

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING MR. NATHANIEL BLUE ON ACHIEVING THE MILESTONE OF FOUR MILLION SAFE MILES WITH BOYD BROTHERS TRANSPORTATION

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Nathaniel Blue of Camden, Alabama, on the occasion of reaching an almost unprecedented level of achievement in the trucking community—logging 4 million consecutive miles with Boyd Brothers Transportation.

Nathaniel has not only worked for the same trucking company for almost 30 years, but during this span, he has never had an accident, negative incident, or ticket; an accomplishment so rare in the trucking industry.

One would think that after logging so many miles, a person would want to retire, but Nathaniel is an exception. He says that he does not want to retire to his hometown of Camden until he reaches 5 million safe miles, and I have every confidence he will achieve this goal.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating him on this remarkable achievement. I know his colleagues, his wife of 29 years, Amanda, their five children and three grandchildren, along with Boyd Brothers Transportation, join me in praising Mr. Blue for these accomplishments and extending thanks for his many efforts over the years on behalf of the citizens of the state of Alabama.

INTRODUCTION OF THE “AFGHAN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 2007”

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the “Afghan Women Empowerment Act of 2007” which would authorize \$45 million each year from FY2008 through FY2010 for programs in Afghanistan that benefit women and girls as well as the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs. The funding would be directed toward important needs including medical care, education, vocational training, protection from violence, legal assistance, and civil participation. This legislation was introduced earlier this year in the Senate by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

Women’s rights in Afghanistan have fluctuated greatly over the years. Women have bravely fought the forces of extremism at various points in the country’s turbulent history. At one time, women were scientists and uni-

versity professors. They led corporations and nonprofit organizations in local communities.

While the Afghan constitution guarantees equality for Afghan women, throughout Afghanistan, women continue to face intimidation, discrimination, and violence. The United States has an obligation to ensure that women and girls have the opportunities that they were denied under the Taliban and that the gains that have been made are not lost in the coming months and years. It is imperative that we provide the support needed to ensure that the rights of women are protected in the new Afghanistan.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE SPADAFOR-CLAY

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Christine Spadafor-Clay, the C.E.O. of St. Jude’s Ranch for Children.

Christine is the first woman and non-clergy person to run St. Jude’s Ranch for Children in its 39-year history. St. Jude’s Ranch for Children provides a safe and caring environment for abused, abandoned, and neglected children. Since starting, Christine has overseen a number of organizational changes including updating the record-keeping process and reshaping the organizational structure system. In addition, Christine was instrumental in facilitating a much-needed renovation of the Boulder City campus.

The St. Jude’s facility is spread over 40 acres in Southern Nevada and consists of 24 buildings. Over the years the facilities have come into disrepair and are in need of significant refurbishment. Now, due to Christine’s leadership, St. Jude’s is finally receiving the renovation it deserves. As a result of sizable contribution from a Southern Nevada non-profit, HomeAid, and its partner, Pardee Homes, eight cottages will be completely renovated and the campus will get new landscaping.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Christine Spadafor-Clay of St. Jude’s Ranch for Children. The service that they provide for the area’s abandoned and neglected children is laudable. I applaud Christine for her leadership and with them continued success in their new, refurbished facility.

LIFTING THE EMBARGO—THE BEST WAY TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY IN CUBA

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to point out the Bush administration’s policy of

isolating Cuba and bringing down the Castro government (or its successor) has no chance of success and enter into the RECORD the first of two parts to an article in the current issue of Foreign Affairs by Julia E. Sweig entitled “Fidel’s Final Victory.” Dr. Sweig’s article analyzes the reality of the current relationship between the U.S. and Cuba and advocates the lifting of the embargo as a means to a more effective advance U.S. interest in establishing an economic relationship with Cuba.

I have long opposed U.S. policy towards Fidel Castro and Cuba, specifically the embargo, as I strongly believe that restricting travel and trade is a failed policy that hinders the American People from competing in the Cuban market and works against the promotion of democracy on the island. It also denies citizens of the United States the fundamental right and freedom to travel where they want and denies Cuban Americans to visit their relatives living in Cuba.

