

Conservation Programs: Rural conservation programs received an unprecedented \$1 billion cut from mandatory spending levels in H.R. 2112. This decision is deeply unfortunate, considering conservation programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program have benefited farmers while improving water quality and wildlife habitat.

H.R. 2112 does reflect a bipartisan agreement to continue the ban on horse slaughter inspection. The bill also stops funding for USDA's Livestock Protection Program that has been found to use lethal methods to address wildlife conflict. Taxpayer money can be better spent on predator control methods that do not involve the use of toxic poisons, steel-jawed traps and aerial gunning.

Overall, H.R. 2112 is a deeply flawed bill. If enacted into law, it will inflict great and unnecessary pain on America's urban and rural communities with no significant or lasting reduction in the federal deficit.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against this bill.

SUDAN: HANGING IN THE BALANCE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a great sense of urgency to call attention to the unfolding nightmare taking place in Sudan right at this very moment.

I submit for the RECORD an article today from the New York Times describing the heinous actions taken by the Sudanese Army against their own people. The article quotes an American official as saying that without mediation, "you're going to have massive destruction and death in central Sudan, and no one seems able to do anything about it."

Indeed, no one seems to be doing anything about it.

Have we forgotten the tragic history of Rwanda? Of Darfur? Are the Nuba people destined to the same grim fate? Have we learned nothing from these previous mass annihilations of people?

The New York Times reports that, "United Nations officials in Southern Kordofan, the state that includes the Nuba Mountains, estimate that dozens have been killed in aerial bombings in the past two weeks and maybe dozens more in extrajudicial killings. Nuban officials put the civilian death toll in the hundreds."

The story continues, "Sudanese soldiers are planting land mines in several towns, United Nations officials said, and possibly digging mass graves. Many people in the mountains are Christian, and church officials say Christians have been attacked and churches burned."

The Times piece echoes reports I heard last week from a young man who was a former intern in my congressional office. He has been living and working in Sudan for the past two years and is in continuous touch with people on the ground in Sudan, including in areas that have been virtually cut off from the outside world.

In the face of this tragedy, the administration is AWOL. The press is hardly covering the story. Congress is barely engaged.

What more will it take?

Time is running short and the situation is grim. The world must not continue to turn a blind eye to slaughter.

[From the New York Times, June 20, 2011]

AS SECESSION NEARS, SUDAN STEPS UP DRIVE TO STOP REBELS

(By Jeffrey Gettleman)

NAIROBI, KENYA.—The Sudanese Army and its allied militias have gone on an unsparing rampage to crush rebel fighters in the Nuba Mountains of central Sudan, bombing thatched-roofed villages, executing elders, burning churches and pitching another region of the country into crisis, according to United Nations officials and villagers who have escaped.

"The market was burning," said Salah Kaka, a mother of four who trekked for days with thousands of others to a mushrooming refugee camp after her husband disappeared during an air raid. "I dug ditches in the ground and hid the children."

Tens of thousands of rebel fighters have refused the government's threat to disarm, digging into the craggy hillsides. They are demanding political reform and autonomy, a familiar refrain in Sudan's marginalized hinterlands that has set off insurgencies in Darfur in the west, as well as eastern and southern Sudan.

"This is going to spread like wildfire," said an American official who was not authorized to speak publicly. Without mediation, "you're going to have massive destruction and death in central Sudan, and no one seems able to do anything about it."

The Sudanese Army has sealed off the area and threatened to shoot down United Nations helicopters. Sudan's forces detained four United Nations peacekeepers and subjected them to "a mock firing squad," the organization said Monday, calling the intimidation part of a strategy to make it nearly impossible for aid agencies and monitors to work in the region.

It seems that the Sudanese government, facing upheaval on several fronts, especially with the southern third of the country preparing to declare independence next month, is determined to suppress the rebels and prevent them from encouraging other restive areas to rise up.

Even after the southerners secede, countless fault lines remain in northern Sudan. Non-Arab people in the Nuba Mountains, Darfur, Blue Nile State, Kasala—and all the way down the Nile to Egypt—have long been chafing against an increasingly isolated government dominated by a small group of Arabs and led by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, a war crimes suspect indicted by the International Criminal Court.

"Bashir is facing enormous pressure," said E. J. Hogendoorn, a program director at the International Crisis Group. "There are a number of areas that could rebel again," he said, and the offensive in the Nuba Mountains "may actually exacerbate resentment and inadvertently unite armed opposition movements."

United Nations officials in Southern Kordofan, the state that includes the Nuba Mountains, estimate that dozens have been killed in aerial bombings in the past two weeks and maybe dozens more in extrajudicial killings. Nuban officials put the civilian death toll in the hundreds.

