

On September 21, 1991, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the long awaited dream of an independent Armenia became a reality as the Armenian people held a referendum to decide their future. An extraordinary 94 percent of Armenia's eligible voters turned out to support independence. I might note that one of our colleagues, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, was in Armenia on this historic occasion.

Although the Republic of Armenia struggles against the impact of an ongoing blockade by its neighbors to the east and west, which has devastated the economy, Armenia continues to make economic strides. Armenia also continues to reach out to its neighbors without preconditions. Unfortunately, Armenia's numerous proposals—from opening borders, restoration of rail and road links in the Caucasus, energy swaps, agreeing to the U.S. proposal to open mutual information centers in Turkey and Armenia among others—have all been rejected.

I am pleased to note that some progress has been made in promoting improved Armenian-Turkish relations with the recent establishment of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC). The commission is an important step toward fostering a new era of mutual understanding and good will between Armenians and Turks. This commission provides a forum for direct dialogue to address issues that continue to divide the people of Armenia and Turkey.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving." Armenia, like many other countries of the former Soviet Union, is still struggling to overcome many obstacles, but I believe it is headed in the right direction. And with the ongoing support of the United States, we can ensure that Armenia's young democracy will flourish. I am confident that the strong and natural bonds that exist between our two countries and peoples will continue to grow and become stronger in the years to come. God bless America and God Bless Armenia.

HONORING KERN COUNTY
FIREFIGHTERS

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2001

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the real contributions of many individuals from California's 21st District to the relief effort because of the horrible tragedy on September 11, 2001. I am continually encouraged by the courageous and unselfish acts of our communities.

Over the past week, a tireless and dedicated crew of 11 firefighters from Kern County in California has helped with the rescue and cleanup efforts at the Pentagon. Facing long days of work in a stressful environment, they kept their resolve. The display of internal fortitude by these heroes serves as a great example of generosity and selflessness.

I would like to express my appreciation to Steve Gage, Keven Harper, Nick Dunn, Ken Stevens, Bob Clinoff, Bob Lehtreck, Dean Clason, Pat Caprioli, Steve Shoemaker, Jim Scritchfield, and Dan Kleinman for all their

hard work in assisting with the rescue and recovery efforts at the Pentagon. I would also like to thank their families for the sacrifices they also endured during these uncertain times.

I am extremely proud of these firefighters and our communities for the compassion shown to the victims of this horrific act of terrorism. The blood, sweat, and tears shed throughout our history in the quest for life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness have never been in vain. That is why I am certain the American people will rise to the occasion and triumph in these most trying of times. Together, there are no difficulties we cannot overcome as the greatest example of freedom and democracy in the world.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS STANDS STRONG FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2001

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the citizens of the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands (CNMI) for their support of the United States Armed Forces. In particular, I want to thank the members of the House of Representatives of the CNMI and their Speaker, Ben Fitial. Recently, that body passed a resolution, authored by Speaker Fitial, calling for the U.S. Navy's continued use of Farallon de Medinilla Island for essential training exercises.

Of all the targets in the Western Pacific available to forward deployed U.S. units, only Farallon de Medinilla offers the target fidelity, access and maneuver space required to maintain the Navy's war-fighting capabilities. Rear Admiral Tom S. Fellin of the U.S. Navy has said that "Farallonde Medinilla . . . plays a special and unique role in national defense. Its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the CNMI."

The men and women in our military need places like Farallon de Medinilla in order to keep our forces the most effective in the world. Shutting them down will cost lives. But Puerto Rico's highly publicized and successful effort to end Navy training on its Vieques Island has inspired activists elsewhere to press for an end to military training in their backyard. Small groups of military extremists are now agitating for removal of U.S. military operations at Farallon de Medinilla Island and in Okinawa. Not only am I concerned about the implications of those efforts for our military readiness, but I am concerned that if successful, these efforts will ultimately encourage domestic pressure for removal of military operations which in any way inconvenience nearby residents. At this time of national crisis, we simply cannot afford to lose our most critical military training sites.

Unlike the situation in Puerto Rico, though, the overwhelming majority of residents and indeed the leaders of CNMI have not jumped on the political bandwagon to force the U.S. out. They are standing up to those fringe elements,

because they recognize that freedom isn't free, and that with the benefits of being part of the U.S. territories come some responsibilities.

The tragic terrorist events in New York and Washington, D.C., show us once again, that we cannot just turn our military on like a light switch. To ensure peace, our military must always be prepared for the horrible reality of war. They must always maintain the people, the equipment and most important, the training to ensure that they prevail when a challenge arises. We thank Speaker Fitial for taking the initiative in confirming the commitment of the CNMI people to our fighting forces and all the citizens of the United States. As we enter the battle against terrorism around the world, it is heartening to have the CNMI people standing by our side. They have been there in times of peace, and they will be with us in the new war against terrorism.

DR. FREDERICK G. SAMPSON II
CELEBRATES 50TH YEAR AS A
MINISTER

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2001

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commend Dr. Frederick G. Sampson II, pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, as he marks two very important milestones in his illustrious career. In addition to celebrating his 50th year as a minister, Dr. Sampson reaches his 30th anniversary as pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.

Dr. Sampson has an extensive educational background, holding degrees in both Behavioral Science and the Theological Sciences. Dr. Sampson, an avid lecturer at colleges and universities throughout our country, is also the annual keynote speaker for various Congresses, Fellowships, Conventions, Councils, Coalitions, Advisory Boards, and Community Outreach Programs all over this country. During his career, Dr. Sampson has pastored various congregations all over the country, and has served on commissions and boards with the aim of fighting crime, improving education, and bringing a higher level of consciousness to our community.

Dr. Sampson's many endeavors to enrich life at all levels of society have also led him to teaching, preaching, and studying mission all over the world. Dr. Sampson deserves praise for his rich, multi-national service record, including his leadership and participation in the Human Rights struggle. Once again, I urge my colleagues to join me in commending Dr. Sampson on his outstanding achievements.

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 20, 2001

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we passed H.R. 1900, the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Authorization Act,