with Foreign Minister Mammadyarov and stress that the United States seeks assurances that all political prisoners are allowed free access to counsel of their choice, are safe and provided all necessary health care, receive humane treatment and, if it goes that far, receive a free, fair and public trial. More appropriately, they should be freed at once as a demonstration of Azerbaijan's commitment to democratic reform and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The Azeri Democracy Initiative, a non-partisan, international non-profit organization headquartered in Washington and dedicated to strengthening U.S.-Azerbaijan ties on a basis of shared values, has joined in calling on the European Court of Human Rights to investigate the politically-motivated arrest of Farhad Aliyev, the reformist former Minister of Economic Development of Azerbaijan.

The case before the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg was filed by a group of British lawyers and alleges human rights abuses. They pointed out that Azerbaijan, as a member of the Council of Europe, is legally obligated to comply with the European Convention of Human Rights as a condition of membership of the Council of Europe.

Lord Lester QC, one of Europe's leading barristers on human rights issues, said the brothers were detained arbitrarily, put in solitary confinement and held ''without justification''. He has been denied access to the men.

''The Aliyev cases illustrate how far the Republic of Azerbaijan has to change before it can be regarded as a truly democratic state respecting the European rule of law and the fundamental human rights and freedoms of its citizens,'' Lord Lester added.

Many members of the brothers' families, business associates and acquaintances have been ''harassed, arrested and persecuted following Farhad and Rafiq's arrests,'' according to Lucy James, one of the London attorneys. ''Many have been detained on trumped up charges or without charge'' and many have reportedly lost their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Secretary of State and Ambassador Derse in Baku to raise this critical human rights issue at the highest levels and call for the freedom of political prisoners.

CONGRATULATING DR. ROBERT JENNINGS ON HIS INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT OF ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the alumni, students, faculty, and friends of Alabama A&M University, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Robert Jennings on his inauguration as the University's tenth President.

Alabama A&M is a prestigious 131-year old land-grant university located in Normal, AL. Its faculty and students are nationally recognized for their work in and out of the classroom.

A&M selected Jennings as President in January of 2006. A graduate of Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University, Dr. Jennings is a Fulbright-Hays Fellow and a highly respected and accomplished professor and administrator.

Prior to his appointment at A&M, Dr. Jennings served many years as a professor and administrator at Atlanta University Graduate School. Dr. Jennings has also held positions at Norfolk State University, Albany State University, and North Carolina A&T State University. Most recently, he served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Wake Forest University's Future Focus 2020, a program designed to encourage urban communities to more actively participate in discussions about the future of the country.

In addition to his impressive academic record, Dr. Jennings is a distinguished diplomat and civil servant. In 1999, he represented the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. State Department as a consultant and trainer at the University of Naimey in Niger, Africa. He also previously served as a Loaned Executive to the Office of the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as an Equal Opportunity and Employee Development Specialist and Lead Trainer for the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission.

Mr. Speaker, during the week of September 11th, the Alabama A&M community is celebrating Dr. Jennings' inauguration. I believe that his impressive resume and numerous academic accomplishments have more than prepared him to lead Alabama A&M University to new heights. I look forward to working with him and all of the faculty, students, alumni, and staff to build on the University's proud tradition of excellence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote for this bill, for several reasons.

To begin with, as the debate in the Resources Committee made clear, this is not the kind of measure that should be considered under a procedure that rigidly limits debate and prevents consideration of any amendments. Instead, it is a controversial proposal that can affect many parts of the country. All members whose districts could be affected—or who have concerns for other reasons—should have the opportunity to propose amendments that they think would improve the legislation.

But regardless of the procedures controlling debate today, I think the bill has such serious flaws that it should be rejected—which was why I voted against it in committee.

As others have noted, it would make a drastic change in current law regarding the regulation of Indian gaming, changes that do not properly reflect and respect the status of tribal governments and that have led the majority of tribes and tribal organizations to oppose the legislation.

I do not think such far-reaching changes are necessary to address the problems cited by the bill's supporters. On the contrary, I think the Interior Department already has ample authority to resolve those problems through regulation.

Finally, some have suggested that the legislation should be passed to resolve questions raised in 2004 when two tribes now based in Oklahoma asserted a claim to lands in Colorado. However, I do not think that is accurate.

Nothing in this bill would prevent tribes from making such land claims in the future. And because no legislation can bind a future Congress, the bill would not prevent a legislative settlement of such claims—the professed goal of those asserting the Colorado claim—which could involve authorization of Indian gaming on some of the lands involved.

I urge the House to reject this bill.

