

of its oil and mineral wealth, Kazakhstan is the crown jewel of the region and is thus another likely target of Islamic extremist groups. Kazakhstan's democratically challenged regime has taken note of the alarming developments in its neighbors to the south and has taken steps to strengthen its defenses. That's the good news. The bad news, however, is that President Nursultan Nazarbayev has apparently stepped up his repression, and it has been reported that he is plundering his oil and mineral rich country by siphoning hundreds of millions of dollars into foreign bank accounts. As a result, President Nazarbayev is said to be the eighth richest person in the world.

The people of Kazakhstan are not as blind. They can easily see that they inhabit a rich country, and they are justifiably beginning to ask why so little of their country's great wealth seems to be trickling down to them. The people are also not blind to sham elections, the stifling of press freedom, and the jailing of opposition leaders that have come to characterize the country's political life. I have been told that more and more people in Kazakhstan are losing hope, and are more willing to give Islamic extremists groups, who claim that they will eliminate the corruption of the current regime, a chance to govern.

In the March 3 issue of the Economist, there is an excellent article on Kazakhstan's security situation. At the end of the article, the author states "Government repression and mismanagement help to nourish extremism and terrorism in Central Asia. An effort to improve social and economic conditions and freedom of expression might make Kazakhstan less fertile ground for militant zealots." I wholeheartedly agree with this premise, and I ask that the full text of the Economist article appear immediately after my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, some people in Washington may be tempted to urge U.S. support for the Nazarbayev regime because it claims to be a bulwark of defense against Islamic extremism. But according to the information that I have been receiving, it is the Nazarbayev regime itself that will likely fuel the growth of Islamic extremism. Democracy, a free press, and respect for human rights are the keys to protecting a country like Kazakhstan from the influence of Islamic extremists groups. The United States must stand with regimes in Central Asia who share these key democratic values, not those regimes and leaders who subvert them.

[From the Economist, Mar. 3, 2001]

#### IN DEFENCE

When the Soviet Union broke up ten years ago, the leaders of Central Asia's newly independent states felt safe from possible attacks on their region. Their main concern was to promote order, economic reform and the assertion of power for themselves and their families. They were jolted out of their complacency by bomb blasts in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in February 1999 and an attack by Islamic militants in Kirgizstan in August. Last year Islamists again attacked both countries.

Although Kazakhstan was not directly affected by these attacks, they have alerted the country to look to its defenses. President Nursultan Nazarbaev has set about making Kazakhstan's armed forces capable of dealing with what he believes are the main threats to the state; terrorism as a result of religious extremism, and organized crime.

He is strengthening defences in the south, in the mountainous border regions from

which an Islamic incursion might come. He wants his soldiers to be more mobile. Sniper groups are being formed. Villagers with local knowledge of the terrain are being recruited as guides. The country's defence budget has been more than doubled this year to \$171m, or 1% of GDP. Soldiers' pay is to go up by 30-40%.

One difficulty is the Kazakhstan's borders were not clearly defined in Soviet times, so it is difficult to decide what is a "border incursion". Kazakhstan has 14,000 km (8,750 miles) of borders with neighboring states. It has agreed on its border with China, but it is still negotiating with Russia, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Bulat Sultanov, of Kazakhstan's Institute of Strategic Studies, worries that "our border troops cannot carry out any operations because there is no legal basis for them."

Last year, Uzbek border guards entered southern Kazakhstan and claimed a stretch of land. Since then, there have been several brushes between Uzbeks and Kazakhs, mostly villagers unclear about which country they are living in. All this is a distraction from the task of making the south of Kazakhstan more secure.

Then there is Afghanistan. Although Kazakhstan is not a direct neighbour, the fiercely Islamic Taliban who control most of Afghanistan are a worry to all of Central Asia. They are believed to provide training for extremists, among them the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which wants to set up a caliphate in the Fergana valley, where Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan meet. The IMU was said to be behind the attacks in Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan in the past two years and is thought to be preparing another assault before long.

