

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SUPPORT REUNIFICATION OF CYPRUS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 15, 2011

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge this Administration to join in the efforts to reach a reunification agreement on the island of Cyprus.

For many years, international organizations have been engaged in the efforts to bring about a negotiated compromise to the dispute in Cyprus and a reunification of the island. These negotiations have been focused around coming to a solution which benefits both Cypriot communities.

On July 7, 2011, the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva in a new effort to reach a deal on reunification. Secretary Ban Ki-Moon is pushing both sides to come to an agreement before Cyprus takes up a steering role in the European Union. This was the third round of three-way talks that Secretary Ban Ki-Moon has held with Cyprus Leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu.

I stand today to ask the Administration to take an active role to bring about a solution that would benefit both Cypriot communities. This ongoing disagreement is not helpful and reunification of Cyprus will only benefit the world community.

Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Philip Gordon, testified that "resolution of the Cyprus problem will have a tremendous impact on the region by strengthening peace, justice, and prosperity on the island, advancing Turkey's European Union accession, improving NATO-EU cooperation and removing a source of friction between two NATO Allies, Greece and Turkey."

I wholeheartedly agree and urge the Administration to take action to ensure that an accord is achieved that would lead to an independent government with both Greek and Turkish Cypriot governmental engagement.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 8, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2354) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Chair, I would like to address some concerns from my constituents

about the Army Corps of Engineers permitting process.

As I travel around Virginia's First District, I hear from many constituents about their frustration with policies and regulations from Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, large federal government bureaucracies can get out of control and fail to protect the citizens and taxpayers.

The Army Corps of Engineers is an important agency in coastal Virginia. They have many responsibilities to promote navigation, commerce and environmental restoration. However, there are some occasions where I believe the multiple levels of bureaucracy and lack of accountability of decision makers can lead to situations that are unfair to Americans.

I've worked on the behalf of one of my constituents, a small marina owner who believes he was harmed due to a permitting mistake by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In this case a permitting decision ultimately cost this small business a significant amount of money.

I raise these issues to highlight the impact Agency action can have on main street businesses. I raise these issues to suggest the need for additional accountability to ensure that Army Corps permitting decisions are made appropriately and that the Corps works hand in hand with small businesses to mitigate financial harm.

RETIREMENT OF NERISSA BRETANIA-UNDERWOOD, PHD., FROM THE GUAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 15, 2011

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nerissa Bretania-Underwood, PhD., for her extensive years of educational leadership on Guam. Dr. Bretania-Underwood is retiring from her career as the Superintendent for the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) after over 30 years of service to our island's education system.

Dr. Underwood was raised in the southern villages of Agat and Santa Rita, Guam. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education, with a double major in Elementary and Special Education, from the University of Guam in 1981. After gaining teaching experience as a special education teacher at Harry S. Truman Elementary School, she became a consulting resource teacher for the GDOE's Division of Special Education. In 1985, she earned a Master of Science in Education, from the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, specializing in the implications of special education placement in Guam. Shortly thereafter, in 1989, the University of Oregon conferred a Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree on Dr. Nerissa Underwood.

Dr. Underwood returned to Guam in 1990 to become an assistant professor at the Univer-

sity of Guam and the program evaluator for GDOE's Division of Special Education. In 1993, she was named Administrator for GDOE's Research, Planning and Evaluation Division, which provides data on the condition of Guam's education system to local educators and policy makers. In 2003, Dr. Bretania-Underwood served as Interim Superintendent for GDOE, and in 2007, she was named the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education. In 2008, Dr. Bretania-Underwood assumed the position of Superintendent of Guam's public education system. As the superintendent of Guam's public school system, Dr. Underwood worked to address structural management issues facing GDOE. She made significant progress to improve financial accountability within the school system, and I recognize her efforts to utilize Recovery Act Funds to improve the quality of education and school facilities on Guam.

