

all the people who both survived and who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, their families and their friends.

These terrorist attacks mark a solemn moment in America's history. American men and women, civilians and soldiers, firefighters and police, mothers and fathers, were slain for a cause so terrible, so heinous, and so despicable that we find it unimaginable and indescribable. United, Americans seek to find meaning and hope in a seemingly hopeless and meaningless act. In the days since these terrible terrorist attacks, America has been shoulder-to-shoulder in a struggle to meet the challenges of a world that is a little less safe, a little scarier, and far less predictable. The efforts of young people like the Student Body of Ridgeview Elementary signify the commitment and concern of Americans everywhere. Our nation's strength does not lie in her military might but rather in the collective compassion of its people.

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, Student Body of Ridgeview Elementary has raised and contributed more than \$1,000 to provide for the grieving families and rescue workers. The patriotism and persistence of the Student Body of Ridgeview Elementary is a lasting memorial to the thousands of victims who perished in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

Through the days, weeks, and months ahead, all Americans must come together and do what they can to assist the nation's war effort. Whether it is giving blood, sending donations, praying for the thousands of grieving families, or simply saying thanks to the brave men and women who put their lives on the line each and every day so that we may be free, it is important that the American people are vigilant in their efforts to overcome this evil. Though our nation has witnessed unspeakable horror, America's virtues, determination, and faith continues to shine brightly on the world.

I am confident that the United States will seek out those that harbor hatred, terror, and depravity in their hearts; and we will defeat them. This is a war that we must, can, and will win. May God bless the families and children grieving across this great nation and may God bless America.

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**MEMBERS TAKE TRIP ABROAD REGARDING THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM**

**HON. BRIAN D. KERNS**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. KERNS. Mr. Speaker, throughout the past three weeks we have seen a tremendous outpouring of patriotism and American pride from coast to coast. After having the opportunity to spend the past few days traveling abroad through Russia, Turkey, and Rome and meeting with leaders from each of these countries—I am proud to return home to the USA with the rest of my colleagues with the understanding that we are not in this fight against terrorism alone. My deepest appreciation goes to Chairman WELDON, and Ranking

Member ORTIZ for their leadership in putting together a thorough and productive trip.

Having completed our trip we came to some important conclusions.

First of all, these nations and many others are united like never before. They stand firm with us in our fight against terrorism, and will continue to support the efforts of President Bush and our nation to root out this evil.

Second, justice will be served to Osama Bin Laden and his radical followers. We must recognize, while this may take some time—we will persevere. Osama Bin Laden and his network is only a small part of the cancer of terrorism that is spreading throughout our world. This evil cancer must and will be eradicated.

While meeting with the former King of Afghanistan, Mohammad Zahir Shah, the King told us that he supports the United States in the war against terrorism and that he would back efforts to bring Bin Laden to justice and end the radical Taliban control of Afghanistan and support free democratic elections in his country.

In our conversation with the former Afghan King, and the field commanders for Afghanistan's United Front which is formerly known as the Northern Alliance, I found it fascinating that in fighting this war we must also fight the continuous war against drugs—Afghanistan is currently one of the leading producers of opium, and the majority of Bin Laden and other terrorist activities are funded through this drug trafficking. We must cut off their financial base at the root. That means putting an end to their drug trade.

I believe that our meetings were successful and established the important ground work in this fight against evil. As President Bush has envisioned, we must continue to build effective coalitions to win this war against terrorism.

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**CALLING ATTENTION TO SPINA BIFIDA AND HONORING THE SPINA BIFIDA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA FOR HELPING VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF THIS DISEASE FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS**

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to more than 70,000 Americans—and their family members—who are currently affected by spina bifida, a debilitating disease caused when a baby's spine fails to close properly during pregnancy. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the good works of the Spina Bifida Association of America, an organization that has helped people with spina bifida and their families for nearly 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, as most Members know, spina bifida, is the most frequently occurring permanently disabling birth defect afflicting 1 out of every 1,000 babies born in this country each year. There are three different forms of spina bifida with the most severe being Myelomeningocele spina bifida, which causes nerve damage and severe disabilities. This severe form of spina bifida is diagnosed in 96

percent of children born with this disease. Between 70 to 90 percent of the children born with spina bifida are at risk of mental retardation when fluid collects around the brain.

With proper medical care, people who suffer from spina bifida can lead full and productive lives. But they must learn how to move around using braces, crutches or wheelchairs, how to learn and how to function independently. They must also be careful to avoid a host of secondary health problems ranging from depression and learning disabilities to skin problems and latex allergies.

Because spina bifida can be detected before birth by using prenatal tests, more than 50 percent of babies diagnosed with spina bifida are aborted—their lives cruelly snuffed out because of their anomalies. Tragically, expectant parents are wrongly pressured to abort their child if spina bifida is detected during pregnancy. It is imperative to get the word out and let expectant parents know that spina bifida is not a death sentence. Those parents who have rejected such pressure have had their lives enriched through the love they share with their child.

The Spina Bifida Association of America works tirelessly to help families meet the challenges and enjoy the rewards of raising their child. As part of its service through 60 chapters in more than 100 communities across the country, the SBAA puts expecting parents in touch with families who have a child with spina bifida. These families answer questions and concerns and help guide expecting parents so that they make life-affirming, family enriching decisions. The SBAA then works to provide lifelong support and assistance for affected children and their families.

Today, about 90 percent of all babies diagnosed with this disease live into adulthood, about 80 percent have normal IQs and about 75 percent participate in sports and other recreational activities. We also know that spina bifida may be preventable if women consume folic acid supplements during their child-bearing years and early stages of pregnancy. The daily amount of folic acid needed is typically found in most multivitamins.

It is heartening to see such promising statistics for people with spina bifida. The spina bifida community and our nation owe a tremendous debt to the SBAA for its work over the past three decades. Much more work still needs to be done, and I am confident this fine organization will lead the effort for decades to come.

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**VISIT OF JASWANT SINGH, INDIA'S MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE**

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to note that Jaswant Singh, who serves as both Minister of External Affairs and Minister of Defense of India, is visiting the United States. He arrived on Sunday, September 30th and will depart on Tuesday, October 2nd.