Current United States policy toward Cuba is markedly out of touch with current world realities. Almost every nation has normal trade and diplomatic relations with Cuba, especially many of our allies such as Israel, Spain, China and other European nations. Instead of collapsing, the Cuban economy is growing at a rate of 8 percent a year, and the government has new and profitable relationship involving crude oil drilling operations off of the Cuban coast with China in conjunction with India, Norway and Spain.

It is evident that continuing the current course and making threats about what kind of change is and is not acceptable after Fidel, the Bush administration will only slow the pace of liberalization and political reform in Cuba, guaranteeing many more years of hostility between the two countries.

The best approach to dealing with post-Fidel Cuba is by immediately proposing bilateral crisis management and confidence-building measures, ending economic sanctions, and by stepping out of the way of Cuban Americans and other Americans who wish to travel freely to Cuba. Further, lifting the embargo now will prevent American businesses from falling even further behind as foreign competitors in this market. I urge you to consider H.R. 624, a bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba and for other purposes.

FIDEL’S FINAL VICTORY

(By Julia E. Sweig)

Summary: The smooth transfer of power from Fidel Castro to his successors is exposing the willful ignorance and wishful thinking of U.S. policy toward Cuba. The post-Fidel transition is already well under way, and change in Cuba will come only gradually from here on out. With or without Fidel, renewed U.S. efforts to topple the revolutionary regime in Havana can do no good—and have the potential to do considerable harm.

Julia E. Sweig is Nelson and David Rockefeller Senior Fellow and Director of Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. She is the author of *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground* and *Friendly Fire: Losing*

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century.

CUBA AFTER CASTRO?

Ever since Fidel Castro gained power in 1959, Washington and the Cuban exile community have been eagerly awaiting the moment when he would lose it—at which point, the thinking went, they would have *carte blanche* to remake Cuba in their own image. Without Fidel's iron fist to keep Cubans in their place, the island would erupt into a collective demand for rapid change. The long-oppressed population would overthrow Fidel's revolutionary cronies and clamor for capital, expertise, and leadership from the north to transform Cuba into a market democracy with strong ties to the United States.

But that moment has come and gone—and none of what Washington and the exiles anticipated has come to pass. Even as Cubawatchers speculate about how much longer the ailing Fidel will survive, the post-Fidel transition is already well under way. Power has been successfully transferred to a new set of leaders, whose priority is to preserve the system while permitting only very gradual reform. Cubans have not revolted, and their national identity remains tied to the defense of the homeland against U.S. attacks on its sovereignty. As the post-Fidel regime responds to pent-up demands for more democratic participation and economic opportunity, Cuba will undoubtedly change—but the pace and nature of that change will be mostly imperceptible to the naked American eye.

Fidel's almost five decades in power came to a close last summer not with the expected bang, or even really a whimper, but in slow motion, with Fidel himself orchestrating the transition. The transfer of authority from Fidel to his younger brother, Raúl, and half a dozen loyalists—who have been running the country under Fidel's watch for decades—has been notably smooth and stable. Not one violent episode in Cuban streets. No massive exodus of refugees. And despite an initial wave of euphoria in Miami, not one boat leaving a Florida port for the 90-mile trip. Within Cuba, whether Fidel himself survives for weeks, months, or years is now in many ways beside the point.

In Washington, however, Cuba policy—aimed essentially at regime change—has long been dominated by wishful thinking ever more disconnected from the reality on the island. Thanks to the votes and campaign contributions of the 1.5 million Cuban Americans who live in Florida and New Jersey, domestic politics has driven policymaking. That tendency has been indulged by a U.S. intelligence community hamstrung by a breathtaking and largely self-imposed isolation from Cuba and reinforced by a political environment that rewards feeding the White House whatever it wants to hear. Why alter the status quo when it is so familiar, so well funded, and so rhetorically pleasing to politicians in both parties?

But if consigning Cuba to domestic politics has been the path of least resistance so far, it will begin to have real costs as the post-Fidel transition continues—for Cuba and the United States alike. Fidel's death, especially if it comes in the run-up to a presidential election, could bring instability precisely because of the perception in the United States that Cuba will be vulnerable to meddling from abroad. Some exiles may try to draw the United States into direct conflict with Havana, whether by egging on potential Cuban refugees to take to the Florida Straits or by appealing to Congress, the White House, and the Pentagon to attempt to strangle the post-Fidel government.

