great day in Bremerton, Washington, and I am proud of the work of these great sailors and of our United States Navy.

THERE IS NO CHOICE IN CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, a woman 4 months pregnant flees to her mother's village to avoid a forced abortion in China. Her brother, two sisters and three other relatives are arrested as bargaining chips to enforce China's brutal one-child-per-family policy.

□ 1145

Three of her families' homes are destroyed. A second woman, 19 years of age, is told that she is too young to have a baby. She does not meet the government's age requirements for pregnancy. Her friends who accompanied her to the local clinic for her mandatory abortion all nod vigorously when asked by an undercover investigator if the young lady would like to keep the baby. "But the law forbids it," they add. Sound barbaric?

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, on this week where millions of Americans on either side of the debate over abortion gathered in our Nation's capital,