

DRUG CRISIS IN MEXICO

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post this week has been running a series of front-page articles documenting the effects of the overwhelming quantities of drugs pouring across our border with Mexico. The Post series has highlighted the terrible threat of corruption also in our own law enforcement ranks, breakdowns in cooperation at the working level between the United States and Mexico, and the spread of drug-related crime and drug gangs in our cities and among our immigrant communities.

I have long been deeply concerned about the escalating drug crisis in Mexico and the United States. In recent meetings with Mexico's Foreign Minister, attorney general, and Ambassador to the United States, I delivered a frank, critical message as a long-time friend of Mexico.

On the positive side, we should recognize that President Zedillo's move to quickly remove the corrupt drug czar, Gen. Jose Gutierrez, sent an important signal that even the highest officials can not betray Mexico's trust with impunity. The Mexican Government has also greatly improved its cooperation with refueling on our counternarcotics missions, especially for maritime deployments to interdict drugs along the transit route currently favored by narcotics traffickers.

However, grave problems persist in our counternarcotics efforts with Mexico which both countries are simply going to have to face and work harder to fix. The drug trade in all its facets threatens us equally. We must not let ourselves be divided in fighting this scourge. Because of this, President Zedillo's reported statements that the United States—as a consumer of illicit drugs—should make reparations for the damage caused to Mexico by the drug trade were especially troubling. We can not accept that assertion. We know empirically that the narcotics traffickers have been dumping drugs onto our streets and using supply to create the increased demand that lines their pockets with criminal wealth.

Our DEA agents who put their lives on the line in Mexico must be allowed to carry arms to defend themselves from deadly thugs. They must have the right to protect themselves as they help Mexico fight the scourge of illicit drugs. This matter should not be turned into a target of anachronistic rhetoric.

Despite President Zedillo's apparent good intentions, the organized crime units and other antidrug infrastructure and critically needed improvements seem to be moving slowly. Some 234 individuals dismissed for drug-related corruption have been reinstated on appeal. Recycling antidrug personnel unfortunately seems far too commonplace in Mexico. Moreover, compared to previous years, seizure rates especially for the cocaine which has been pouring into the United States from Mexico, are disappointing and distressing.

No major cartel leader has been arrested in Mexico since the March 1 certification. Also, despite 23 pending requests for extradition of Mexican nationals on narcotics offenses, Mexico has not extradited a single Mexican—as opposed to dual—national to the United States

on narcotics charges since certification. Finally, only 16 out of 48 helicopters in the possession of the Mexican Army that we provided to Mexico are in operation. Those helicopters that are operating are primarily conducting surveillance missions and have not made any drug seizures.

The situation is not encouraging. As the Washington Post articles point out, drugs are breeding addiction and its attendant misery, violence, and corruption on both sides of our border with Mexico. We must redouble our Nation's commitment to reinforce every legitimate effort to combat this well-armed, wealthy, and ruthless underworld. It is essential that to be effective, our war on drugs must have the cooperation of our neighbors and the international community.

HONORING AMBASSADOR
SHYAMULA B. COWSICK OF INDIA**HON. BILL McCOLLUM**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to honor the outgoing Deputy Chief of Mission of India, Ambassador Shyamula Cowsick. Over the past 2 years, I have had the pleasure of working closely with the Ambassador on improving relations between our two nations. The Ambassador has always been available to provide special briefings and materials as we worked through issues. Her involvement allowed the two nations to make historic progress at the legislative, executive, and non-governmental levels through an explosion of contacts and ongoing dialogues. Her special insight was valuable in that it allowed her to bridge the cultural and political gap that frequently confronts policy makers. As co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, it has been my pleasure to work with Ambassador Cowsick, and I am sure that my colleagues will join me in wishing her continued success.

FIRST BOOKS: THE JOYS OF
READING**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a unique educational program—a partnership between the YMCA's Childcare Resource Service and KPBS Television in San Diego. The First Books program, part of the nationwide ready to learn campaign, will provide 200 free books each month to children from low-income families.

The First Books program has a simple goal: to promote literacy in homes where books may not be readily available. They plan to make reading books more pleasurable and entertaining by connecting them to public television programming.

Children in 25 different San Diego day care programs will receive free books from the First Books program. The YMCA's Childcare Resource Center staff, led by Director Nan Mitchell, hopes to extend the joy of books to the

parents and teachers through monthly workshops designed to teach ways of making learning fun by combining books and public television.

Providing books to children in homes where books are not always available is a proven way to build a firm foundation for future generations of schoolchildren. When one member of a family reads, it inspires the whole family.

The First Books program will make sure that the children of working parents who strive to make ends meet, are not left behind, but will be involved in fun activities with books to make sure they are ready to learn.

Research tells us that reading to our children from a very young age supports their development and enhances their learning. The adults who read with them—whether it be their parents or childcare providers—share in unlocking the wonders of imagination that books foster.

This program ensures all children will have the opportunity to discover the delight of books. Books are many children's most cherished possessions and provide long-lasting memories. I salute KPBS and the Childcare Resource Service for introducing all children to this magical world.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I inadvertently voted "no" on rollcall No. 570, the United States-Caribbean Trade Partnership Act (H.R. 2644). I want the record to reflect that I strongly support this legislation and should have voted "yes."

VERNON E. HALL: UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE PORT OF LOS ANGELES

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Vernon E. Hall, who will be honored today by his friends, family, and colleagues in San Pedro, CA. Vern is retiring after 27 years of dedicated service to the Port of Los Angeles.

Vern Hall has served as Director of Development for the Port of Los Angeles since May of 1995. Prior to that time, Vern served as Chief Harbor Engineer since 1988. He is responsible for the activities of the Port's development divisions which include Engineering, Construction Management and Environmental Management, as well as numerous consultants and contractors engaged in the planning, design, permitting and construction of Port terminals and supportive infrastructure. Hall, during his Port career, was responsible for numerous capital development projects and programs, ranging from the West Channel/Cabrillo Beach Recreational Complex to the \$650 million Pier 300/400 Implementation Program. He has contributed to most of the significant Port development projects undertaken