

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CLEMENCY FOR FALN TERRORISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the House did not get an opportunity earlier this week to discuss the Senate's resolution condemning the President's decision to grant clemencies to members of the FALN.

I draw Members' attention to the USA Today's headline, "FALN Brought Bloody Battle Into America's Streets." Let me read part of this newspaper article.

The Puerto Rican separatist group FALN exploded into public view on January 24, 1975, by attacking an icon of American history. It quickly became the most feared domestic terrorist group operating on U.S. soil.

The 1975 bombing of the Fraunces Tavern in New York City, where General George Washington bid farewell to his troops in 1783, left four dead and 54 wounded. It was the deadliest of more than 130 attacks linked to this group from 1974 to 1987, when most members were jailed.

Some Members here feel we are wasting our time talking about an issue that is already a fait accompli because the President has in fact signed the clemency and they are out of jail. They say we should be discussing social issues important to the American people.

Let me tell the Members, that is exactly what we are doing here in discussing the clemencies for FALN Members. We are talking about whether we should be a society that tolerates violence or a society that condemns it. It seems to me the people who propose more gun control measures, and some of it was discussed here today, as a solution to prevent future tragic acts of violence are the same ones who preach forgiveness and understanding for past acts of violence.

Following this twisted logic, we should create new gun control laws and then offer clemency to the people convicted of violating those laws.

It sounds like a bizarre scenario to me. But anyone who supports the President's decision to offer clemency to Members of the FALN is not serious about locking up those who violate our Nation's existing gun laws.

Of the 16 terrorists offered clemency by the President, 12 were convicted of

the following violations of Federal firearm laws:

Possession of an "unregistered firearm," a machine gun or sawed-off rifle or shotgun. Twelve were convicted of those crimes.

Nine were carrying a firearm during the commission of a seditious conspiracy and interference with interstate commerce by violence.

Nine were arrested and convicted for interstate transportation of firearms with the intent to commit seditious conspiracy and interference with interstate commerce by violence;

Three, conspiracy to make a "destructive device", such as a pipe bomb;

Two, possession of a firearm without a serial number.

These are people we let out of jail last week. For anyone who thinks that these terrorists will now be model citizens, let me share with them the 1997 statistics from the Bureau of Justice. Of the 108,580 persons released from prisons in 11 States in 1983, representing more than half of all released State prisoners that year, an estimated 62.5 percent were rearrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within 3 years, 46 percent were reconvicted, 41 percent returned to jail. A high recidivism rate, I would assume.

Maybe those same people we let out last week will have a chance to display their good citizenship, as they did when they maimed, injured, and killed others.

I do not care if those offered clemency actually pulled the trigger, detonated the bomb, or drove the get-away car. The fact is they were active members of a terrorist organization dedicated to violence. Now they are free by an act of this president. That is more than a shame, it is tragic.

Let me also read, because people say that it is time for healing, time to get along, time to accept their apologies, time to recognize they have said they are sorry. Let us let them out of jail.

Jailhouse statements of FALN Members given clemency contrast with their recently stated claims to have renounced violence.

In October, 1995, for example, Luis Rosa, Alicia Rodriguez, and Carlos Torres told the Chicago Tribune that they have nothing to be sorry for and have no intention of renouncing armed revolution.

Another FALN member granted clemency, Ricardo Jimenez, told the judge in his case, "We are going to fight. Revolutionary justice will take care of you and everyone else." I think that is a fairly strong threat.

Talk about four killed, 54 injured.

On October 26, five bombings in downtown New York City, more than \$1 million in damage.

December 11, New York police were called to an upper east side building to collect a dead body. A booby-trap was set for them. A police officer was injured and lost an eye.

June 15, two bombs detonated in Chicago's loop area.

February, 1973, Merchandise Mart in Chicago bombed, damage totaled \$1.3 million.

□ 1330

August 3, 1977, Mobil Oil employment office in New York bombed, one killed, several injured; November 1979, two Chicago military recruiting offices and an armory bombed; March 1980, FALN members seized the Carter-Mondale campaign office.