Dr. Nerissa Underwood is married to Dr. Robert A. Underwood, the President of the University of Guam and former Guam Congressman. She is blessed with three children: Christopher, Gerecka, and Mike; and nine grandchildren. Throughout the years, Dr. Underwood has been active in many community and non-profit organizations, such as the Filipino Community of Guam, Iloilo Association of Guam, the American Red Cross, the Guam Humanities Council, the St. Paul Christian School Board, and the Guam Women's Club. She has contributed and devoted much of her knowledge and talents toward improving the quality of life for everyone who calls Guam home.

Today, I join the people of Guam in extending a sincere Un dangkulo Na Si Yu'os Ma'ase to Dr. Nerissa Bretania-Underwood for her over 30 years of dedicated service to our island's children and public school system.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRESIDENT'S NOMINATION OF MATHEW OLSEN TO LEAD THE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 15, 2011

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit a letter I sent to Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman DIANNE FEINSTEIN opposing the President's nomination of Mr. Matthew Olsen to lead the National Counterterrorism Center.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 14, 2011.

Hon. DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR FEINSTEIN: I write in opposition to Mr. Matthew Olsen's nomination to serve as director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), which is located in

• 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.

my congressional district. I believe Mr. Olsen exercised questionable judgment and made misleading statements while serving as the special counselor to the attorney general and executive director of the Obama Administration's Guantanamo Review Task Force, where he led the interagency process to implement the president's executive order that led to the release of a number of dangerous terrorist detainees held at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base. Dozens of high risk terrorist detainees recommended for release by the task force led by Mr. Olsen were released abroad to dangerously unstable countries, including Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan.

As then-ranking member and now chairman of the House Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations subcommittee—which funds the Justice Department, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Marshals Service and which helped fund the NCTC's predecessor, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center—I was disturbed by decisions and statements made by Mr. Olsen in 2009 while he led the task force. These concerns have deepened based on new information that has come to light in recent articles from *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *The National Journal* and *The Weekly Standard*. These reports have raised troubling questions about Mr. Olsen's leadership of the task force and his actions in response to White House influence.

Additionally, my personal interactions with Mr. Olsen, as well as these subsequent news reports, lead me to conclude that he was not forthright with the Congress and may have changed detainee assessments under political pressure from administration officials. I believe these are troubling concerns which deserve a thorough investigation and should give the Senate serious pause as it considers who should lead the NCTC. I have visited the NCTC on several occasions and have met with a number of its former directors, as well as the former and current directors of National Intelligence. I have seen firsthand the critical work that is done by the center and fully understand the need for an independent, capable and principled director to lead the operation.

There are three concerns that have led me to oppose Mr. Olsen's nomination. First, it is clear to me that in order to achieve the president's promise to close Guantanamo Bay during his first year in office, Mr. Olsen may have been susceptible to the immense political pressure placed on the interagency task force to re-classify detainee threat levels. Second, it has become clear that Mr. Olsen's task force may have altered some detainee assessments—overturning Department of Defense assessments—in order to clear and expedite the release of a large number of detainees. Third, I have recently learned that Mr. Olsen was not forthright with me and my staff about the effort to release a number of Uighur detainees to northern Virginia in 2009. Attached is a white paper that addresses these concerns in greater detail.

Leading the NCTC is a serious responsibility and requires a director that is exceptionally experienced, forthcoming, trustworthy and has good judgment. The analyses and recommendations provided by the NCTC have direct bearing on the safety of the American people. The director must be able to withstand political pressure from all sides, facilitate the complete and straightforward sharing of information and ensure unbiased analysis. I do not question Mr. Olsen's professional qualifications for this position, but from my observations of his recent leadership positions, I believe that he lacks the judgment to lead the NCTC.

I am willing to testify about my concerns during your committee's upcoming con-

firmation hearing for Mr. Olsen. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-225-5136 to discuss any of this information.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Chairman, Commerce-
Justice-Science Sub-
committee, House
Appropriations Com-
mittee.

