

Fifty-eight years ago they stepped to the doors of their C-47 transports and jumped into the dark, menacing embrace of the Normandy night. Fifty-eight years ago, the ramps of their landing crafts hit the pounding surf at Omaha and Utah beaches and they leapt forth into the teeth of terrible storm.

They were the elite of the American Army and Air Corps. They were the pride of our entire nation. They were what Tom Brokaw later came to call our "Greatest Generation."

As these gentlemen spearheaded the Allied invasion of France on that fateful summer night 58 years ago, they were taking an incredible leap of courage.

Steven Spielberg has said that his depiction of D-Day in *Saving Private Ryan* actually underplayed the ferociousness of the battle. That gives some measure of the superhuman heroism and valor of our D-Day vets.

It is no exaggeration to say they saved the world. And it is even less of an exaggeration to say they saved democracy for my generation—and future generations.

In his history of D-Day, Stephen Ambrose points out that Hitler thought that democracies were too weak to fight fascism, and that American soldiers—raised to believe in freedom and liberty—were soft and no match for his master race. But America's soldiers of democracy—you and millions of other World War II veterans—were anything but soft. The Taliban, by the way, are learning the same lesson about today's GIs.

These six Arizonans were able to storm the beaches of Normandy and win World War II precisely because they were fighting for liberty and freedom. They are the heart and soul of America.

In some ways, modern society is very different from the nation that the men and women of D-Day knew, and it is sometimes fashionable to take a cynical view of the world. But when the calendar reads the 6th of June, such opinions are better left unspoken. No one who has heard and read about the events of D-Day could possibly remain a cynic.

Army Private Andy Rooney was there to survey the aftermath. A lifetime later he would write, "If you think the world is selfish and rotten, go to the cemetery at Colleville overlooking Omaha Beach. See what one group of men did for another on D-Day, June 6, 1944."

Mr. Speaker, I remain eternally grateful to all of the veterans who stormed the beaches at Normandy in the defense of freedom. Every American soldier who courageously fought for freedom deserves recognition and thanks from this Congress.

ATTACK ON THE U.S.S. "LIBERTY"

HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 2002

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I speak to commemorate and recognize the tragic attack that took place against the U.S.S. *Liberty* on June 8, 1967. Although thirty-five years have come and gone since this historic event, the survivors of the U.S.S. *Liberty* are still struggling with the fact that their story has never been heard.

While there has never been an official investigation into this event, we have learned

from survivor accounts that for over 75 minutes the Israeli Defense Forces attacked the U.S.S. *Liberty*, killing 34 American soldiers and wounding an additional 172. With over 85% of the crew either dead or wounded, they somehow managed to keep the ship afloat after being hit by over 1000 rounds of rocket, cannon, machine gun, napalm hits, and even a direct hit from a torpedo.

This unprovoked attack took place in international waters, and by a trusted ally. The only explanation given to the survivors and their families as to why this attack took place was that it was an accident and that their ship was not identified as being American, regardless of the fact that our flag was proudly flown throughout the attack. Unfortunately, that explanation is not good enough for those whose lives have been impacted by this attack, and it should not be good enough for the American people. Let's not wait another thirty-five years before we provide the survivors of the U.S.S. *Liberty* an official investigation into why this attack took place and allow them to tell their story. We owe them more than a debt of gratitude for their sacrifice; we owe them the truth.

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 2002

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, during the past recess, I joined with Representative CURT WELDON and other Members in traveling to Russia, Uzbekistan, China, and Korea for discussions with government officials in those nations. I think I speak for all members of our delegation in thanking Representative WELDON for his excellent leadership of this group. I think we all also would agree that this trip provided an invaluable and enlightening look at key nations we must deal with in a broad range of issues.

Representative WELDON recently reported on our trip but today I want to insert into the RECORD my own most recent newspaper commentary, which outlines my own thoughts and assessment of our delegation's meetings. I ask that the commentary appear at this point in the RECORD.

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM

During the Memorial Day recess, I joined a 13-member bipartisan congressional delegation to meet with government leaders in Russia, Uzbekistan, China, and South Korea. One of the key goals of the delegation, led by Representative Curt Weldon (R-PA), was to visit North Korea. We wanted to express our interest in addressing food aid, agriculture, health, education, and other humanitarian assistance in a nation rampant with starvation and economic turmoil. Unfortunately, the North Korean government denied us entry at the last moment.

Traveling through three countries that were once part of the "Communist Bloc," we could see that democracy is now a growing force in these nations. Our delegation arrived in Moscow the day after the historic signing of the strategic arms reduction treaty by Presidents George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin. More good news came when we met with members of the State Duma, our legislative counterpart that once was a rubber stamp of the Kremlin, but now is a legiti-

mate policy institution. We presented the legislators with 108 recommendations for U.S.-Russian engagement, and the Members of the Duma stated their desire to work with us to bring the U.S. and Russia closer together.

We visited the Kurchatov Institute, initially established to design Russia's first nuclear weapons, but now transformed into a research center for safe and environmentally friendly nuclear power generation. We attended the ribbon-cutting for the new American University in Moscow, where we met students and faculty in the American Studies program.

Over the last decade of reforms, Moscow has changed from a gray and solemn city to a tourist destination. Gold-domed churches, colorful buildings beautifully lit at night, billboards and neon abound in the new Moscow.

At our next stop in Uzbekistan, a former Soviet Republic which is key to the stability of Central Asia, we found a strongly pro-American sentiment. In the capital of Tashkent, the Uzbekistan President, Islom Karimov, told us he wants to model his country after America.

Uzbekistan (about the size of California) is one of the few countries in Central Asia that shares this pro-American stance. We visited with our troops in the hot and dry desert base of Karshi-Khanabad on the edge of Afghanistan, and assured them of the complete support of the American people. We delivered letters from school children and homemade cookies as tokens of appreciation.

When we arrived in Beijing, China, I was stunned by its growth since I was first there in 1981. Now it is a bustling metropolis complete with high rise buildings, luxury hotels, and streets packed with cars rather than bicycles. We met with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who stressed that China and the United States have more interests in common than differences.

China has been fairly successful in its economic reforms. The one major concern I have had with China is its human rights record. Our goal must be to find common ground, while supporting freedom, such as last year's approval by Congress of permanent normal trade relations. Reunification with Taiwan remains a central focus for China's leaders, and our delegation was adamant that this issue must be solved peacefully.

In Seoul, South Korea, our ally for over 50 years, progress and expansion are still taking place. As hosts of the World Cup, Seoul was filled with visitors from around the world, lending a festive air to this vibrant city. The traffic reminded us of Los Angeles. The delegation visited our troops at Yongsan military base and at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on the border of North Korea. In a last attempt to obtain visas to visit North Korea, we were denied entry by General Secretary, Korean Workers' Party Kim Jong-Il (he is also "Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army.") Unfortunately, his country is stuck in the dark ages of totalitarian communism. But we are hopeful that our efforts to open dialogue will lay the groundwork for future meetings.

It is heartening to report that with the leaders of the countries that we met had praise for America's war on terrorism and President Bush's conduct of our foreign policy. Everywhere we saw leaders, there was great respect for President Bush. Our travels provided insight into the progress and economic growth that has taken hold as a result of democratic reforms. Our congressional delegation brings home a more informed picture of this progress and a set of goals to help us continue improving our relations with these important countries.