''IRAQ WATCH''

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, back in June the Democratic Caucus began a series of weekly special orders and floor speeches as a part of our ongoing ''Iraq Watch.'' Midway through September, we're still watching, and what we're seeing is not encouraging. Other members will elaborate on the escalating death toll, the continued drain on our Treasury, and our inability to provide even the most basic services that might show the Iraqis that our invasion has improved their lives in some way. That there were no weapons of mass destruction, no link between Saddam and Al Qaeda, and no threat to America in Iraq continues to be demonstrated with each new report released and each study published. We know that we went in without a plan to manage the country after we toppled the government, contrary to military recommendations. Indeed, we now know that Secretary Rumsfeld actually threatened to fire staff who kept insisting on making some attempt at post-war planning. The generals in the field have told us, again, that their mission cannot be accomplished without tens of thousands, perhaps even a hundred thousand or more troops. Yet, according to an official army report referenced in the article I include, for the record, there are no more troops to send.

Mr. Speaker, we've been watching as this quagmire gets worse by the day. But I can't help wondering if the Republicans are watching the same conflict I am. To listen to what the Administration and its backers in Congress are saying, one might think that the invasion happened just last month, rather than three and a half years ago. You might think we were greeted as liberators, or even that we helped the Iraqis form a functioning democracy. You might even draw the conclusion that fanning the flames in Iraq is somehow, in some way making the American people safer.

Operating on the same flawed assumptions they used to mislead us into this mess in the first place, the Administration still has not given us an exit plan out of this bloodbath. We've heard plenty of slogans. ''As the Iraqis stand up, we'll stand down.'' ''Stay the course,'' But, Mr. Speaker, empty rhetoric is not a strategy. Hearing these slogans again and again, I'm reminded of one definition of insanity: to take the same action over and over and expect different results. Our continued occupation of Iraq without any kind of strategy or plan to resolve the conflict simply makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, I was shocked and horrified when I heard that Vice President Cheney went

on a talk show last weekend and said, and I quote, ''if we had it to do over again, we'd do exactly the same thing.'' Is our vice president misleading us again, or does he really believe that our Iraq policy is working? Is this administration so arrogant, so stubborn, so unwilling to admit its mistakes that it wants to continue the occupation of Iraq ''exactly'' as it has for three and a half years? The Administration's continued failure to level with the American people and learn from its errors is an affront to all of us, but most especially to the memory of the 2,671 brave young men and women who have given their lives for this war of choice. The Republicans have shown that they lack the humility and the vision to change our disastrous course in the Middle East. We've lost not only lives and treasure but our standing in the world as a beacon of freedom and democracy. It is time for a new direction.

[From Washingtonpost.com, Sept. 14, 2006]

WHY WE CAN'T SEND MORE TROOPS

(By Lawrence J. Korb and Peter Ogden)

In ''Reinforce Baghdad'' [op-ed, Sept. 12], William Kristol and Rich Lowry argue that the United States needs to deploy ''substantially'' more troops to Iraq to stabilize the country. Aside from the strategic dubiousness of their proposal—Kristol and Lowry's piece might alternatively have been titled ''Reinforcing Failure''—there is a practical obstacle to it that they overlook: Sending more troops to Iraq would, at the moment, threaten to break our nation's all-volunteer Army and undermine our national security. This is not a risk our country can afford to take.

In their search for additional troops and equipment for Iraq, the first place that Kristol and Lowry would have to look is the active Army. But even at existing deployment levels, the signs of strain on the active Army are evident. In July an official report revealed that two-thirds of the active U.S. Army was classified as ''not ready for combat.'' When one combines this news with the fact that roughly one-third of the active Army is deployed (and thus presumably ready for combat), the math is simple but the answer alarming: The active Army has close to zero combat-ready brigades in reserve.

The second place to seek new troops and equipment is the Army National Guard and Reserve. But the news here is, if anything, worse. When asked by reporters to comment on the strain that the active Army was under, the head of the National Guard said that his military branch was ''in an even more dire situation than the active Army. We both have the same symptoms; I just have a higher fever.''

Already, the stress of Iraq and Afghanistan on our soldiers has been significant: Every available active-duty combat brigade has served at least one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan, and many have served two or three. Likewise, the vast majority of Army National Guardsmen and Reservists have been mobilized since Sept. 11, 2001, some more than once.

Thus the simple fact is that the only way for Kristol and Lowry to put their new plan into action anytime soon without resorting to a draft—and thereby dismantling the all-volunteer Army, which, as the authors themselves would certainly admit, could be strategically disastrous—is by demanding even more from our soldiers by accelerating their training and rotation schedules. While there is no question that the soldiers would respond to more frequent calls to duty, it is doubtful that they would be supplied with proper equipment and training for their mission in the near term. Moreover, the long-term toll on the cost and quality of our troops would be threatened by the added strain.