Most of Kazakhstan's military equipment dates back to the Soviet period. Replacing, say, old helicopters used in the border areas will be expensive, but necessary. In January a Mi-8 helicopter crashed in the south, injuring the defence minister, Sat Tokpakbaev, who was aboard. Another helicopter crashed near the Chinese border two weeks ago, killing six people.

Kazakhstan will receive arms from Russia worth \$20m this year as part of its annual payment for the use of a space-rocket site at Baikonur. It is due to receive over \$4m from the United States to improve border security. The government might also consider some nonmilitary measures. Government repression and mismanagement help to nourish extremism and terrorism in Central Asia. An effort to improve social and economic conditions and freedom of expression might make Kazakhstan less fertile ground for militant zealots.

#### RECOGNIZING MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY FOR WINNING THE NORTHEAST CONFERENCE MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP AND GOING TO THE NCAA TOURNAMENT

#### HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work of the Monmouth University Hawks men's basketball team who won the Northeast Conference basketball title recently with a 67-64 victory over St. Francis of New York. Mr. Speaker, this victory rounds out a "Cinderella" season that saw the Hawks reclaim the top spot in the Northeast Conference

and earns them an automatic bid to the "big dance."

The 12th Congressional District of New Jersey has a proud tradition of sending teams into battle during March madness. This is Monmouth University's second NCAA tournament bid. As the field begins to fill out I salute the courage and determination of the Monmouth Hawks and wish them great success and a full dance card.

#### Men's Basketball 2000-01 Roster

Listed by number, position, height, weight, class, hometown, and highschool/college, as follows:

4 Rahsaan Johnson, G, 6'-0", 195, Jr., Washington, D.C., Gonzaga/Allegheny College.

5 Tom Kaplan, G, 6'-4", 190, Fr., Tel Aviv, Israel, Elitzur Rishon Le Zion.

10 Jason Kray, G, 6'-5", 215, Fr., Point Pleasant, N.J., Christian Brothers Academy.

11 Steve Birdgemohan, F, 6'-8", 225, Jr., North Brunswick, N.J., North Brunswick.

12 Phil Bonczewski, F, 6'-8", 220, Fr., Plymouth, Pa., Wyoming Valley West.

13 Cameron Milton, G, 6'-3", 185, Jr., Philadelphia, Pa., Franklin Learning Center.

20 Demitry Courtney, G, 6'-1", 165, Sr., Trenton, N.J., Notre Dame.

21 Jay Dooley, F, 6'-6", 210, So., Rumson, N.J., Rumson-Fair Haven.

24 Gerry Crosby, F, 6'-5", 205, Sr., Twinsburg, Ohio, R.B. Chamberlin/Monroe CC.

25 Kevin Owens, C, 6'-10", 225, So., Haddonfield, N.J., Camden Catholic.

33 Nick Barnes, C, 6'-9", 260, Fr., Mount Airy, MD., The Newport School.

45 Russ Anderson, F, 6'-7", 210, So., Chester, N.Y., Don Bosco Prep.

Head Coach Dave Calloway.

Assistant Coach Mark Calzonetti.

Assistant Coach Ron Kray.

#### TRIBUTE TO STEVE VOSSMEYER

#### HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

#### HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my esteemed colleague from Missouri's 3rd District, the Democratic Leader, Mr. GEPHARDT, to honor a loyal friend, devoted father, remarkable public servant, and esteemed political and civic leader whose love of life will live on in the memory of all those lives he touched. Steve Vossmeier died March 9, just five days before his 57th birthday. Citizens of the City of St. Louis, his beloved Central West End neighborhood, and the Great State of Missouri mourn his passing.

Steve loved the law and he loved people. He was a popular political figure who used his wit and humor to cajole and prevail upon others to accept his point of view. He was a force to be reckoned with because he researched the situation thoroughly, asked tough questions of opponents, and loved to galvanize those of like mind around a challenge then execute a winning strategy. His love of sports, particularly Cardinals baseball, was legendary and shared enthusiastically with family and friends. An invitation to partake of Steve's culinary skills was a treasured occasion that brought the best minds together around his table and provoked conversations which extended well into the night.