

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.

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.

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.

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.

During Minister Singh's visit, he met with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to show support to the U.S. in the fight against terrorism on the global level. Minister Singh is also visiting Washington, DC to meet with top officials at the White House, the State Department and the Defense Department, as well as House and Senate leaders.

Minister Singh's visit to the U.S. is symbolic of India's unconditional support for the U.S. This support is based on shared democratic principles and common interests. Additionally, from the very day that the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington occurred, India has come forward in strong support of the United States, offering its unwavering support for the war against terrorism.

India's prompt and bold action in coming forth to stand united with the U.S. stems from the fact that this country has been on the front lines in the fight against international terrorism for the years. Over the past 10 to 15 years, more than 53,000 civilians in India have been killed as a result of cross-border terrorism. These victims have suffered at the hands of many of the same terrorist networks believed to be behind the attack on the U.S.

India continues to be subject to the ravages of cross-border terrorism to this very day. Just yesterday afternoon, Monday, October 1st, a massive explosion near the main entrance of the State Assembly in India's state of Jammu and Kashmir left at least 29 persons dead and 40 injured. In addition, two militants firing from automatics later stormed the heavily-guarded assembly complex. The state assembly was in session when the blast occurred.

Those killed included five policemen, two from the Central Reserve Police Force, a schoolgirl and six state assembly employees. Eyewitnesses said a suicide bomber drove a jeep laden with explosives up to the main entrance of the state assembly and shortly after, the jeep exploded into a massive ball of fire leaving behind a trail of death and destruction. Jaish-e-Mohammad, a Pakistan-based militant group, has claimed responsibility for the blast. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher has condemned the bombing, stating: "I would say, first of all, that we very strongly condemn the attack today in Kashmir, as we have previous attacks. We think that no cause can justify the deliberate targeting of civilians in this manner. We extend our sympathies to the victims of the attack, we extend our condolences to India, a country that's suffered many terrorist attacks over the years. India is a key partner in the global coalition against terrorism, and we do believe that terrorism must be ended everywhere."

In statements from top Government officials, India has expressed its condolences for the terrible losses, its solidarity with the American people, and its pledge of cooperation with the Administration. We have learned in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the number of missing Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin is estimated at about 250.

Cooperation between India and the United States, the world's two largest democracies, extends beyond the current international campaign against terrorism, and has been steadily developing for the past few years. During the U.S.-India Summits in New Delhi in March

2000 and Washington in September 2000, the two countries established frameworks for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, preserving stability and growth in the global economy, protecting the environment, combating infectious diseases and expanding trade, especially in emerging knowledge-based industries and high technology areas.

However, at this time of crisis and tragedy for the American people, India has shown itself to be a good friend and a reliable and valued partner. India, with its strategic location and its excellent intelligence data, represents a vital resource and a logical partner for cooperation with the U.S. At this time of crisis, India has been recognized and appreciated in public statements from President Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell and other top officials in the Administration and the visit to Washington of Minister Singh allows U.S. leaders to demonstrate the importance that the U.S. attaches to our growing relations with India.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT BARS VIEWING OF BURNING PUNJAB

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for quite a while, people interested in South Asian issues have had a valuable resource in the website Burning Punjab, located at <http://www.burningpunjab.com>. This website has reported many stories about the Indian government's tyranny against Sikhs and other minorities. Now the Indian government has banned the viewing of Burning Punjab in the northwest part of India, where Punjab, the Sikh homeland, is. Punjab, of course, declared its independence on October 7, 1987, calling itself Khalistan. The website has been blocked in Punjab and in the state of Haryana, which has a substantial Sikh population, and Delhi.

Suppressing information is not the way that democratic countries do things. This ban shows that India is a deficient democracy. It has about as much freedom of the press as Communist China. Burning Punjab was founded on September 15, 1997. On March 29, 2000, the site's founder, Sukhbir Singh Osan, was reportedly threatened with murder, apparently by the Indian government. Are these the acts of a democracy?

The massive human-rights violations of the Indian government have been well documented. Over 250,000 Sikhs, more than 200,000 Christians, over 75,000 Kashmiri Muslims, and tens of thousands of Dalits and other minorities have been killed by the government. It holds over 52,000 Sikhs and tens of thousands of others as political prisoners with no charges and no trial. Some have been in custody for 17 years. There have been rapes of nuns, murders of priests, the burning death of a Christian missionary, attacks on Christian prayer halls, schools, and churches, on mosques, on the Golden Temple. A group of Indian soldiers were caught trying to burn down a Gurdwara (a Sikh temple) but were stopped by villagers.

Why does a country like that receive U.S. aid? Do we support them so they can suppress the information their citizens need? Do we support them so they can maintain bloody repression against the minorities within their borders? We should stop all aid to India until basic human rights like the free flow of information are allowed for all citizens. Furthermore, we should put this Congress on record in support of self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and the 14 other countries seeking their freedom from India. This should take the form of an internationally-monitored, free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence. That is the democratic way and the way of major world powers. We owe it to the principles that gave birth to America to take these measures to promote the principles of freedom in South Asia and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the article on the banning of Burning Punjab into the RECORD at this time.

[From Burning Punjab News, Sept. 23, 2001]

VIEWING WEB SITE "BURNING PUNJAB"
BANNED IN NORTH INDIA

NEW DELHI.—The Indian Intelligence Agencies have banned the viewing of World Wide Web site 'Burning Punjab' (www.burningpunjab.com). The site was not accessible in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi for the past four days. It is reliably learnt that the Research Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Indian Hindu Regime ordered ban. The 'Burning Punjab' has now decided to change its IP identity and servers.

Here it is pertinent to mention that web site 'Burning Punjab' was launched on September 15, 1997 by a Chandigarh based journalist and lawyer, Sukhbir Singh Osan. The staff and manager of the site were threatened number of time by the Indian Police. On 29 March 2000, France based organization Reporters sans Frontier's (RSF) also objected to various restrictions imposed by the Indian Government on the staff and manager of the web site 'Burning Punjab' RSF General Secretary Robert Menard issued a letter to the Indian authorities opposing unwarranted 'censorship'.

It's worth mentioning that 'Burning Punjab'—www.burningpunjab.com is an endeavor of IHRF. International Human Rights Forum (IHRF) is engaged in propagating the cause of Human Rights worldwide. Organization is taking special care for the welfare of state victims and is lending a helping hand to hapless and helpless to mitigate their sufferings. The activities of the IHRF have been appreciated by one and all irrespective of politico-religious affiliations. During the cult of violence in Punjab, Kashmir, Delhi, Assam, Bengal and elsewhere, the IHRF played a significant role in exposing inhuman & barbaric treatment and excesses committed by the State against the innocent & law abiding citizens.

About web site Burning Punjab: Burning Punjab is Punjab's first ever media site on Sikh Holocaust. It deals with the situation in East Punjab. Site contains news & views, political scenario, human rights values and holocaust of Sikhs. Sukhbir Singh Osan has created site. S.S.Osan is a Law Graduate from Punjab University, Chandigarh. He is a prolific writer and a born journalist. The International Human Rights Forum is operating this site.