My colleagues, these people should not have been released. This is an outrage, and the citizens of America should recognize it for what it is. It was a political act and not a just act.

FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO ROUBEN SHUGARIAN, OUT-GOING AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I spoke about the 8th anniversary of the Independence of the Armenian Republic, which is celebrated by the citizens of Armenia and by people of Armenian descent here in the United States on September 21. But one individual who has played a significant role in solidifying the bonds between the United States and Armenia during these early years of Armenian independence is the current ambassador, Rouben Shugarian. Mr. Shugarian has represented Armenia in Washington since March 1, 1993, and in a few weeks Ambassador Shugarian will be leaving Washington to take another post in the foreign ministry in Yerevan, Armenia's capital. Still only in his late 30s, Ambassador Shugarian obviously has a great future ahead of him in service to the Armenian Republic.

During his very distinguished tenure here, Ambassador Shugarian has done a great deal to help raise the profile of Armenia in the Capitol of the free world. For his efforts, he has earned the respect of Members of Congress, the administration, and his colleagues from many other nations in the Washington diplomatic corps. He has also earned the gratitude of the Armenian-American community for helping to advance Armenia's cause, while making the embassy an important focal point for Armenian Americans.

When Ambassador Shugarian arrived in Washington, Armenia did not really have an embassy per se, making do with cramped office space. But during his tenure, the Armenian mission in Washington moved to a beautiful facility in the embassy row area near Massachusetts Avenue. The physical presence of the embassy and its central location serves to symbolize Armenia's

arrival as one of the emerging nations of the post-Cold War world.

Yesterday, Wednesday, September 23, The Washington Post had an article on Ambassador Shugarian entitled "A Reflection on Washington's Ways." The article says, "The image of a nation that is coming back home," was the way the ambassador described to The Washington Post how he has sought to represent his country abroad. Again quoting from the article, it says, "In a speech at a farewell reception at the Armenian embassy last Friday, Shugarian joked that in the first 2 years he and his staff learned what not to do in Washington, and in the next 5 years they learned about what to do."

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Washington is considered the most prestigious and high-profile post for international diplomats. Ambassador Shugarian's appointment to this prestigious post at such a young age demonstrates the high regard he was held in by the leaders of the newly independent Armenian Republic. Indeed, his relative youth in some ways symbolized the energy and optimism of the newly born country that he represented. His success here shows how well deserved that reputation was.

Since becoming an independent country, Armenia has signed a wide range of agreements with the United States on trade and investment, on science and technology, on humanitarian issues, and the establishment of a Peace Corps program in Armenia. Ambassador Shugarian has played an important role in much of this progress, and his leadership will be sorely missed.

As The Washington Post article notes, Ambassador Shugarian recently had an opportunity to interact with his Turkish counterpart, Ambassador Baki Ilkin in the aftermath of last month's devastating earthquake in Turkey. Since Armenia came through a devastating earthquake in 1988, it has some experience with this type of natural disaster. Armenia offered to help its neighbor, despite their strained relations. Although the initial delivery of aid was rejected at the insistence of certain extreme nationalists in Turkey, eventually Armenian relief supplies did arrive in the stricken earthquake area.

A further hopeful sign was seen here last week when Turkish Ambassador Ilkin made an appearance at Ambassador Shugarian's farewell party. And that really was the first time in the annals of Washington diplomacy that the ambassadors of the two countries had met together formally.

Mr. Speaker, Ambassador Shugarian is in the process of completing a book on his recollections of his service in Washington, entitled *On the Overgrown Path*. And as he leaves Washington to return to Armenia, I want to wish Ambassador Shugarian, his wife Lilit

Karapetian, and their two sons all the best. I hope we will have the opportunities to receive them as visitors in the country they called home for more than 6 years.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD the article I referred to above.

[From the Washington Post, September 22, 1999]

DIPLOMATIC DISPATCHES—A REFLECTION ON
WASHINGTON'S WAYS
(By Nora Boustany)

Seven years after arriving as Armenia's first ambassador to Washington, Rouben Robert Shugarian is moving on to greener pastures at the Foreign Ministry in Yerevan. The former university professor, specialized in American and English literature and philosophy, said that despite the maddening tempo of diplomatic life here, every day has been a revelation and a discovery.

