

Again, I wish the people of Taiwan a happy Double Ten Day. I would like to congratulate Taiwan on the occasion of Double Ten Day, and I hope the friendship between our two nations continues to grow in the years ahead.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BENGALI ASSOCIATION

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2016

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the Northern Virginia Bengali Association (NVBA), which is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. A quarter of a century ago, the first Bengali residents of Virginia felt a need to have their own organization. Distance was barring their participation in Sanskriti, Maryland, which is the oldest Bengali association in the Washington, DC area. After extensive discussion and planning, the then Virginia residents decided to form a new organization of their own and called it Northern Virginia Bengali Association, with the broad vision of nurturing and promoting Bengali and Indian culture through education, cultural, spiritual, and charitable activities. In 1990, the first community event, Saraswati Puja, was held in McLean Hall.

Bengal, India, is a crucible of art and culture. The Bengalis of Virginia, who have their roots in Bengal, expectedly, have a penchant for art, culture, music, and community life and strive to preserve their unique identity while intermingling with diverse ethos. They endeavor to strike a balance between indigenous traditions and cosmopolitan influences in their lifestyle and that of the next generation. The above values shape the foundation of NVBA's mission and are reflected in its major events.

The following are among NVBA's significant achievements. They have sustained a rapid growth of members in the community in the past few years and have accommodated their social needs. They have increased the number, scale, and quality of the social/cultural events organized around the year. They have improved community relations by engaging with community leaders and officials, keeping communication channels open for dialogue, and also giving them the opportunity to experience Bengali culture. They have held several charitable events to help fellow citizens in the community and created a wing called 'NVBA Cares' to administer such initiatives. Some of the recent activities of NVBA Cares include participating in food drives by partnering with Food for Others to help struggling families. There is also an initiative to support fellow members in severe health and financial distress until they are back on their feet again. NVBA has also participated in feeding the underprivileged in homeless shelters and helping in soup kitchens.

In 2014, The Commonwealth of Virginia awarded a commendation plaque to NVBA for sharing their unique traditions with the people of this region and their positive impact on society. NVBA's contributions were also acknowledged on the Virginia House of Delegates' floor.

From the founding fathers to the current board members, and countless volunteers,

many individuals have worked selflessly to bring NVBA to its current stature in its 25th year since inception, relying on the simple principles of social and cultural enrichment of its members and promoting the spirit of harmony and goodwill in the community.

Mr. Speaker, this is an organization which helps the citizens of Virginia's 10th Congressional District to thrive. I would ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Northern Virginia Bengali Association and wishing it a happy 25th anniversary. I wish this institution continued success in the future.

PAKISTAN: FRIEND OR FOE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM?

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on May 21, 2016, a U.S. drone strike killed the leader of the Afghan Taliban, Mullah Mansour. To no one's surprise, at the time of his death Mansour was in southwestern Pakistan. The drone strike Pakistan's longstanding support for terrorist groups. For example, Pakistan openly supported the Afghan Taliban both before and after the extremists took control of Kabul in 1996.

Islamabad's connection to terrorist groups is so close that in 2011 Admiral Mike Mullen, then chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff testified before the Senate that "the Haqqani network acts as a veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency." The Inter-Services Intelligence Agency or the "ISI" is Pakistan's version of the CIA. The Haqqani Network is not a nice group of people. They have killed more Americans in the region than any other terrorist group.

A leaked NATO report in 2012 detailed Pakistan's ongoing relationship with the Taliban. The report described Pakistan's "manipulation of the Taliban senior leadership" and claimed that the government was aware of locations of senior Taliban leaders, including some who lived in the vicinity of the ISI headquarters in Islamabad.

The laundry list of evidence of Pakistan's support for terrorists goes on and on. We all remember where al-Qaeda's leader and America's most wanted terrorist Osama bin Laden was found: in Pakistan, of course. In response to the bin Laden raid, Pakistan put the doctor who helped us in jail and closed the U.S. military's supply route from Karachi port to Afghanistan for 7 months.

While Pakistan has been harboring and supporting terrorists with American blood on their hands, it also has been receiving billions in U.S. foreign assistance. In fact, Pakistan is one of the leading recipients of U.S. aid in the last 14 years. Congress has appropriated more than \$33 billion to Pakistan since fiscal year 2002.

One of the ways we have given Pakistan money over the years is by reimbursing them for efforts they take to fight terrorists. But a GAO study from 2008 found that the Department of Defense could not verify the validity of Pakistan's claims. The GAO study concluded that some reimbursed costs were potentially duplicative or not based on actual activity. In 2010, Special Representative for Afghanistan

and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrook said that roughly 40 percent of Pakistan's reimbursement requests were rejected.

Each year we say that Pakistan is at the crossroads and needs to decide whether it is going to fight terrorists or fight on our side. In fact, just two months ago the State Department's Ambassador Richard Olson, used this very line. But the United States has been using this line for the last 15 years. Enough is enough. Pakistan is playing us. They are trying to have it both ways. They want our money and they keep supporting terrorists who target Americans.

I invited Ambassador Olson to come testify before us and explain himself, but he refused. Instead, the State Department said this was a "particularly sensitive time in our relationship with Pakistan". In other words, he was afraid Pakistan would come away looking bad. Well that might be just because Pakistan is bad.

Now we have put conditions on aid to Pakistan before, requiring them to really go after terrorists if they want our money. But those conditions have always had a waiver attached to them and every year, the President has exercised that waiver. In other words, we paid Pakistan even though it did not go after terrorist groups. Well, for the first time last year, we did not include a waiver on \$300 million of money for Pakistan. And guess what? Pakistan did not get the money because it had not gone after the terrorist groups. Even when there are hundreds of millions of dollars on the line, Pakistan refuses to go after terrorist groups.

The reality is that Pakistan has chosen sides. And it isn't ours. It is time to change our policy towards Pakistan. We do not need to pay Pakistan to betray us. They will do it for free.

And that's just the way it is.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE McLEAN PROJECT FOR THE ARTS 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MPAARTFEST

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2016

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the McLean Project for the Arts in Loudoun County for the 10th anniversary of their MPAartfest. Established in 1962, the McLean Project for the Arts has worked tirelessly to provide opportunities for local and regional artists to showcase their work, to foster appreciation of contemporary art, and to offer instruction and teaching in the visual arts in many communities. The MPAartfest is an annual celebration in the form of an outdoor gallery experience highlighting the work of 52 artists from the area, as well as offering many other interactive activities that expose eventgoers to the arts.

Some of this year's exhibits will include the Children's ArtWalk, an open-air gallery of elementary school children's artwork, and the Hands-On Art Studio, which gives artists of all levels the opportunity to further develop their passion. Additionally, this year's MPAartfest will host a new branch of exciting activities in their STEAM Center. This innovative program combines STEM and the Arts for those interested in architecture, robotics, and math.