

Secretary General Kofi Annan, a great friend of this Congress and of the American people, and a dear friend of our family.

Kofi Annan began his service as Secretary General in January 1997, and his second five-year term will be completed in December of this year. Although he is the seventh individual to serve as Secretary General in the history of the United Nations, he is the first individual to be selected for this position from the ranks of U.N. staff.

As the Secretary General completes his work in New York, Mr. Speaker, the world's luminaries will weigh in and a consensus will quickly emerge that Kofi Annan is the United Nations' greatest secretary general. Because Kofi and his wife Nanne are dear personal friends of my wife, Annette, and me, I want to be the first to reflect on the remarkable term of this outstanding international civil servant.

Mr. Speaker, in looking back on the decade that Kofi Annan has shaped the United Nations, it is clear that his term has been sustained by a powerful vision—his belief that this complicated world body could become something much more than a Cold War relic useful only for convening meetings and servicing international conferences.

Since Secretary General Annan's first day on the job, he has been driven by the conviction that the United Nations must undergo what he has called a "strategic refit" to help the organization reach its full potential in the 21st century, to better serve the pressing needs of mankind that individual states are unable or unwilling to meet.

Every day for the last decade, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary General has worked tirelessly, against impossible odds, to convince 191 sovereign states to let him reshape the organization in line with his vision. This has been no small task, given that each one of these 191 states—democracies, monarchies, military juntas, and brutal dictatorships—is jealous of its own sovereign rights.

As we enter the closing months of Kofi Annan's term at the helm of the most important and most unruly international organization, we can say with absolute confidence that—against all odds—he has succeeded in this project.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most profound measure of Kofi's success was the groundbreaking consensus agreement he led the United Nations to adopt last September at an historic summit of more than 100 heads of state. This agreement consisted of a binding pledge by all U.N. member states to recognize a collective "responsibility to protect" individuals threatened with genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity, a responsibility that supercedes the sovereignty of any individual state.

Kofi Annan's inspiration for his effort to reshape the fundamental principles underlying the United Nations grew out of his profound sadness in the tragic failure of the global community to protect its most vulnerable citizens in Srebrenica, Bosnia, and in Rwanda.

Mr. Speaker, during the decade between the latter of these two tragedies and that World Summit pledge last September, Secretary General Annan, has focused U.N. activities on three goals: preventing conflict, promoting democracies, and eradicating poverty. He has done this methodically and with steely determination, step by step, surmounting numerous pitfalls and hurdles along the way.

Despite inheriting a United Nations beset with a sclerotic bureaucracy and severely limited resources, Kofi Annan's achievement in mobilizing the world body to start to close what he has called "the chasm between [those who are] rich and poor, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated." This effort has been breathtaking in scope and scale.

In the past nine years under Secretary General Annan's watch, Mr. Speaker, the number of civilian soldiers deployed on U.N. peacekeeping missions has increased from 20,000 to 80,000, bringing hope and a measure of stability to damaged lives in places like Liberia, Burundi, Haiti, the Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

U.N. capacity to move beyond simply keeping the peace to helping shell-shocked societies recover and prosper has also been greatly enhanced under Kofi Annan's leadership. His most notable accomplishment in this process was to establish a U.N. Peacebuilding Commission during that World Summit last September.

Mr. Speaker, the Secretary General's efforts to build U.N. capacity to promote democracy have also enjoyed remarkable success. During his tenure the Secretariat's Political Office has helped conduct more than 100 successful elections, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan. The people involved in this enterprise have also helped achieve democratic openings in places previously thought to be beyond democracy's reach, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Sierra Leone and Lebanon.

Secretary General Annan's moral leadership has also inspired the U.N.'s member states to remake a wholly dysfunctional U.N. Human Rights Commission by replacing it with a Human Rights Council that for the first time in the history of the United Nations will require countries to meet human rights qualifications to gain membership. This change will forever shatter the pernicious myth that had long operated in Geneva, that a pathological dictatorship like Sudan somehow occupied the same moral high ground as Sweden in enforcing agreed human rights standards.