Sudanese soldiers are planting land mines in several towns, United Nations officials said, and possibly digging mass graves. Many people in the mountains are Christian, and church officials say Christians have been attacked and churches burned.

"So many people have been made to leave their homes," said Ali Shamilla, liaison offi-

cer for the Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organization. "Many are living in caves."

Witnesses said government soldiers were shooting "the black people," a reference to Nubans, who are often darker skinned than the Arab-dominated military. Human rights groups worry that this could begin a new round of ethnic cleansing, given the wholesale destruction of communities that has been part of how war is fought in Sudan.

Hundreds of thousands died in Darfur after the government razed villages and armed militias to throttle rebels there, leading to genocide charges against Mr. Bashir. Millions died in the decades of civil war between north and south, under many of the same tactics.

The same thing happened in Nuba. In the mid-1980s, southern rebels opened bases in the Nuba Mountains. Residents who had long felt discriminated against by the Arab rulers of Sudan joined the southerners in droves.

The rulers responded by arming Arab militias—just as it would in Darfur—and setting them loose on impoverished villagers. Tens of thousands of civilians were killed and villagers were incarcerated in "peace camps," forced to convert to Islam. Entire villages were wiped out.

"Nuba were often just shot on sight by Khartoum forces, no questions asked," said Roger P. Winter, a former State Department official, who testified Thursday during a Congressional hearing on Sudan's future. "Today, again, Nuba are positioned for liquidation by Khartoum forces."

This may sound hyperbolic. But as Julie Flint, an author who first visited the Nuba area in 1992, argued, some of the same men responsible for earlier atrocities in Nuba are in charge once again, including Ahmed Haroun, the Southern Kordofan governor, indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity connected to Darfur.

"A new war in Nuba threatens to be a replay of Darfur," Ms. Flint said.

The Sudanese government does not deny bombing Nuban villages, arguing that the Nuba militia were supposed to disarm but did not. One Sudanese official said the war could go on "for some years." Nuban militia leaders have vowed to fight until there is "regime change" in Khartoum or autonomy for Nuba.

Under the accords that set in motion the south's secession, Nubans were supposed to hold "popular consultations" to determine their future, but that has not happened. Now that the south is on the verge of realizing its hard-fought goal— independence many Nubans feel their demands have been deferred.

In the north, oil had helped buy friends and woo enemies, but huge economic uncertainties loom. The south has most of the oil, and in any deal before the south splits off, the north will almost certainly get less than it used to.

Already, riots have broken out in central Sudan's Arab heartland, as Mr. Bashir has warned of austerity measures. Many analysts say the recent military activity along the north-south border, including the north's seizure of the disputed Abyei area and its push in the Nuba Mountains, is part of a hard-knuckled negotiation to secure more oil revenue.

Southern Sudan's leaders are reluctant to go to war over Nuba, but the southern-allied militiamen in Nuba are part of the overall southern military command, so the south could be dragged into the conflict.

During a recent meeting, the top Nuban militia commander, Abdel Aziz al-Hilu, said that before any cease-fire he would have to inform "Chairman Salva," meaning southern

Sudan's president, Salva Kiir. Mr. Abdel Aziz also said that if things don't change, "fires will just break out everywhere, here, in Blue Nile, in Darfur," according to someone at the meeting.

"We, the people of Sudan, are ready to remove them," vowed Mr. Abdel Aziz, the person said. "We have guns."

Josh Kron contributed reporting from Parieng, Sudan.

INTRODUCTION OF FIRE GRANTS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2011

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to support our Nation's first responders. The Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2011 reauthorizes two programs—the Assistance for Firefighters Grant, AFG, Program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, SAFER, program—that were created to help local fire departments across the country maintain and increase their capabilities to do all that is asked of them, including fighting fires and responding to medical emergencies and disasters.

Maintaining the equipment, training, and personnel to safely and swiftly respond to calls for assistance is increasingly difficult. Fire departments around the country have been forced to lay off firefighters and do without needed equipment and training. The fire grant programs have played an important role in helping local fire departments overcome some of these challenges, providing over \$6 billion in assistance since 2000. These grants have been essential to maintaining public safety in many communities.

Fire is a serious problem in the United States, killing over 3,000 people a year—a rate higher than all other industrialized countries. In addition, approximately 20,000 people are injured, over 100 firefighters are killed in the line of duty, and \$10 billion in property is lost each year due to fire. Statistics show that minorities and low-income Americans are disproportionately the victims of fires. In addition to providing the resources necessary to ensure our fire departments have the equipment and personnel they need, the AFG program supports fire prevention and safety activities to help reduce the numbers of death, injury, and loss.

