

In the same spirit we discussed issues concerning energy and climate change. We exchanged views on adopted legislation on the EU side, in particular the 2020 goals, and on pending legislation on the US side. We emphasized the importance of sustainable policies on both sides of the Atlantic which could facilitate agreement in the larger international context. In this respect the upcoming COP 16 in Cancun was noted. We discussed the aim of 'greening the economy', including alternative energy sources, to provide the opportunity of enhancing the quality of the environment and improving the economic situation, as well as the perspective of setting common standards for new and environmentally friendly technologies, such as electric vehicles. The national security implications of energy sources and independence were also discussed.

In the presence of the Director General for External Relations of the European Commission, Mr. Joao Vale de Almeida, the prospects for bilateral and global cooperation between the EU and the US were discussed and our shared commitment for disaster relief in third world countries and our common interest in stable and sustainable development in all areas of the world were recognized.

In the presence of the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and current President of the EU General Affairs Council, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, we exchanged views on regions in the world where tensions are high. In this respect we focused attention on the situation in the Middle East, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Iran, Somalia and Cuba.

An extensive discussion was held on the latest financial and economic developments in Europe, the US and the world. With regard to Europe, government interventions to stabilise the situation in Member States and the Eurozone are needed. We recognised the global character of the crisis and its effects and therefore emphasised the importance of coordinated action. In this respect the prospects for common approaches regulating the financial sectors of the economy were explored.

We evaluated the state of play of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) and ways to enhance EU-US economic cooperation. The transatlantic market should be allowed to develop its full potential in particular through reducing non-tariff barriers and joint efforts to find common standards. The importance of a successful outcome of the Doha Round was reiterated. We welcomed a proposal to submit a TLD paper to our respective administrations on ways to expand US-EU trade and economic cooperation.

Finally, we reviewed progress in strengthening the Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue, in particular:

- the growing interest in communication among Members of our institutions, both in general and on specific topics,

- the strengthening of the TLD in the Congress by enhancing its status, increasing stability of membership and involving the Speaker of the House of Representatives,

- the opening on 29 April 2010 of the European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLLO) in Washington,

- the steps in expanding contacts among staff of our institutions,

- and discussed options for further enhancing it, such as:

- inviting EU and US officials to provide perspectives on strategic issues related to financial recovery and economic growth,

- expanding interaction between the US Congress and the European Parliament in Brussels and in Washington, including through video-conferencing,

- the possibility of joint hearings and the issuance of joint statements.

In conclusion, we reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening the transatlantic relationship and working in partnership to solve common challenges. We pledged to continue improving the effectiveness of our dialogue in order to realise the full potential of our interparliamentary relationship, as well as to ensure the relevance of the TLD's work to the European Parliament and the United States Congress.

ANNEX: STATEMENT ON IRAN

We, the members of the Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue, condemn the systematic violations by the Iranian regime and its agencies of the human rights of the Iranian people. The actions of the regime are denying the Iranian people the basic human rights as described in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. We call on our respective Administrations to strengthen their efforts to assist the Iranian people in achieving the rights that they are due, through effective means to counteract the regime's repression.

We welcome the coordinated strategy and concerted action by the US government and the European Union to halt the threat posed by Iran's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

CELEBRATING THE HOWARD K. WATKINS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE PROJECT

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 2010

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Howard K. Watkins Photographic Archive Project, aptly recognized as the current "Fresno Photo Laureate."

Since his arrival in Fresno in 1973, Howard K. Watkins has been photographing and documenting events in the greater Fresno area. His collection of 200,000 photos is the largest of its kind and includes: elected officials, community and business leaders, members of the judiciary and legal community, celebrities, numerous community groups, parades, political rallies, athletes, historic buildings and several award winning photographs.

Influenced by the historic Pop Laval Photographic Archive Collection and encouraged by others, Mr. Watkins has partnered with the Fresno Regional Foundation and the Henry Madden Library at California State University, Fresno to provide a permanent home for all to enjoy. Therefore, Fresno State is helping to establish the Howard K. Watkins Photographic Archive Project with the goal of making the photographs publicly accessible as an online historical archive.

Mr. Watkins began taking photos in junior high school with a simple Brownie camera. He pursued his passion for photography as a hobby as a young adult and continued throughout his career as an attorney with Fresno County Legal Services and the Office of Fresno County Counsel. Mr. Watkins became the official photographer for the Fresno County Supreme Court and has taken photographs for the State Bar of California and the California Supreme Court.

Now retired from a distinguished thirty-three year career in the legal field, Mr. Watkins is devoting most of his time to indexing his photographic collection and raising the funds needed to make his photos accessible for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to rise with me today to express our appreciation for Mr. Watkins' unwavering dedication and commitment to keeping the greater Fresno legacy alive through the Howard K. Watkins Photographic Archive Project.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT ON H.R. 5641: TO AMEND TITLE 38, U.S.C., TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE NURSING HOME CARE FOR VETERANS WHO ARE UNABLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY AT NON-DEPARTMENT MEDICAL FOSTER HOMES

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 2010

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing H.R. 5641, a bill to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to enter into contracts with adult foster homes to provide life-long care to veterans unable to live independently.

Adult foster homes are designed to provide non-institutional long-term care to veterans who prefer a more personalized, familial setting than traditional nursing homes are able to provide.

VA has been helping to place veterans in adult foster homes since 2002 and over time more than 600 veterans in need have paid to receive such care. As we speak, 219 veterans are living in these special homes.

The need for long term care is increasing as veterans from past conflicts get older, and it will continue to grow as wounded warriors return home from Iraq and Afghanistan with severe injuries that require life-long assistance. While nursing homes will always be a valuable tool for providing lasting care, for some the individualized, home-like atmosphere of an adult foster home is a much more attractive alternative than the prospect of moving into a traditional nursing home.

The advantages of adult foster homes are clear. Veterans who opt for foster home care will move into a home owned or rented by their chosen foster home caregiver. The caregiver—who has passed a VA screening, federal background check, and home inspection and agreed to undergo annual training—resides with the veteran and provides them with 24-hour supervision and personalized care. For as long as that veteran resides in the home, VA adult foster home coordinators and members of a VA Home Care Team will make both announced and unannounced visits at least three times every month to ensure the veteran is safe and the home and caregiver are in compliance with VA's high quality standards.

Additionally, the Home Care Team will provide veterans with comprehensive, interdisciplinary primary care and provide the caregivers with supportive education and training.

Many veterans who choose to reside in an adult foster home would otherwise be in need of nursing home care and would qualify for VA benefits to receive it. However, because VA is not authorized to provide veterans with assisted living benefits, these veterans must pay for the care they receive in adult foster homes out of their own pockets.