Washington must finally wake up to the reality of how and why the Castro regime

has proved so durable—and recognize that, as a result of its willful ignorance, it has few tools with which to effectively influence Cuba after Fidel is gone. With U.S. credibility in Latin America and the rest of the world at an all-time low, it is time to put to rest a policy that Fidel's handover of power has already so clearly exposed as a complete failure.

CHANGE IN THE WEATHER

On July 31, 2006, Fidel Castro's staff secretary made an announcement: Fidel, just days away from his 80th birthday, had undergone major surgery and turned over "provisional power" to his 75-year-old brother, Raúl, and six senior officials. The gravity of Fidel's illness (rumored to be either terminal intestinal cancer or severe diverticulitis with complications) was immediately clear, both from photographs of the clearly weakened figure and from Fidel's own dire-sounding statements beseeching Cubans to prepare for his demise. Across the island, an air of resignation and anticipation took hold.

The dead of August, with its intense heat and humidity, is a nerve-racking time in Cuba, but as rumors sped from home to home, there was a stunning display of orderliness and seriousness in the streets. Life continued: people went to work and took vacations, watched telenovelas and bootlegged DVDs and programs from the Discovery and History channels, waited in lines for buses and weekly rations, made their daily black-market purchases—repeating the rituals that have etched a deep mark in the Cuban psyche. Only in Miami were some Cubans partying, hoping that Fidel's illness would soon turn to death, not only of a man but also of a half century of divided families and mutual hatred.

Raúl quickly assumed Fidel's duties as first secretary of the Communist Party, head of the Politburo, and president of the Council of State (and retained control of the armed forces and intelligence services). The other deputies—two of whom had worked closely with the Castro brothers since the revolution and four of whom had emerged as major players in the 1990s—took over the other key departments. Ranging in age from their mid-40s through their 70s, they had been preparing for this transition to collective leadership for years. José Ramón Balaguer, a doctor who fought as a guerrilla in the Sierra Maestra during the revolution, assumed authority over public health. José Ramón Machado Ventura, another doctor who fought in the Sierra, and Esteban Lazo Hernández now share power over education. Carlos Lage Dávila—a key architect of the economic reforms of the 1990s, including efforts to bring in foreign investment—took charge of the energy sector. Francisco Soberón Valdés, president of the Central Bank of Cuba, and Felipe Pérez Roque, minister of foreign affairs, took over finances in those areas.

At first, U.S. officials simply admitted that they had almost no information about Fidel's illness or plans for succession. President George W. Bush said little beyond soberly (and surprisingly) pointing out that the next leader of Cuba would come from Cuba—a much-needed warning to the small yet influential group of hard-line exiles (Republican Florida Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a nephew of Fidel's, prominent among them) with aspirations to post-Fidel presidential politics.

A few weeks into the Fidel deathwatch, Raúl gave an interview clearly meant for U.S. consumption. Cuba, he said, "has always been ready to normalize relations on the basis of equality. But we will not accept the arrogant and interventionist policies of this administration," nor will the United

States win concessions on Cuba's domestic political model. A few days later, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Thomas Shannon responded in kind. Washington, he said, would consider lifting its embargo—but only if Cuba established a route to multiparty democracy, released all political prisoners, and allowed independent civil-society organizations. With or without Fidel, the two governments were stuck where they have been for years: Havana ready to talk about everything except the one condition on which Washington will not budge, Washington offering something Havana does not unconditionally want in exchange for something it is not willing to give.

From Washington's perspective, this paralysis may seem only temporary. Shannon compared post-Fidel Cuba to a helicopter with a broken rotor—the implication being that a crash is imminent. But that view, pervasive among U.S. policymakers, ignores the uncomfortable truth about Cuba under the Castro regime.

Despite Fidel's overwhelming personal authority and Raúl's critical institution-building abilities, the government rests on far more than just the charisma, authority, and legend of these two figures.

