and many others I would hope will join us in ensuring that we move forward on behalf of our children. I close by simply saying that we will soon engage this Congress in a very important debate on how we proceed, whether in war or conflict. We must do it in a rational and a firm way with the facts. We must lead this country in a way that upholds our values and our courage so that we go further. We must embrace the American people and bring peace and deliberation. Yes, we will give retribution, but we will be firm and factual and studied. We will do it together, the President in fact, that we believe in our freedom in a way that encourages peace and deliberation.

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

Mr. EHLLERS. Mr. Speaker, many of us have been quiet about what has happened this week, but many of us also feel the need to speak. What I say is not in the mold of reviewing it or condemning anything that has happened, but I just want to express some personal feelings about it and also a few opinions. I will not relive in self-misery, although it is tempting to do so, but at least I want to share my experience with my colleagues and the American people.

Tuesday morning, as I was listening to the morning news, I heard about the airplane hitting the first tower. It was described as a two-engine plane, and since I am a former pilot, I assumed it was some amateur who had gotten off course, or some kook who was trying to do some damage with a small twin-engine plane.

I immediately turned on the television just in time to see the second plane approach, and immediately I knew it was terrorism, because it was obviously a large commercial airliner, and no large commercial airliner would be off course or score a direct hit in clear weather such as that.

I immediately headed for the Capitol. In doing so, I drove past the Pentagon. They had just been hit. That confirmed that indeed it was a very serious case of terrorism. The smoke was beginning to billow out. I drove to the Capitol; and at that time, a decision was made to evacuate it. I turned and headed back.

It was as I was driving back across the Potomac River and I crested the hill on the bridge, I saw the Pentagon with smoke billowing out of it that it hit me with full force. My immediate response was what are they doing to my country? What are they doing to our country? It was with horror, disbelief, and shock.

It took more than a day for that to turn to anger, although anger was present at the beginning. But this has happened to all the Members of Congress and similarly, from my point of view, it is a network, I am convinced, because it is not just one terrorist camp, it is a network, I am convinced, that is lodged in a number of nations. We cannot simply knock out one and think we have solved the problem. We are going to have to deal with the entire problem.

So many Americans have been writing me, my own constituents and others. We have been receiving letters from all over the world yesterday. I

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE
September 14, 2001

What we can do as Americans
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. Kaptur) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, every time that I have the privilege of addressing this House, I am reminded of indeed what a privilege it is to represent constituents from my own State of Ohio and to vote on laws affecting our Nation and the world.

This week in particular the magnitude of this privilege has come home to me again. I rise as a citizen in the freest Nation on Earth, given the opportunity under our freedom of speech to speak my peace, but in a representative government.

As I think about what happened to America this week, I think about the forces of the world that are outside of governments and have no representative decision-making in the way that the civilized world understands. I am reminded of what happens to the world when that kind of force is allowed to work its evil in our country and other places.

As Members of Congress, we are given the privilege of traveling to many places. A few years ago, I remember going to one of the newly emerging nations of the world. During a session with the citizenry, I was asked, “Congresswoman Kaptur, what makes you feel like a nation?” And I remember stepping back from the microphone for a moment and pondering that, and trying to answer the other day that I was asked, why do your people feel like a nation?

This week, we have had many indicators of how deep our nationhood runs: the enormity of the valor that we have seen coast-to-coast, the thousands of acts of kindness and of decency that have accompanied this great tragedy that our entire Nation has suffered, and so many families have suffered so personally.

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This has been compared in many ways to Pearl Harbor, but it is very different in one sense. The enemy was clearly identified, and we proceeded for several years to arm to resolve that menace.

This will take an equal amount of time, I am convinced, because it is not just one person. It is not just one terrorist camp, it is a network. I am convinced, that is lodged in a number of nations. We cannot simply knock out one and think we have solved the problem. We are going to have to deal with the entire problem.

I hope and pray that God will be with us. I hope and pray that our allies will continue to help us, and that, indeed, we will be able to have justice, we will have retribution and the world will once again enjoy peace.

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