UNITED STATES SECURITY ACT

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Democratic Caucus' Homeland Security bill, the United States Security Act (USA Act).

This legislation is a collaborative effort crafted by my democratic colleagues on the Homeland Security Task Force. I was honored to have served as the vice chair of the Transportation Security task force with my friend, BOB BORSKI, who chaired the task force.

The USA Act addresses funding needs to improve our homeland security in the following areas: public health, transportation, physical and informational infrastructure, law enforcement and the military. As the attacks of the 11th clearly and unfortunately demonstrated, our nation is vulnerable to attack. This bill goes a long way to minimize those vulnerabilities.

In the past five years—and prior to the 11th—there have been international events which highlighted potential weaknesses in our transportation systems. In Tokyo, Japan, individuals caused harm by releasing sarin gas in the subway system. The USGS *Cole* was attacked in a seaport that, although in Yemen, was considered safe. While these attacks occurred overseas, they could have taken place here in the States.

With the passage of the Aviation Security Act earlier this year, significant improvements to aviation security were mandated. However, other modes of transportation could still be susceptible to attack. This legislation authorizes funds to secure bridges, tunnels, dams, seaports, rail, and public transit.

Specifically, the bill provides $3.6 billion to strengthen bridge and tunnel structures, improve inspection facilities and the inspection of Hazmat materials on highways, supply the traveling public with real-time information about availability roads and bridges if terrorist attacks were to occur again, and improve security for locks and dams. It also provides $992 million to enhance security at our seaports by increasing coast guard personnel, establishing a sea marshal program, requiring transponders for foreign vessels in U.S. waters, and screening ship cargo by x-ray. To improve security on transit systems, $3.2 billion is authorized. Funds would be used to hire additional security personnel, improve communications and refine mass transit evacuation plans. With the appropriation of funds, the security of these transportation systems will markedly improve.

The USA Act also authorizes funds to strengthen communities responses to emergency incidents. This is done by increasing the number of firefighters, providing grants to communities and first responders and improving technology so that important information can be more readily shared between local, state and federal governments. Our nation's first responders are an integral component in response to a terrorist attack, and we must ensure that they are well prepared.

In addition, the bill also takes major steps towards improving the preparedness of the military to effectively fight terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have the best military in the world; however, the war on terrorism is unlike any we've ever fought, and enhancement of current training is important.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have produced a good bill. This legislation addresses many real needs in enhancing the security of the United States. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the legislation.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF DANIEL HARTER

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bid farewell to Daniel Harter, an intern with my office. Daniel has provided a unique perspective along with legal expertise as a member of my staff for the past three months, and became an invaluable resource.

Daniel started with me shortly after completing law school, wanting to learn as much as possible about the workings and intricacies of Capitol Hill. Despite being confronted with challenges and pressures most would fold under, Daniel persevered and became a valued part of my Washington, DC, office.

Like so many capable and hard working young congressional staff members, Daniel is moving on to work as an attorney. Although my staff and I are saddened to see him leave, Daniel's commitment to the legal process, his passion for public service, and his vigorous pursuit of perfection will serve his clients and his profession well.

Daniel tackled every task head on, from helping with day-to-day operations, to aiding with the daunting legislation and constituent demands of post-September 11 life on the Hill. His contribution to our office and his work for the people of Middle Tennessee will be missed.

U.S. HAS LONG TRADITION OF HELPING MUSLIMS, AS SHOWN BY 1952 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO NEARLY 4,000 MECCA PILGRIMS

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the fact that our nation has a long history of helping Muslims. While we are familiar with the actions America has taken in recent years to intervene for the benefit of Muslims in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, among numerous other locations around the world, America is hardly new to coming to the aid of people of the Islamic faith.

In particular, I would like to call the attention of the House to an instance brought to my attention by an alert constituent, Mr. Leonard Mulcahy of Wyoming, Pennsylvania. In light of recent events, Mr. Mulcahy recalled seeing an article in the July 1953 issue of National Geographic magazine about the U.S. Air Force assisting nearly 4,000 Muslims in 1952, and he was kind enough to provide me with a copy of that issue of the magazine.

Mr. Speaker, the article states that in August 1952, ''with the opening of the hadj only a few days away, nearly 4,000 desperate Moslems found themselves in Lebanon . . . with air tickets but no reservations. Commercial lines, flooded with applications, could take only a few.'' As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the hadj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which each Muslim is expected to undertake at least once in his or her life if possible.

The article continues, ''To help in the emergency, American Ambassador Harold B. Minor asked the United States Air Force to fly 14 C–54s from Libya and Germany. Quickly a shuttle service was set up; in 75 flights 3,763 pilgrims were transported 900 miles from Beirut to Jidda in time to begin their hadj. In gratitude, the Mufti of Lebanon ordered prayers for Americans in all mosques, and King Abdul Aziz al Saud presented Arab robes to 86 airmen.''

The article also states, ''The Air Force accepted no money for the pilgrim passages. Fares collected by commercial airlines, for flights they were unable to complete, went to Moslem charity.''

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank Leonard Mulcahy for making sure that America's assistance to the Muslim pilgrims in 1952 is not forgotten. Despite our imperfect history, Americans can be proud that ours is a generous and tolerant nation, and I believe the fact that we provided this type of assistance to thousands of Muslims nearly half a century ago helps to illustrate that fact.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE VOTING RIGHTS OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS WHOSE HOME OF RESIDENCE IS AMERICAN SAMOA

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce federal legislation to protect the voting rights of active duty military members whose home of residence is American Samoa.

Since 1977, active-duty service members serving overseas or on the United States mainland have been excluded from fully participating and voting in both general and runoff Federal elections in American Samoa due to several factors, including local law that requires active duty military members to register in person, limited air and mail service between the U.S. mainland and American Samoa, and delays in the preparation of new ballots in the case of runoff elections.

However, under the provisions of 42 U.S.C, 1973ff–1, Federal law states that:

Each State shall—

(1) permit absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to use absentee registration procedures and to vote by absentee ballot in general, special primary, or runoff elections for Federal office;

(2) . . .

(3) permit overseas voters to use Federal write-in absentee ballots . . . in general elections for Federal office.''