"There is never a second chance to make a first impression," Shugarian noted stoically about his stiff learning curve in Washington. He is completing a book on some of his recollections here titled "On the Overgrown Path," which looks at his homeland's independence since it broke away from the Soviet Union eight years ago tomorrow. It offers a conceptual look at U.S.-Armenian relations, touching on stereotypes and real perceptions of Armenia here and focusing on how best to represent Armenia abroad in its new incarnation.

"The image of a nation that is coming back home," was the way he described it. He said Armenia is a country that has suffered from extensive man-made and natural disasters, that is now trying to build its future differently. In a speech at a farewell reception at the Armenian embassy last Friday, Shugarian joked that in the first two years, he and his staff learned what not to do in Washington and the next five years they learned about what to do.

"This is a tough city. Any sign of exhausted creativity or ineffectiveness is not easily pardoned. This is an open society. Old career diplomacy tricks and buttoned up social graces don't get the job done," he said in an interview yesterday. "This is a country where you have to be engaged in a sincere dialogue to reach your objectives." A country that had no diplomatic representation, Armenia now has 15 students at Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy who Shugarian hopes will benefit from his impressions. The book will not be a memoir as such because he will not be able to share some secrets until some time has elapsed. His most exhilarating moments in Washington came in 1993 when he celebrated Armenia's second anniversary of independence at Meridian International House.

"We did not have an embassy at the time. One felt the country becoming a reality, however, and that we were really going back home," he reminisced.

He said his first extended exposure to Turkey's ambassador, Baki Ilkin, was in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake Aug. 17 that killed more than 15,000 people. Armenia arranged to send a plane with seismologists, doctors, generators, blankets and medicine to the stricken areas. "We went through a terrible earthquake 11 years ago in which 25,000 people were killed. It was a purely moral step, not a political one and we do not expect anything in return. We went through something like that and we know what it is like," the ambassador said.

Although Turkey and Armenia do not have embassies in one another's capitals, Ilkin

made a 20-minute appearance at Shugarian's farewell reception, a first in the annals of Washington diplomacy. "This is such a wonderful country where there is so much to see, to learn and to understand," Shugarian said in summing up his time here. "The most striking thing about life here is the freedom that exists, the freedom that gives you an opportunity."

AMERICANS DESERVE A BREAK
WHEN IT COMES TO TAX RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. EHRlich) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EHRlich. Mr. Speaker, the typical American family pays 38 percent of its income in taxes, more than it spends on food, clothing and shelter combined. We are taxed when we save for school, taxed when we get married, even taxed when we die. Mr. Speaker, it is about time the American family got a break. That is why this Congress passed comprehensive tax relief that includes the most meaningful tax relief passed in a generation.

The strongest evidence of all that Americans are paying too much is the size of the budget surplus. Conservatively projected at \$2.9 trillion over the next 10 years, this surplus was earned by taxpayers. They are the ones who deserve to reap the benefits of their labors. The Republican tax relief package returned only a portion of that money to taxpayers, despite all that spin from this floor and the administration to the contrary.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, our proposal returns 27 cents on each dollar of surplus over the next decade. The remainder we locked away to be used for protecting Social Security, strengthening Medicare, and paying off the national debt. Our tax relief package benefits all Americans, married couples, senior citizens, working families, the self-employed, public schools, and distressed neighborhoods.

We provide tax relief for married couples. One of the most unfair provisions in our present Tax Code requires married couples to pay more in taxes simply because they are married. Our plan eases this unfair penalty to the benefit of 42 million taxpayers.

We provide tax relief for education. Our plan helps parents and students facing educational expenses by raising the ceiling on education savings accounts and permitting their use for K through 12 costs, and changing bond rules to assist local school construction issues.

We provide tax relief for retirement. Our plan helps American workers gain access to a pension plan and enjoy greater retirement security by increasing limits to 401(k) plans and other retirement options, increasing portability of pensions, and simplifying pension rules.

We provide tax relief for medical expenses. Our plan makes health care and