First, the equipment shortage that the U.S. Army faces at the moment is making it difficult to train troops even at current levels. The service has been compensating for this $50 billion equipment shortfall by shipping to Iraq some of the equipment that it needs to train nondeployed and reserve units. Increasing the number of deployed troops would compound this readiness problem and leave the Army with little spare capacity to respond to other conflicts around the globe that might demand immediate and urgent action.

Second, the long-term costs of leaning even more heavily on our ground troops to fight what is an unpopular war will take its toll on the quality of our Army. At present the Army is compelled to offer promotions to an unprecedented number of its personnel to retain them. Some 98 percent of captains were promoted to major this year, and the quality of the next generation of military leaders will suffer if this process is not made more selective once again.

In addition, even the quadrupling of recruitment bonuses since 2003 has not been enough to attract adequate numbers of talented men and women to meet the Army's personnel goals. Although the Army has accepted more troops with lower aptitude scores and raised its maximum enlistment age, it still must grant waivers to about 1 out of 5 new recruits and has had to cut in half the number who ''wash out'' in basic training.

While we disagree with Kristol and Lowry's contention that sending more troops to Iraq would bring peace and stability to the country, the U.S. Army and National Guard and Reserve should nevertheless possess the capacity to respond to such a plan or other deployments without undue strain and long-term costs. The solution is to do two things that the Bush administration has not: permanently increase the number of troops in the active Army and fully fund its equipment needs. Let this, not the expenditure of more blood and treasure in Iraq, be the ''courageous act of presidential leadership'' that Kristol and Lowry desire.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA BUTLER COSTIGAN

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I announce the passing my dear friend and colleague, Linda Butler Costigan.

Linda Butler Costigan passed away peacefully on Sept. 6, 2006 at Sutter Roseville Medical Center after a long battle with metastatic breast cancer. She was born on Dec. 20, 1946 in White Plains, NY to the late George and Faye Butler. She is survived by her beloved husband of 42 years, Richard S. Costigan, Jr. (Dick) of Granite Bay, CA and sons, Richard, III and wife Gloria of Granite Bay, CA and Chris and wife Gabby, who now live in Hong Kong.

She was the devoted ''Gram'' to her three grandchildren, Eric Samuel, Emma Laraine and Andrew Butler, of Granite Bay, CA. She is also survived by her sister, Mary Catherine Butler-Adkins and husband, Frank of Virginia Beach, VA.

Linda spent the first half of her life in Norfolk, VA., but she lived in many places, including Miami, Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Sydney Australia, and Danville, CA, before settling in Granite Bay over 16 years ago.

Though Linda would want to be remembered as a loving wife, mother and grandmother, she made many contributions to the communities in which she lived. In Norfolk, VA she was President of the local Catholic Youth Organization. In Danville, she was president of the St. Isidore's PTA and started a fund raising auction at De La Salle in Concord that is still going on; she replicated that program for La Salle College High school when the family moved to Philadelphia.

During those years, she was very active in Marriage Encounter and served on various boards. She loved college football, becoming a devoted follower of the University of Georgia where Richard and Gloria attended and the University of Alabama where Chris was a wide receiver on the 1989 SEC Championship team. She and Dick would often travel to both schools from California. She was involved in California politics for years, including serving as the State Private Sector Chair of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) for the state of California for a number of years and as the national Private Sector Chair in the early 1990s. For her service, she received the Thomas Jefferson Award.

She ran an event planning company that helped to bring policy makers together with advocates and those impacted by policy decisions. Her clients included Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson. She was also the secretary of the Granite Bay Municipal Advisory Council for a number of years when Dick served as the Chair. She also served on Board of the Arthritis Foundation of Northern California.

In 2001, after her husband became sick, they moved to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina where they thought they would spend the rest of their lives. When she was rediagnosed with cancer in 2004, they moved back to Granite Bay. She was greatly admired by many and continued to positively touch many lives even in her last days fighting this disease. Her legacy as a devoted daughter, sister, wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, and dear friend will be remembered and cherished by all she touched.

HONORING ANNE-MARIE GNACEK

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor one of my constituents, Ms. Anne-Marie Gnacek upon her retirement after 50 years of managing, designing, and developing simulations to evaluate our Nation's ability to intercept and destroy foreign missiles.

Beginning in 1956, Ms. Gnacek worked for a variety of defense related engineering companies. With the exception of choosing to stay at home to raise her two sons in the 1960s, she has worked continuously on developing software simulations to help develop our Nation's space and missile development programs, including the Navy's Polaris missile and the development of our National Missile Defense initiative.