The Secretary General has also created a new architecture to attack poverty and chronic disease by committing states to tangible Millennium Development Goals, and by creating a Global Compact committing corporations to pledges to upgrade environmental, labor and human rights conditions. This will serve to bring the benefits of globalization to more people worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, it was my honor to be the first person to nominate Kofi Annan for the Nobel Peace Prize. When the distinguished Secretary General accepted that prize in October 2001, he explained why he is so committed to ensuring that the United Nations can live up to its responsibility to protect each and every vulnerable human being.

As he most eloquently phrased it on the stage in Stockholm, "What begins with the failure to uphold the dignity of one life, all too often ends with a calamity for entire nations." And "a genocide begins with the killing of one man—not for what he has done, but because of who he is."

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to overstate the contribution that United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has made to advancing human dignity, peace and stability in the world. I invite my colleagues to join me in saluting Kofi Annan, the finest Secretary General ever to have served at the helm of the United Nations.

HURRICANE KATRINA STATEMENT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on May 4, 2006, I prepared the following opening statement for the Committee on Government Reform's hearing, "Sifting Through Katrina's Legal Debris: Contracting in the Eye of the Storm":

Thank you, Chairman DAVIS, for holding this important oversight hearing to examine federal contracting for Hurricane Katrina relief. I appreciate that you have kept your promise to hold a series of hearings on the subject of Hurricane Katrina as you said you would in September of last year. I am grateful for your leadership in this regard.

Since this Administration has come into office, we have witnessed multiple federal contracting sprees, which have all been reckless and wasteful. After 9/11, and the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, a variety of security functions were contracted out to private companies. The Iraq war and reconstruction brought the next round of federal contracts, and finally, after Hurricane Katrina, several contracts were administered to aid in relief and reconstruction.

Contracts awarded have consistently been cost-plus and no bid contracts, have lacked oversight and transparency, and have led to costly waste, fraud and abuse.

Despite the waste, fraud and abuse, which have been well documented by government oversight bodies, including this Committee, the federal government has refused to learn its lesson and change its contracting practices. The contracts handed out for Katrina relief and reconstruction were just as flawed as those for Homeland Security functions and Iraq reconstruction.

Halliburton, for example, which has been the target of investigations for robbing the American taxpayer blind in its Iraq contracts, was one of the first companies awarded no bid contracts after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, to repair 3 different Navy facilities in Mississippi.

Furthermore, measures put forward immediately following Hurricane Katrina to help ensure proper contracting, such as Ranking Member Waxman's bill, the "Hurricane Katrina Accountability and Clean Contracting Act," were disregarded.

Now, eight months later—eight months too late—we are here in this Committee examining what went wrong. Our government should have known better.

Today's hearing will reveal how FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies entered into at least eight major contracts, worth over \$5.6 billion, that have resulted in significant waste, fraud and abuse.

We will also hear some familiar testimony: how full and open competition has been the exception, not the rule, in awarding Katrina contracts; how lack of contract management and oversight were missing in Katrina contracts; and how these flawed contracting procedures lead to significant cost or performance problems in nearly every major contract related to Hurricane Katrina.

Far too much taxpayer money has been squandered on important jobs that aren't getting done. I look forward to the testimonials

from the witnesses today. Despite the federal government's record, it is my sincere hope that this hearing will lead to concrete reforms in contracting practices.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for rollcall votes 121, 122, 123, and 124. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 121, "yea" on rollcall vote 122, "nay" on rollcall vote 123, and "no" on rollcall vote 124. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my statement appear in the permanent RECORD immediately following these votes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DC NATIONAL GUARD HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2006

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the fourth bill in the Free and Equal DC series. This series includes measures that all involve obsolete or inappropriate intervention into the local affairs of the District of Columbia. The other bills in the series are the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act, the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act, and the District of Columbia Hatch Reform Act. This bill would give the Mayor of the District of Columbia the same authority over the District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) as the governors of all 50 States have over their guard units. My work on the Homeland Security Committee convinces me that this bill is necessary now more than at any time in the District's history. In most circumstances involving a suspected terrorist incident and in all circumstances constituting local emergencies, the Mayor of the District of Columbia should have the same authority as governors. The National Guards in the 50 states operate under similar dual federal and local jurisdiction. Yet the President of the United States as the Commander in Chief alone has the authority to call up the DC National Guard for any purpose here, local or national. Each governor, however, as the head of state, has the authority to mobilize the National Guard to protect the local jurisdiction, just as local militia did historically. Today, the most likely need is to call upon the National Guard to restore order in the wake of civil disturbances and natural disasters. Today it could prove necessary to act quickly without knowing the origin of an event. The Mayor, who knows the city better than any federal official and works closely with federal security officials, should be able to call on the DCNG to cover local natural disasters or civil disturbances without relying on the President, who may be preoccupied with national matters, including perhaps war or security matters, or relying on a delegated official with little familiarity with the city. It does no harm to give the Mayor the authority. How-

