

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING MR. PAUL FOREMAN

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the years of service given to the people of Chautauqua County by Mr. Paul Foreman. Mr. Foreman served his constituency faithfully and justly during his tenure as the Town of Dunkirk Highway Superintendent.

Public service is a difficult and fulfilling career. Any person with a dream may enter but only a few are able to reach the end. Mr. Foreman served his term with his head held high and a smile on his face the entire way. I have no doubt that his kind demeanor left a lasting impression on the people of Chautauqua County.

We are truly blessed to have such strong individuals with a desire to make this county the wonderful place that we all know it can be. Mr. Foreman is one of those people and that is why Madam Speaker I rise to pay tribute to him today.

RECOGNIZING THE PASSING OF
VIRGIL MILLER

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Virgil White Miller, who passed away on February 20, 2010 at the age of 68. Virgil spent his life serving his country, his community, his family, and his church, and I am honored to recognize his life of dedication and service.

A native of Texas, Virgil Miller graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1964. In college, Virgil met his wife, Kathryn Rogers, and he served in the Corps of Cadets. Upon graduation, he received a commission in the United States Air Force and moved to Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Virgil worked as a Mechanical Engineer for the Air Force Armament Laboratory at Eglin Air Force Base. He and his wife loved Northwest Florida so much that they decided to stay, and Virgil began his 32 year career as a civil servant with the Air Force Research Laboratory, retiring in 2000.

In addition to his service to our country, Virgil was an active member of our Northwest Florida community. A dedicated member of Fort Walton Beach First Baptist Church, he taught Sunday School, church training, Royal Ambassadors, and was a deacon, serving as chairman of deacons for two terms. Virgil also participated in disaster relief efforts with the Florida Baptist Convention on numerous occasions. In 2007, Virgil was elected to the Fort

Walton Beach City Council, where he served faithfully until his passing.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am humbled to recognize Virgil Miller as a veteran, public servant, community volunteer, and loving father and husband. My wife Vicki and I offer our prayers for his entire family, including his wife, Kathy, his children, Michelle, Kristyn, and Randy, his grandchildren, and entire extended family as we remember and honor the life of Virgil Miller. He will be truly missed by all of us.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN
IRAQ

SPEECH OF

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 944 and thank the Chair and Ranking Member for their efforts to bring this to the floor for consideration at such a pivotal time in Iraq.

A February 6 ABC News story opened with the following observation: "Across the Middle East, where Christianity was born and its followers once made up a sizable portion of the population, Christians are now tiny minorities."

This is perhaps no more true than in Iraq. With the exception of Israel, the Bible contains more references to the cities, regions and nations of ancient Iraq than any other country. The patriarch Abraham came from a city in Iraq called Ur. Isaac's bride, Rebekah, came from northwest Iraq. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq and his sons (the 12 tribes of Israel) were born in northwest Iraq. A remarkable spiritual revival as told in the book of Jonah occurred in Nineveh. The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq as did the account of Daniel in the Lion's Den.

Tragically Iraq's ancient Christian community is facing extinction. The U.N. High Commission for Refugees estimates that some 250,000 to 500,000 Christians have left the country since 2003, or about half the Christian population. According to the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), "while Christians and other religious minorities represented only approximately 3 percent of the pre-2003 Iraqi population, they constitute approximately 15 and 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria, respectively, and Christians account for 35 and 64 percent, respectively, of all registered Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and Turkey."

It is critical to note, as the figures above indicate, that the violence and intimidation that Iraq's Christians and other vulnerable ethnoreligious communities have faced is targeted.

In July 2008, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration & Refugee Services said this about the minority religious communities: "These groups, whose home has been what is now Iraq for many centuries, are literally being obliterated—not because they are fleeing generalized violence but because they are being specifically and viciously victimized by Islamic extremists and, in some cases, common criminals."

Reports indicate that since 2003, more than 200 Christians have been killed in Iraq, and since June 2004, 65 churches have been attacked or bombed. The situation facing these minority communities is not improving. In fact there has been a recent uptick in violence in the lead up to the elections in Iraq. A Reuters story last week reported that, "With Iraq's March 7 parliamentary vote looming, a spike in attacks against Christians could be a sign of voter intimidation by factions in the bitter Kurd-Arab dispute, or another attempt by al Qaeda to derail the election."

I have appreciated Ambassador Chris Hill's commitment to this issue. In recent correspondence he indicated that "the security of the Christian community remains one of my paramount concerns, especially in light of attacks directed at Christian churches in Baghdad and Mosul over the past five months."

But there needs to be leadership from the highest levels within the State Department as well. I have long advocated, both during the previous administration and in the current administration, that the U.S. needs to adopt a comprehensive policy to address the unique situation of these defenseless minorities. This resolution includes language urging the Secretary of State to develop just such a strategy.

It is time for this administration to start taking religious freedom seriously. The position of U.S. ambassador for International Religious Freedom has been vacant for more than a year while other more junior posts have been filled. There's a saying in Washington that personnel is policy. When there isn't personnel, the policy inevitably suffers.

The ancient faith communities of Iraq and others enduring religious persecution worldwide deserve a voice. This resolution is a step in the right direction.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, on Monday, February 22, 2010, I was unable to be present for recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote No. 49 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4425) and "yes" on rollcall vote No. 50 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4238).

• 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.