

was forced to develop synthetic rubber to relieve the U.S. military of its dependence on imported rubber.

Mr. Ford and a team of dedicated engineers at The Dow Chemical Company in Midland, Michigan, developed and pioneered domestic ethylene production, which as the precursor to synthetic rubber, was used to supply the U.S. with critical resources necessary to win the war. Ethylene continues to have practical, widespread applications today in plastic bags, paints, antifreeze and car components.

Until recently Mr. Ford's family was unaware of his impact on Dow and his important role in developing ethylene. He is being honored today at the Herbert D. Doan Historical Museum in Midland and finally getting the recognition he and others deserve.

Like so many in Mr. Ford's generation, he never asked for any credit, recognition or accolades for his work or the work of his team during the war. He did not ask for a blue ribbon or a tickertape parade. He is among the many anonymous Americans who quietly, selflessly did his job on the home front to win the war overseas.

That is why more than 60 years after World War II it is a privilege for me to publicly recognize Mr. Ford and his team at The Dow Chemical Company as unsung heroes and acknowledge their contributions to the U.S. during a time of world war.

WELL DONE!—ATLANTA GAS  
LIGHT

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 29, 2006*

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on February 16th of this year, Atlanta Gas Light celebrated 150 years of quality and continued service to the people of Georgia. What a privilege it is to take this opportunity to thank Atlanta Gas Light for being a leader in innovation and economic development.

Natural gas is a cornerstone of the energy supply for Georgia residents and businesses. From cooking food and heating our homes to lighting our streets, natural gas has helped make Atlanta the commercial leader of the Southeast.

Atlanta Gas Light has become a community leader as well volunteering time and money and giving back to the citizens of Georgia. In addition to their own accomplishments, Atlanta Gas Light recognizes other community leaders in Georgia with its Shining Light Award. Since 1963, recipients of the Shining Light Award have been recognized by gas lamps erected throughout the city in their honor. This is just one of the many ways Atlanta Gas Light continues to give back to the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia.

I applaud Atlanta Gas Light on their first 150 years as a business and community leader. Without a doubt, their continued leadership will help Atlanta grow and remain the center of the Southeast for the 21st Century.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 29, 2006*

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, due to inclement weather, I was unable to vote during the following rollcall vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as indicated below.

Rollcall No. 68: yea.

MONITORING RESPECT FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE  
WORLD

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 29, 2006*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on March 16, 2006, I chaired a hearing to review the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005 and, in the context of those reports, to examine the state of respect for human rights around the world.

Human rights are not a concession or benefit conferred by the state. They are the entitlement of every human person on the basis of that person's inherent dignity and worth. Thus the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and subsequent international human rights treaties did not establish human rights—they recognized those rights. Therefore, human rights cannot be abrogated or otherwise removed by any government. They are entitlements pre-existing and superseding the prerogatives of the government, and as such are either respected or violated.

Certain human rights are fundamental, and are the basis for the recognition and enjoyment of all other human rights. Foremost of these rights is the right to life. If a human being is denied or threatened with the denial of life, the existence of other rights is meaningless. And attempts to exclude any category of human beings from the inviolable right to life at the whim of expediency or the more powerful undermines and threatens the respect of life for all peoples. A determination to take the life of one human being easily translates into taking the life of another, limited only by the relative power of the aggressor and the vulnerability of the one whose life is threatened. It is for these reasons that the life of every human being, from conception to natural death, is of such critical, overriding importance.

As affirmed by the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, liberty, justice and peace in the world are built on the foundation of the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. Human rights are central to United States foreign policy not only because they are a moral imperative but also because they are central to any effort to establish and maintain a democratic, peaceful, stable society. Those who ignore or repudiate human rights are sowing the seeds of instability, rebellion and violence.

It is therefore disturbing that human rights concerns are often subordinated to other concerns, such as trade, cooperation on terrorism, immigration control, or selling military equip-

ment, in the name of maintaining relations with countries of high importance to U.S. strategic goals. This misses the point. The most important U.S. interest is the promotion of freedom and democracy and long-term stability. We are strong enough, and we are prosperous enough that we have no need to accept blood money or to send refugees back to persecution or to seek our alliances among regimes that murder and torture their own people.

The Country Reports are among the most important tasks undertaken by the Department of State. These reports allow the United States an opportunity to bear witness, to reassert fundamental principles, and also to examine its own conscience about whether its foreign policy comports with these principles. Other annual reports, such as the Trafficking in Persons report and the report on International Religious Freedom, also shine the spotlight on specific human rights areas which bear closer examination.

Although the human rights mechanism of the United Nations is not directly germane to the release of the Country Reports, the importance of the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution establishing the new Human Rights Council is of such importance that I included it in the discussions of the hearing. I personally am deeply disappointed and dismayed that the United Nations adopted such a weak and deeply flawed replacement for the discredited Human Rights Commission.

Furthermore, the new Council's anticipated promotion of the goals and commitments "emanating" from UN conferences and summits, measures not intended by negotiating member states to be on a par with human rights treaties, will dilute and trivialize the solemn importance rightly attributed to fundamental human rights. Many of us in Congress will be watching the development of the new Council closely, and we strongly encourage the Administration to work assiduously to not only ensure that this new council promotes and defends human rights but also that it does not distort the established and accepted framework of fundamental human rights.

The 2005 Country Reports document several important steps forward taken by governments around the world to respect and protect the fundamental human rights of their citizens. Burundi concluded a four-year transitional process and large numbers of displaced persons were encouraged to return home. The election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia marked "a significant milestone" in that country's efforts to achieve democracy and peace. Afghanistan experienced its first parliamentary elections in almost 30 years, with women enthusiastically participating. And in Ukraine, the Orange Revolution resulted in a democratically elected government and a notable improvement in respect for human rights.

Unfortunately, the news is not all good. The Country Reports also serve to confirm and document what we knew already, that the last year has not been a good one for the state of human rights in the world. The Zimbabwean government's Operation Restore Order led to the demolition of houses and businesses and displaced or destroyed the livelihoods of more than 700,000 people. The government of Belarus President Lukashenko detained, fined, and imprisoned pro-democracy activists, including opposition politicians, students and newspaper editors, for criticizing him and his