ever, it could do great harm to leave him powerless to act quickly. If it makes sense that a governor would have control over the mobilization and deployment of the state National Guard, it makes the same sense for the Mayor of the District of Columbia, with a population the size of that of small states, should have the same authority.

The Mayor of the District of Columbia, acting as head of state, should have the authority to call upon the DCNG in instances that do not rise to the level of federal importance necessary to implicate the authority of the President. Today requiring action by the President of the United States could endanger the life and health of DC residents, visitors and federal employees. Procedures that require the Mayor to request the needed assistance from the Commander in Chief for a local National Guard matter are as old as the republic, and are dangerously obsolete. This bill would deprive the President of his authority over the DC National Guard. The President could still nationalize the Guard at will, as he can with the Guards of the 50 states, and particularly here in the nation's capital.

Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, I succeeded in including a provision in the Homeland Security Act recognizing that the District of Columbia must be an integral part of the planning, implementation, and execution of national plans to protect city residents, federal employees, and visitors by including the District of Columbia, as a separate and full partner and first responder in federal domestic preparedness legislation. At a minimum, such recognition also demonstrates the respect for local governance and home rule that every jurisdiction that recruits members of the military to its National Guard deserves, especially today when the Guards are no longer weekend warriors, as the Iraq war demonstrates. The confusion that accompanied the September 11 attack plainly showed the danger inherent in allowing bureaucratic steps to stand in the way of responding to emergencies in the nation's capital. September 11 has made local control of the DCNG an imperative.

This bill is another important step necessary to complete the transfer of full self-government powers to the District of Columbia that Congress itself began with the passage of the Home Rule Act of 1973. District authority over its own National Guard apparently was not raised during the Home Rule Act process. However, it was almost unthinkable then that there would be war in the homeland, much less terrorist threats to the nation's capital. What should be unthinkable after 9-11 in an era of global terrorism is allowing to stand old and antiquated layers. Giving the mayor of the District of Columbia authority to call up the National Guard could make the difference in protecting the safety of the residents, federal employees, and visitors alike. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HOBBS HIGH SCHOOL INSPIRATION AWARD

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hobbs High School, in Hobbs

New Mexico, which recently earned the 2006 College Board Inspiration Award.

The College Board's Inspiration Award annually honors three schools nationwide that have demonstrated extraordinary achievements in expanding access to college, particularly in financially disadvantaged areas.

Hobbs High School is a model of educational success and its receipt of this award is an accolade to their hard work and dedication to improving the opportunities available to their students.

Hobbs is a community that receives less funding per pupil than any other district in New Mexico and has twice as many people in terms of percentage living at or below the poverty level compared to the national average. However, in spite of these setbacks Hobbs High School has made extraordinary advances in expanding access to college for their students.

Approximately 55 percent of all secondary students at Hobbs High School now participate in Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement courses and they currently have the largest Advanced Placement program in the State of New Mexico. Demonstrated success has already been seen with last year's 97 percent graduation rates and the increase in the number of those individuals who went on to college upon graduation.

Hobbs High School is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when teachers, students, and community leaders come together to ensure that plentiful opportunities exist for their students. I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Hobbs High School for this wonderful academic achievement.

UKRAINIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY STATEMENT ON CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, last Friday evening, I was honored to join Southeast Michigan's Ukrainian American Community in remembrance of a terrible tragedy: the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on April 26th, 1986.

Here in Washington, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus organized a number of events last week to ensure that Congress adequately remembered this solemn anniversary. Through all of these events, and at the commemoration I attended in Michigan, there was a consensus that as we remember those victims of Chernobyl who lost their lives, we must continue, and indeed strengthen, our efforts to help those who are still living with its consequences.

To that end, I ask that a statement from the Ukrainian American Community in Michigan be placed in the RECORD. It calls on us all to do our part in standing with the Ukrainian people to address the consequences of this disaster that so many still struggle with 20 years later.