tax cuts. Never mind the bill does not contain any projects earmarked for any specific Congressional districts.

And never mind that some ''Know-Nothing'' conservatives in the media will attack this session for being a ''do nothing'' Congress. The one thing Congress is doing, over their objections, is building assets for the future of our country.

Perhaps the next time they attack Government spending, they might reflect on an observation by the columnist George Will: ''Many of today's conservatives rallied 'round keeping control of the Panama Canal. But would such conservatives have built it in the first place?''

THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONDUCTING A FRONTAL ASSAULT AGAINST FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely concerned about the very disturbing reports from Russia which indicate that Kremlin authorities are intimidating, harassing and attempting to control the nation's news media. These unwarranted attacks have been directed primarily at Media-Most, which is the largest and most successful privately-owned television and publishing company in Russia.

Democracy and freedom are still new and largely untested in Russia, and efforts are still underway to develop firmly rooted democratic institutions. Until now, however, press freedom has been one of the early successes in Russia's transformation from a totalitarian society to one that permits true freedom, including free speech and uncensored news reporting.

Mr. Speaker, any efforts to impose government censorship or control over any news media—and particularly over private news organizations—would be a tragic and serious setback for democratization in Russia. The news media must be free to report, even when that it is critical of the government. There is absolutely no justification for government agencies to threaten media companies as a means of controlling what is reported in the news.

I want to report to my colleagues in the Congress about recent disturbing actions by the Russian government that seem to be directed at some of the most professionally respected news organizations in Russia. Reports from Moscow indicate that the Director of Presidential Administration, Mr. Alexander Voloshin, is engaged in a personal campaign against the prestigious NTV and other private media enterprises because he is dissatisfied with how the news media are covering the government and its activities.

It has been widely reported by wire services that the Federal Tax Policy Service of the Russian Federation is relentlessly monitoring the financial and economic activities of privately owned television companies, publishing houses, and other mass media outlets. The Russian Government appears to be involved in a campaign of targeting these news organizations in order to undertake investigations or other legal of quasi-legal actions against those who own or operate independent news media outlets.

Mr. Speaker, another form of harassment has been an effort to censor the media. Just this month, the Russian Government established the Ministry for Publishing, Television and Radio aimed at ''consolidating'' the government's ''ideological work.'' That last phrase, Mr. Speaker is a chilling throw-back to conditions under the totalitarian Soviet regime, when the government and Communist Party made a concerted and successful effort to strictly control and censor all news media under the rubic of ''ideological work.''

The head of this new ministry is a ''press czar'' who has been equipped with power to oversee and possibly censure the content of news reports and other information programs in Russia. This is a frightening prospect for all news organizations—and particularly for privately owned independent media—who could lose their freedom to report news as they see it. This censorship effort could be particularly destructive during periods of increased political activity, such as national election campaigns.

Mr. Speaker, the situation today in Russia is especially precarious given President Yeltsin's fragile health and the absence of strong leadership at the national level. This has been clearly demonstrated by the fact that President Yeltsin has dismissed three Prime Ministers in the past two years. With the upcoming parliamentary elections in December 1999 and presidential elections in June 2000, the situation is expected to become even more politically charged and volatile.

It would appear, Mr. Speaker, that the newly launched effort to control and/or censure the media in Russia is in large part explained by these upcoming elections. With the beginning of serious political activity over the next year in connection with the parliamentary and presidential elections, Kremlin authorities have accelerated their offensive against NTV and other independent news outlets. One of the clearest indications of this struggle is the fact that the state-owned television network ORT is using its news programs to undermine privately-owned rival television network.

Mr. Speaker, I have consistently supported U.S. programs to assist Russia to get back on its feet economically, to develop strong private institutions, and to establish a functioning market-oriented economy. All of us want to see Russia succeed and become a strong and viable democratic country which plays a positive role in the community of nations. Respect for freedom of expression and freedom of the press, however, are absolutely essential if we are to assist Russia, and an uncensored press is essential if Russia is to take its appropriate place in the world.

I call upon President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin to take quick and decisive action to end once and for all the efforts within the Kremlin to punish, intimidate or threaten independent news reporting in Russia. The government must also end its policy of favoritism by rewarding those who gratuitously promote the official Kremline line.

Mr. Speaker, with the critical parliamentary and presidential elections coming up in Russia during the next twelve months, the Russian government must do everything in its power to insure free and fair reporting of all political events. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are absolutely essential for any democratic nation. Russia's international reputation and its position among the community of nations depend on how it deals with this most serious threat to its democracy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, due to official business, I was unable to record my vote on the following measures that were considered here in the House of Representatives today. Had I been present I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall vote 343.

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall vote 344 I would have voted ''no.''

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall vote 345, I would have voted ''aye.''

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall vote 346, I would have voted ''no.''

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall vote 347, I would have voted ''nay.''

AFTER KARGIL—WHAT?

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over an important foreign policy decision. If left unpunished, the Pakistani conduct during the recent Kargil crisis—particularly in view of the Clinton Administration's handling of the crisis—would set a dangerous precedent for would-be aggressors and rogue nations. Failing to address the Pakistani precedent swiftly and decisively is therefore detrimental to the national security and well being of the United States.

Three aspects of the Pakistani behavior during the crisis should worry us:

1. Intentional reliance on nuclear capabilities in order to shield one's own aggression. A policy advocated by radical Islamists since 1993, the current Pakistani nuclear doctrine constitutes a profound deviation from the post WWII norm of using nuclear weaponry—an ultimate deterrence in the form of weapons of last resort in case of aggression against one's own state and/or most vital interests. The Pakistani intentional and unilateral ultimatum—repeated warnings to escalate the Kargil crisis into a nuclear war in case India's reaction to the Pakistani aggression threatened to deprive Pakistani of any achievement—exceeds even the most aggressive use of the nuclear card by the USSR at the height of the Cold War (when Moscow reiterated its commitment to use nuclear weapons solely at time of a major world war). In contract, the Pakistani nuclear ultimatum is identical to the nuclear blackmail doctrine of the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—a doctrine based on brinkmanship and blackmail which both states tinkered with but are yet to have implemented despite repeated crises. Thus, it is Islamabad that was the first to cross the threshold of aggressive use of one's own nuclear potential.

2. Concealing the use of one's own national military forces as deniable ''militants.'' In so doing, Islamabad demonstrated unwillingness