The bill I am introducing today is nearly identical to the bill that moved through the Science and Technology Committee and then passed the House by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote last Congress.

The good news is that, even in these times of increasing partisanship, this common sense bill has once again garnered widespread support. I am pleased to be joined by the bipartisan co-chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus in introducing the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act, along with other members from both sides of the aisle who have long supported these important programs.

We need to ensure that our firefighters and emergency medical personnel have the tools that they need to protect us. This legislation will do just that.

As the Ranking Member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee,

which has jurisdiction over these programs, I look forward to working with my colleagues to put this important bill on the fast track and ensure that these critical programs are reauthorized as expeditiously as possible.

CONGRATULATING CHRISTOPHER ERBE FOR OBTAINING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SANDY ADAMS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mrs. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Christopher Erbe for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Throughout the history of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout has only been attained through dedication to concepts such as honor, duty, country and charity. By applying these concepts to daily life, Christopher has proven his true and complete understanding of their meanings, and thereby deserves this honor.

I offer my congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF NAVESINK HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY NUMBER 1

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Navesink Hook and Ladder Company #1 of Middletown, New Jersey, as its members gather to celebrate its 125th Anniversary. Since its founding in 1886, Navesink Hook and Ladder Company has faithfully protected the local residents, businesses and visitors of the Township. Their honorable and courageous actions are undoubtedly deserving of this body's recognition.

The Navesink Hook and Ladder Company was founded on May 1, 1886 and remains an all-volunteer organization. Throughout their rich history, the members of this fire company have exemplified their unwavering dedication and service toward members of the community. They have risked their lives to respond to various emergencies involving fire, carbon monoxide, motor vehicle accidents and other various rescues. Their responsibilities have begun to expand beyond the borders of Middletown and have also assisted neighboring towns including Highlands, Rumson, Fair Haven, Keansburg, Sea Bright and Atlantic Highlands. Navesink Hook and Ladder Company promotes a proud and longstanding history of valor and sacrifice. Their heroic actions while serving their community is a testament to the selfless actions of the members to protect and serve the residents of Middletown. The members of this fire company continue to exemplify their unwavering dedication and service for their fellow citizens and community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Navesink Hook and Ladder Company #2 on its 125th Anniversary and thanking the men and women who have served and protected the Township of Middletown.

HONORING THE LIFE OF REV. BEN COX, SR., ORIGINAL FREEDOM RIDER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of a trail-blazer and humanitarian, Reverend Ben Elton Cox, Sr. Reverend Cox's life mission was to fight for the equal rights of blacks in southern states where Jim Crow laws and intimidation tactics hindered and denied blacks the right to beaches, hotels, schools, restaurants, and jobs that whites enjoyed. Though confronted with hatred, violence and blatant racial discrimination, Reverend Cox's courageous acts and unyielding belief in equality for all people subsequently effected change across this country.

Reverend Cox was a fervent community activist and devoted NAACP member. He was not only a leader of the Freedom Rides in Little Rock, but was one of the original 13 Riders on the first Congress of Racial Equality Freedom Ride in 1961. His role during the movement helped amplify the voice of oppressed blacks in the south and shape future civil rights policy in the United States that would advance the rights and freedoms of African Americans.

Family, friends, and freedom riders described Reverend Cox as one of the young Americans who repeatedly exhibited courage and bravery in the cause of Civil Rights. Ben Cox and 12 others faced violent opposition and discord from Klansmen and angry mobs during the Freedom Rides traveling throughout the south. In his own words, Reverend Cox said he'd been in 37 states for civil rights and in jail 17 times and that his life had been threatened 87 times in writing. Sacrificing their safety and endangering the lives of their families—harassed, jailed and brutally beaten by their detractors, Reverend Cox and the Freedom Riders were on the "front line" of a civil war and remained steadfast in the fight against racism, discrimination and inequality in the segregated south and around the country. Ben Cox embodied courage and was a champion of the struggle for human rights.

Again, I ask that my colleagues please join me in saluting the life and legacy of Civil Rights leader and Freedom Rider Rev. Benjamin "Elton" Cox, Sr.

ELECTION SUPPORT CONSOLIDATION AND EFFICIENCY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I voted against H.R. 672, a bill that ends the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), an independent and bipartisan commission whose main function is to improve and oversee elections in the U.S.

This bill would transfer much of the EAC's responsibilities and funds to the Federal Elections Commission (FEC), whose main priority