POLITICALLY INCORRECT

Cuba is far from a multiparty democracy, but it is a functioning country with highly opinionated citizens where locally elected officials (albeit all from one party) worry about issues such as garbage collection, public transportation, employment, education, health care, and safety. Although plagued by worsening corruption, Cuban institutions are staffed by an educated civil service, battle-tested military officers, a capable diplomatic corps, and a skilled work force. Cuban citizens are highly literate, cosmopolitan, endlessly entrepreneurial, and by global standards quite healthy.

Critics of the Castro regime cringe at such depictions and have worked hard to focus Washington and the world's attention on human rights abuses, political prisoners, and economic and political deprivations. Although those concerns are legitimate, they do not make up for an unwillingness to understand the sources of Fidel's legitimacy—or the features of the status quo that will sustain Raúl and the collective leadership now in place. On a trip to Cuba in November, I spoke with a host of senior officials, foreign diplomats, intellectuals, and regime critics to get a sense of how those on the ground see the island's future. (I have traveled to Cuba nearly 30 times since 1984 and met with everyone from Fidel himself to human rights activists and political prisoners.) People at all levels of the Cuban government and the Communist Party were enormously confident of the regime's ability to survive Fidel's passing. In and out of government circles, critics and supporters alike—including in the state-run press—readily acknowledge major problems with productivity and the delivery of goods and services. But the regime's still-viable entitlement programs and a widespread sense that Raúl is the right man to confront corruption and bring accountable governance give the current leadership more legitimacy than it could possibly derive from repression alone (the usual explanation foreigners give for the regime's staying power).

The regime's continued defiance of the United States also helps. In Cuba's national narrative, outside powers—whether Spain in the nineteenth century or the United States in the twentieth—have preyed on Cuba's internal division to dominate Cuban politics. Revolutionary ideology emphasizes this history of thwarted independence and imperialist meddling, from the Spanish-American

War to the Bay of Pigs, to sustain a national consensus. Unity at home, the message goes, is the best defense against the only external power Cuba still regards as a threat—the United States.

To give Cubans a stake in this tradeoff between an open society and sovereign nationhood, the revolution built social, educational, and health programs that remain the envy of the developing world. Public education became accessible to the entire population, allowing older generations of illiterate peasants to watch their children and grandchildren become doctors and scientists; by 1979, Cuba's literacy rates had risen above 90 percent. Life expectancy went from under 60 years at the time of the revolution to almost 80 today (virtually identical to life expectancy in the United States). Although infectious disease levels have been historically lower in Cuba than in many parts of Latin America, the revolutionary government's public vaccination programs completely eliminated polio, diphtheria, tetanus, meningitis, and measles. In these ways, the Cuban state truly has served the poor underclass rather than catering to the domestic elite and its American allies.

Foreign policy, meanwhile, put the island on the map geopolitically. The Cubans used the Soviets (who regarded the brash young revolutionaries as reckless) for money, weapons, and insulation from their implacable enemy to the north. Although the government's repression of dissent and tight control over the economy drove many out of the country and turned many others against the Castro regime, most Cubans came to expect the state to guarantee their welfare, deliver the international standing they regard as their cultural and historical destiny, and keep the United States at a healthy distance.

The end of the Cold War seriously threatened this status quo. The Soviet Union withdrew its \$4 billion annual subsidy, and the economy contracted by 35 percent overnight. Cuba's political elite recognized that without Soviet support, the survival of the revolutionary regime was in peril—and, with Fidel's reluctant acquiescence, fashioned a pragmatic response to save it. Cuban officials traveling abroad started using once-anathema terms, such as "civil society." Proposals were circulated to include multiple candidates (although all from the Communist Party) in National Assembly elections and to permit small private businesses. The government legalized self-employment in some 200 service trades, converted state farms to collectively owned cooperatives, and allowed the opening of small farmers' markets. At Raúl's instigation, state enterprises adopted capitalist accounting and business practices; some managers were sent to European business schools. As the notion of a "socialist enterprise" became increasingly unsustainable, words like "market," "efficiency," "ownership," "property," and "competition" began to crop up with ever more frequency in the state-controlled press and in public-policy debates. Foreign investment from Europe, Latin America, Canada, China, and Israel gave a boost to agriculture and the tourism, mining, telecommunications, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and oil industries.

