

County's Superintendent of Schools since 1990, and is being honored by the Kremen School of Education and Human Development.

Dr. Mehas was born and raised in Fresno, graduated from Fresno High in 1957, and earned his Bachelor's degree from California State University, Fresno. He continued his education at University of California, Los Angeles, where he received his Master's degree, and went on to University of Southern California, where he secured a Doctorate in Education.

Pete has served the public for many years as an educational advocate. He was Secretary of Education to Governor George Deukmejian, and also a member of the California State Board of Education and Board of Governors for California Community Colleges.

His efforts have not gone unnoticed—Dr. Mehas has been appointed by four presidents and three governors to major commissions, boards, and advisory committees committed to making education a priority throughout our Nation. He has appeared on national television's NBC's "Today" show and ABC's "Good Morning America," and was the only educator invited to address the National Republican Convention in Houston, Texas in 1992.

Dr. Mehas' accomplishment list is long and includes USC School of Education Distinguished Lecturer, CSU Fresno School of Social Science Distinguished Alumni Award, Honorary Life Member in the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, NAACP Presidents Award, Rose Ann Vuich Ethical Leadership Award, and most recently the Kremen School of Education and Human Development "Noted Alumni Recipient" for significant contributions in the field of education.

His efforts have been exhaustive, and we are continually lucky that his family, wife Demi and daughters Alethea and Andreanna have been willing to share all that Dr. Mehas has to offer—he has made an amazing impact on our community.

SIKH LEADER AGAIN SPEAKS OUT FOR FREEDOM FOR KHALISTAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, there are encouraging developments in the fight for freedom for minorities in India. It looks like the people of Nagaland are making progress in their negotiations with India to achieve autonomy. This is a potentially significant development that will begin, at long last, the unraveling of the web of Indian oppression. Can Kashmir and Khalistan be far behind?

To add to this, the fire of freedom continues to burn as brightly as ever in Punjab, Khalistan. On December 7, a Sikh leader named Simranjit Singh Mann, who is a former Member of India's Parliament and has held events right here in the Capitol and met many Members of Congress, again spoke out for independence for the Sikh homeland, Khalistan. Mr. Mann put his party, the Akali Dal, Amritsar, on record for independence. He pledged that he would lead a peaceful movement for independence, which he said was a dream of the Sikh people that "will be mate-

rialized one day." It looks like that day is getting closer.

The government of Punjab acted last year to cancel all water agreements with the other states in India, by which Punjab's water was being diverted to those other states. In so doing, they declared the sovereignty of the state of Punjab. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. They are openly claiming their sovereignty. This is good to see.

Mr. Speaker, when India became independent, the Sikhs were supposed to get an independent state in Punjab. But the Indian leaders assured them they would have "the glow of freedom" there, so they stayed with India. Well, that "glow of freedom" has taken the lives of over 250,000 Sikhs as well as over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 89,000 Kashmiri Muslims, and tens of thousands of other minority people. It has resulted in 52,268 Sikhs being held as political prisoners under a repressive law called TADA that expired in 1995. It is time for real freedom for the Sikhs, the Nagas, the Kashmiris, and all people in the subcontinent.

The essence of democracy is self-determination. If India wants to be treated as a democracy, it must allow self-determination and all other rights to all its citizens. We should not provide any money to India until it does. In 1948, India promised to hold a plebiscite to let the people of Kashmir decide their status. It's now 56 years later and they are still waiting. Similarly, the demand for self-determination in Khalistan, in Nagaland, and elsewhere has been met with nothing but violent resistance. Is that democracy, Mr. Speaker? Is that freedom?

The Tribune, a newspaper in Chandigarh, Punjab, carried excellent coverage of Mr. Mann's remarks in its December 8 issue. I would like to place that article in the RECORD at this time for the information of my colleagues.

[From the (Chandigarh, India) Tribune, Dec. 8, 2004]

MANN REVERTS TO SOVEREIGN PUNJAB THEME

LUDHIANA, Dec. 7.—Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) supremo Simranjit Singh Mann yesterday reverted to the theme of sovereign Punjab, declaring that his party would launch a peaceful movement to realise this dream. He said his party had never given up the demand for a separate and sovereign Punjab as the Sikhs' was a separate nationality, foundations of which had been laid down by Guru Gobind Singh himself.

Mr. Mann, who was here to preside over a meeting of the party office-bearers at Gurdwara Akalgarh, said to ensure lasting peace in South Asia in the face of deep hostility between "Hindu civilisation (India) and Muslim civilisation (Pakistan)", it was in the interest of the people of the region to create a neutral and buffer sovereign state.

He maintained that the foundations for a separate sovereign Sikh state had been laid down by Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur followed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This dream was furthered by "Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale" and "would be materialised one day". He said since both Pakistan and India had nuclear weapons, it was necessary that some buffer state should be created so that the two countries did not come face to face with each other.

Mr. Mann refused to give the geographical outline of the "sovereign state" envisioned by him. He evaded an answer to a question whether it included the part of the state which is now with Pakistan.

Welcoming the close cooperation between the Pakistani Punjab and the Indian Punjab, Mr. Mann claimed it was he who had initiated this move by demanding way back in 1990 that the border between the two Punjab should be opened up for the people to cross over.

To a question on the demand of the Dal Khalsa that ban on cow slaughter in Punjab should go, Mr. Mann said he or his organisation had nothing to do with that organisation (Dal Khalsa). At the same time, he said, he or his party would not like to hurt the sentiments of a majority of people as "Hindus held the cow to be sacred and their sentiments should be respected".

Mr. Mann also accused Shiromani Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal of having connived with Hindu organisations in demolishing the Babri mosque. He alleged that Mr. Badal had sent a special jatha, led by Mr. Avtar Singh Hit, to Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, to join the kar sevaks for demolishing the Babri mosque.

IN HONOR OF JOE HARRIS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life-long service of Joe Harris. Mr. Harris, hailed as a man who always put everyone before himself, spent the last 34 years of his life serving my constituents as a fire fighter in the City of Denton, Texas. Mr. Harris not only served the people of Denton County but also his family and co-workers with the encouragement, warmth and generosity that defined his life.

The recent death of Mr. Harris came after years of fighting cancer. He had recently retired so he could spend more time with his family. During his career as a public servant, Mr. Harris took pride in each task that he was given. His contagious personality and love for those whom he saw day after day went far beyond his call of duty. A life-long citizen of my district, Mr. Harris served not only my constituents but our country in the United States Coast Guard. Mr. Harris was steadfast in his life of service, and I have no doubt that he has inspired everyone who came to know him.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I stand here today to commemorate the life of Joe Harris; one of our fellow public servants. May his work be a guide and inspiration to us all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote No. 31, I had thought that I had voted and that the machine had accepted my vote. Apparently, it did not; therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD show that had my vote been accepted, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 31.