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS REGARDING MR. OLSEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ACTIONS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S GUANTANAMO REVIEW TASK FORCE

1. QUESTIONABLE ALTERING OF GUANTANAMO BAY DETAINEE ASSESSMENTS

I am concerned about new information reported by *The Weekly Standard* about the assessments of detainees who were transferred abroad in 2009. Throughout that year, I repeatedly wrote the president and attorney general expressing concern over the release of certain detainees believed to be threats by the Department of Defense (DOD). I was also deeply concerned that detainees were being released to dangerously unstable countries, such as Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan. Despite my warnings in the fall of 2009, detainees continued to be released to these countries until the administration was forced to halt releases to Yemen following the attempted attack by the Christmas Day bomber, who trained in Yemen with al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

According to a July 13, 2011, article in *The Weekly Standard*, "[Olsen's] task force approved most of the detainees remaining at Guantanamo for transfer, clearing the way for the Obama administration to empty most of the detention facility's cells. But a review of leaked detainee threat assessments reveals that many of the detainees approved for transfer [by Olsen's task force] were deemed 'high' risks by Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO), which oversees the detention and interrogation of detainees. Moreover, JTF-GTMO recommended that most of these detainees be retained in U.S. custody—precisely the opposite of the task force's recommendations."

The article continues, "In its final report, dated January 22, 2010, Olsen's task force reported that 126 detainees, out of a total of 240, were 'approved for transfer.' Olsen's task force approved roughly 2 out of every 3 (65 percent) Guantanamo detainees for transfer, JTF-GTMO recommended that approximately 1 out of every 4 (25 percent) be transferred."

There is one case in particular that serves as a good example of the troubling discrepancy between Olsen's recommend release of a detainee that JTF-GTMO considered to be "high" risk. In early 2010, I wrote White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan about one detainee, Ayman Batarfi, whom the DOD believed to be closely connected to al Qaeda's anthrax program. Brennan forcefully rejected my concerns about Batarfi. However, as a recent *Weekly Standard* article notes:

"A recently leaked threat assessment prepared at Guantanamo draws into question the Obama administration's analysis of a detainee [Batarfi] who was transferred to Yemen shortly before all future transfers to the unstable nation were suspended."

"Brennan decided to answer Wolf's challenge by sending a letter on White House stationery to then-House speaker Nancy Pelosi on February 1, 2010. ABC News obtained a copy of the letter and published it online. Brennan wrote:

"During the briefing on January 13, Representative Wolf made allegations that one detainee repatriated to Yemen had been in-

involved in weapons of mass destruction. As it has done in every case, the task force thoroughly reviewed all information available to the government about this individual and concluded that there is no basis for the assertions Representative Wolf made during this session. I am attaching a classified addendum to this letter that addresses these concerns directly."

"But a recently leaked April 29, 2008, threat assessment prepared by Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) contains numerous references to Batarfi's ties to al Qaeda's anthrax program. These connections were made through a known al Qaeda front named al Wafa, which employed Batarfi and provided cover for al Qaeda's pre-9/11 pursuit of an anthrax capability . . .

"For all of these reasons, and more, Batarfi was deemed a 'high risk' who is 'likely to pose a threat to the U.S., its interests, and allies' by the JTF-GTMO team. Batarfi was also considered to be of 'high intelligence value.'"

This newly leaked 2008 assessment raises serious questions about why Olsen's task force didn't include the DOD's information about Batarfi's ties to the al Qaeda anthrax program as well as their judgment that Batarfi was, in fact, "likely to pose a threat to the U.S." This information raises questions about the integrity of the task force's review and whether undue political pressure to release more detainees led task force members to doctor detainee assessments.

The *Weekly Standard's* Thomas Jocelyn succinctly posits in the July 13, 2011, article, "It is clear that the Guantanamo Review Task Force, headed by Matthew Olsen, approved a large number of 'high' risk transfers. The senators presiding over Olsen's confirmation hearing may want to ask: Why?"

2. POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE GUANTANAMO BAY DETAINEE TASK FORCE

I am concerned about political pressure placed on Olsen and the task force by administration officials. Although the administration asserts that the task force was independent, it is clear that the task force reported directly to the White House and participated in meetings led by White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel. According to the April 23, 2011, *Washington Post* article:

"In late April [2009], Obama heard some jarring news during a Situation Room meeting with the interagency task force reviewing the case of every detainee at Guantanamo."

"The president asked Matthew G. Olsen, the Justice Department lawyer heading the task force, approximately how many Guantanamo detainees could be prosecuted, according to administration officials.

"Probably fewer than 20, Olsen said.

"The president seemed peeved that the number was so small, in contrast with the optimistic predictions during his election campaign that nearly all of the remaining detainees could face trial or be transferred. The number would eventually rise to 36."

I am concerned that pressure from White House officials may have led Olsen and his task force to inflate the number of cases eligible for prosecution from "fewer than 20" to the 36 that were ultimately provided to the administration. The nearly 100 percent increase in the number of cases brought forward for prosecution following the president's comment merits a serious review of whether political pressure led the task force to alter its independent assessment of detainees.

The recent *Weekly Standard* analysis notes, "[Olsen's] task force approved only 35 percent of the detainees for indefinite detention or prosecution, whereas JTF-GTMO recommended that roughly 75 percent be retained in DoD custody." This dramatic shift

in the number of cases recommended by Mr. Olsen raise serious questions about whether pressure from the president and other administration officials led him to inflate the number of detainees recommended for trial.

3. MISLEADING CONGRESS ABOUT THE TRANSFER OF UIGHUR DETAINEES TO THE UNITED STATES

It has become clear that the administration was directing Mr. Olsen to intentionally withhold information from members of Congress and he willingly complied with their inappropriate direction. According to *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post* and *The National Journal*, the administration was planning a secret transfer and settlement of at least two Uighur detainees to northern Virginia in April 2009. Each of these reports indicates the degree to which the White House attempted to hide this effort from the Congress and the public.

According to a May 2009, article in *Newsweek*, White House officials are alleged to have been particularly concerned about Republican members of Congress being made aware of the secret transfer. *Newsweek* reported, "As part of their efforts to shut down the Guantanamo Bay detention center, Obama Administration officials were poised in late April to make a bold, stealthy move: they instructed the U.S. Marshals Service to prepare an aircraft and a Special Ops group to fly two Chinese Uighurs, and up to five more on subsequent flights, from Gitmo to northern Virginia for resettlement. In a conference call overseen by the National Security Council, Justice and Pentagon officials had been warned that any public statements about Gitmo transfers would inflame congressional Republicans, according to a law-enforcement official who asked not to be named discussing internal deliberations." (This operation appears similar to the administration's secret transfer of Somali terrorist Ahmed Abdulkadir Warsame to New York City for civilian trial on July 5 after spending two months on a U.S. Navy ship).

It has recently come to my attention that I was misled about the status of the transfer of the Uighur detainees in April 2009. This information confirms the *Newsweek* report that career federal employees were explicitly directed to hide this information from members of Congress, especially Republican members.

During an April 22, 2009, meeting in my office with members of the Guantanamo Bay Detainee Review Task Force, including Mr. Olsen, I inquired about the status of the potential transfer of Uighur detainees to the United States. Mr. Olsen indicated that a decision had not yet been reached on the transfer of the detainees. None of the other career or political officials in the meeting countered Mr. Olsen's assertion.

That is why I was deeply concerned to learn in an April 2011, *Washington Post* article, that the final decision on the transfer of the Uighur detainees had been made during a White House meeting eight days before my meeting with Mr. Olsen. According to *The Washington Post* article, "The first concrete step toward closing the detention center was agreed upon during an April 14, 2009, session at the White House. 'It was to be a stealth move . . . They were going to show up here, and we were going to announce it,' said one senior official, describing the swift, secretive operation that was designed by the administration to preempt any political outcry that could prevent the transfer."

Following the publication of this article in April, I personally called Mr. Olsen to ask whether he was aware at the time of my meeting with him on April 22, 2009, that a decision had already been made on the transfer of the detainees. He told me that he had been aware of the decision prior to our meeting.