These changes rendered Cuba almost unrecognizable compared with the Cuba of the Soviet era, but they also allowed Fidel's government to regain its footing. The economy began to recover, and health and educational

programs started to deliver again. By the end of the 1990s, Cuba's infant mortality rate (approximately six deaths per 100,000 births) had dropped below that of the United States, and close to 100 percent of children were enrolled in school full time through ninth grade. Housing, although deteriorating and in desperate need of modernization, remained virtually free. And a cosmopolitan society—albeit one controlled in many ways by the state—grew increasingly connected to the world through cultural exchanges, sporting events, scientific cooperation, health programs, technology, trade, and diplomacy. Moreover, by 2002, total remittance inflows reached \$1 billion, and nearly half of the Cuban population had access to dollars from family abroad.

In 2004, a process of "recentralization" began: the state replaced the dollar with a convertible currency, stepped up tax collection from the self-employed sector, and imposed stricter controls on revenue expenditures by state enterprises. But even with these controls over economic activity, the black market is everywhere. Official salaries are never enough to make ends meet, and the economy has become a hybrid of control, chaos, and free-for-all. The rules of the game are established and broken at every turn, and most Cubans have to violate some law to get by. The administrators of state enterprises steal and then sell the inputs they get from the government, forcing workers to purchase themselves the supplies they need to do their jobs—rubber for the shoemaker, drinking glasses for the bartender, cooking oil for the chef—in order to fill production quotas.

At the same time, the revolution's investment in human capital has made Cuba uniquely well positioned to take advantage of the global economy. In fact, the island faces an overcapacity of professional and scientific talent, since it lacks the industrial base and foreign investment necessary to create a large number of productive skilled jobs. With 10,000 students in its science and technology university and already successful joint pharmaceutical ventures with China and Malaysia, Cuba is poised to compete with the upper ranks of developing nations.

HONORING THE MAYOR OF GLADSTONE, DR. WILLIAM C. CROSS, FOR THE 2006 NORTHLANDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize William C. Cross, a constituent of the 6th District of Missouri who recently added another prestigious award to his resume as he was named the Northlander of the Year by the Northland Chamber of Commerce at their annual banquet held January 27, 2007.

Dr. Bill Cross has lived one of the most admirable and distinguished lives any of us could hope for as he was a teacher, coach, and school administrator for 52 years. Bill Cross earned his bachelor's degree at Westminster College in Fulton, MO, while attaining his Ph.D at Kansas State University. Dr. Cross has

been a mentor and role model for over 25,000 high school students and an additional 10,000 teachers in graduate programs. He has written and published multiple articles and authored books in the area of education. Dr. Cross has served as the sponsor for over 100 college students in the classroom practicum portion of their education major. He is frequently engaged as a speaker on the topics of business and education.

But that's not all, Madam Speaker, Dr. Bill Cross has served two terms as mayor of the great city of Gladstone, MO. He serves on the board of directors of the Mid-America Regional Council, the Missouri Municipal League, the Missouri Municipal League West Gate Division, Head Start, Teaching and Reaching Youth, Clay County Coordinating Committee, Shepherds Center of Kansas City, and is a committee member of the National League of Cities. Dr. Cross was a popularly elected member of the North Kansas City School District.

One special recognition I would like to address is that Dr. Cross is a fellow Eagle Scout, the tribe of Mic-O-Say. There is so much more that this great person has done and continues to do for his fellow man. If there ever was an example of a great person and one most deserving of recognition in the United States House of Representatives, it is truly Dr. William C. Cross. Teacher, civic leader, husband to Mary and father of three daughters and seven grandchildren, active member of North Cross United Methodist Church and valued friend and advisor to so many. Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in honoring Dr. William C. Cross whose dedication and service to the people of the Sixth District of Missouri has been exceptional.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT RANDY J. MATHENY

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, it is with a deep sense of gratitude and a profound sense of sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to the life of a brave man from McCook, NE. Sgt Randy J. Matheny died on Sunday in Iraq in Baghdad by an improvised explosive device.

With his entire life in front of him, Randy chose to risk everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

My heart goes out to Randy's family. He was known as a dedicated spirit and for his love of our country. All Nebraskans will remember him as a true American. We can take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a better place.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Randy's family and friends during this difficult time.

May God grant them strength, peace, and comfort.