I believe that I was intentionally misled by Mr. Olsen and other administration officials during my April 22 meeting with the task force. I also am concerned that the attorney general did not acknowledge that a decision had been made when he appeared before the House Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations subcommittee the following day. That is why I was surprised when my office was notified by a career federal employee that the administration was misleading the Congress and planned to secretly transfer the detainees around May 1, 2009.

As *Newsweek* reported, "Then on May 1, Virginia GOP Rep. Frank Wolf got tipped off. Furious, he fired off a public letter to President Obama, charging that the release of the Uighurs—Muslim separatists opposed to the Chinese government—could 'directly threaten the security of the American people.' White House officials were not happy . . . The flight never took off."

**HONORING ROBERT THORSEN
UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS
RETIREMENT**

HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 15, 2011

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the career of Robert Thorsen, on the occasion of his retirement, on July 4th, 2011, and to thank him for his more than twenty-three years of distinguished service and dedication to the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. Thorsen helped guide the House community from mainframe computers to the House Cloud of today. He was responsible for re-establishing the House Information Resources (HIR) Technology Call Center, TCC, and he helped expand the TCC into a 24/7, 365-days-a-year operation. In the past several years, Bob has worked with the HIR Technology Support Escalations Team to provide high-quality support to all House offices. He has also been involved in continuity and contingency planning efforts for the House.

Beyond his work at the House, Mr. Thorsen served in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserve. He was recalled to active duty in 1990, serving in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Desert Calm. He retired from the reserves in 2002 with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

Mr. Thorsen's knowledge, experience, dedication and consistently outstanding performance have set an example for superior customer service. These traits have also earned Mr. Thorsen the respect of his co-workers and colleagues.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Robert (Bob) Thorsen for his many years of dedication, outstanding contributions and service to the House.

We wish him many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

**RETIREMENT OF ARLENE REYES
UNPINGCO FROM THE GUAM
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 15, 2011

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Arlene Reyes Unpingco, for her years of support to the education system on Guam. Mrs. Unpingco is retiring as Deputy Superintendent of Educational Support and Community Learning for the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) after 25 years of service to the people of Guam.

Mrs. Unpingco began her career at GDOE immediately after receiving her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education, majoring in Elementary and Special Education, from the University of Guam in 1986. In 2000, Mrs. Unpingco received her Master's Degree in Education, with specialization in Administration & Supervision, again from the University of Guam. Mrs. Unpingco began her career as an elementary and middle school teacher on Guam. She later was promoted to serve as an Assistant Principal, and eventually, School Principal in several local schools. In 2008, Mrs. Unpingco's contributions to the classroom and through education administration were recognized as she was appointed to the role of Deputy Superintendent of Educational Support and Community Learning. In her years of service, her commitment to our students and leadership in administration has helped to strengthen our island's education system in many far reaching ways.

Mrs. Unpingco was born and raised in the central village of Tamuning, Guam, on September 15, 1956. She is married to the Honorable Steven Sablan Unpingco, retired Superior Court Judge and resides, with her family, on the shores of beautiful Pago Bay, Chalan Pago. She is blessed with five children: Jan, Jason, Jossalyn, Steven, and Michael; and four grandchildren: Brandon, Jaylene, Jenna, and Kailani.

It is on the occasion of Mrs. Unpingco's retirement from the Government of Guam's Department of Education that I join the people of Guam in acknowledging her service and dedication to our island's public schools and the education of Guam's children. I wish her the best in her retirement and in her future endeavors.

**IN HONOR OF CONGRESSMAN
FRANK MASCARA**

HON. JASON ALTMIRE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 15, 2011

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to former Congressman Frank R. Mascara, who passed away Sunday, July 10 at the age of 81. Born in Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania, Congressman Mascara proudly served southwestern Pennsylvania for over 30 years, first at the county level, then for four terms in the United States House of Representatives.

A first-generation Italian-American, Mascara embodied the humble, hardworking nature of his immigrant parents and his constituents