

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMEMORATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, ten years ago, on March 15, 1989, President Bush hailed the creation of the new Department of Veterans Affairs by saying, "There is only one place for the veterans of America, in the Cabinet Room, at the table with the President of the United States of America." Ten years ago today, veterans took their rightful place at the highest executive level of Federal Government. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act, passed the previous October by the 100th Congress, was implemented and the new Department of Veterans Affairs became a reality. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs became the 14th member of the President's cabinet.

While the United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans of any nation in the world, it was not until 10 years ago that our Nation's veterans received the hard earned recognition provided them by the creation of a cabinet level department. It is also somewhat ironic that veterans waited so long for the establishment of a cabinet level department as the foundation for the Department of Veterans Affairs was established some 350 years earlier in 1636, when the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony, who were at war with the Pequot Indians, approved a measure stating that disabled soldiers would be supported by the colony.

The establishment of the Department of Veterans Affairs fulfilled this Nation's promise to those who had risked it all to preserve, protect and defend by giving them direct representation before the Nation's chief executive. As Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee at the time the legislation passed, said, "We didn't make the government bigger, we gave our veterans a bigger voice in government."

Rep. Gerald Solomon, ranking minority member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs at the time, said, "The change directly supported Congress's and the President's effort to rebuild the military. A strong VA and strong veterans' benefits programs are the underpinning of a viable all-volunteer military force. We understood that then, and we understand it now."

After becoming a cabinet level department in 1989, VA began to grow, not in size, but in importance, operating as an equal to other departments. As a department, VA has played a major, if not the lead, role in issues that have dominated our national agenda—homelessness, health care management, government reinvention and reengineering, AIDS, workplace diversity and medical research to name a few.

As a cabinet department, VA has successfully embarked on bold initiatives to reinvent the veterans' benefits delivery process and re-engineer the nation's largest hospital-based health care system into a patient-focused health network delivering a uniform package of health maintenance services to more veterans in more locations than ever before. VA is today undergoing an evolution like never before in its history with the goal of continuing to provide better service to our Nation's veterans, their survivors and dependents.

As a cabinet level department of federal government, VA is well positioned to fulfill the Nation's promise to its veterans well into the 21st century and to give renewed meaning to Lincoln's call for this nation "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." We expect and will accept no less.

HONORING MARIE JOSSE L. MONTROSE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Marie J. Montrose, for her exemplary community service, and for her numerous contributions to the Brooklyn community.

Ms. Marie J. Montrose is the Director of Community and Patient Relations at Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. In that capacity, she is responsible for Community Affairs, Patient Relations, Pastoral Care and Volunteers Services. Ms. Montrose is Interfaith's liaison with community organizations, agencies, churches, schools and other groups that are interested in working together with the institution to continue to improve the health of residents of the Central Brooklyn community.

Ms. Marie J. Montrose has implemented several new programs at the hospital: The Dr. Martin Luther King—the African American Celebration Day, Employee Honor Roll, Employee Satisfaction Survey, Random Act of Kindness Day, the Annual Memorial Service for deceased employees, the Summer Youth Employment Program and the hospital-wide Customer Relations training program. Last September, she directed the activities for the groundbreaking ceremony of "Interfaith, A New Beginning".

A native of Haiti, Ms. Montrose is a long time resident of Brooklyn. She is also a proud parent. Her daughter Sarah Anne gives her the inspiration to lecture and write extensively on health care advocacy and children issues. Her thesis "Who are the Children and How is their Health?" was published in the book "The Multicultural Challenge in Health Education" in 1996. Her latest projects "The Economics of Health and the Immigrant"—"The Patient and

Managed Care—Whose Right Is It Anyway?" were accepted for publication.

Ms. Montrose is an active member of national, state, and local organizations. She serves on several local boards dedicated to improving health care: AMBA Executives, New York Society of Health Care Advocacy, National Society for Consumer Affairs, Visions Services for the Blind, American Public Health Association, and the Ryan White Advisory Committee. With all of her activities Ms. Montrose still finds time to volunteer as a teacher for newly emigrated teenagers.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Ms. Marie J. Montrose who has helped the community, and has served as an excellent role model.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 37 on March 10, 1999, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 42) regarding the use of United States Armed Forces as part of a NATO peacekeeping operation implementing a Kosovo peace agreement:

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in strong opposition to the deployment of U.S. ground forces in Kosovo. I base my opposition on three principles: first, that the administration must abide by U.S. law in the event of a deployment; second, that the Kosovo issue represents a threat primarily to European, rather than American interests; and third, that intervention in Kosovo at this time would set a dangerous precedent for NATO and the U.S. armed forces by providing military support to an independence movement within a sovereign nation—a far different mission than that currently underway on the Balkan Peninsula.

With particular regard to the administration's legal obligation, I believe it critical for the President to abide by last year's defense authorization measure (P. Law 105-262), which

● 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.

the President signed into law. This law requires that before American troops are deployed to Kosovo, the President must (1) certify that the presence of U.S. forces in Kosovo is necessary to the national security interests of the United States; (2) provide the reasoning behind this certification; (3) report the number of American men and women who will be deployed; (4) establish the mission and objectives of U.S. forces in Kosovo; (5) detail the expected schedule for accomplishing mission objectives; (6) outline the exit strategy for U.S. forces; (7) provide an estimate of the costs of the deployment and the funding sources that will be used to pay those costs; and (8) estimate and report the potential effects of this additional deployment on the morale, retention, and effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

These eight requirements are, in my view, the minimum amount of information a President should provide the people and their duly elected representatives prior to sending American men and women into harms way. President Clinton should follow the example of President Bush in the months leading up to the American deployments and military action in Operation Desert Storm. During that time, President Bush reached out to Congress and the American people to explain why the action was necessary and the extent and nature of its risks. Not only does President Clinton have a moral and ethical obligation to the American people to explain our interests before risking the lives of our soldiers, he has a legal obligation to report to Congress, as well. Congress was clear in its requirements, and the President must be held accountable to the law.

Regarding the interests at stake in Kosovo, it is clear that the conflict represents very little threat to American military, diplomatic, economic, or other interests. While protecting human rights is clearly an important goal of American foreign policy, it is unclear whether the deployment of U.S. ground forces will serve or complicate attempts to accomplish this goal. A long-term solution would likely be all the more difficult to reach if the U.S. intervenes as Turkey, Greece, and Russia would all likely oppose such an action. Intervention would, therefore, put U.S. troops at odds with allies and adversaries alike.

While it is unclear what effect American military action would have in Kosovo at this time, it is obvious that the current fighting has significant ramifications for Europe and North Africa. Albanian minorities in Montenegro and Greece will take cues from the international response to Kosovo, and Albania itself could face severe difficulties if NATO actions force the repatriation of tens of thousands of refugees. Clearly, Europe has an interest in stopping the violence and the flow of refugees from Yugoslavia. It is the nations of Europe, therefore, that should lead the peace effort in Kosovo and that should bear the human and economic costs of any military action.

Finally, I believe the United States should be very wary of setting a precedent for supporting independence movements within sovereign nations. While there is no doubt that Serbian forces have committed and, apparently, continue to commit deplorable acts of violence and oppression, there are political mi-

norities in virtually every country in the world that legitimately claim some degree of oppression. I do not think the American people are ready to deploy U.S. armed forces throughout the world to establish new countries for every group that seeks greater political influence. And I know that our armed forces—already stretched so thin that our readiness for engagement in a major contingency has come into question—will find it even more difficult to accomplish their primary function of national defense if the President chooses to engage in yet another unfunded, open-ended operation on foreign soil.

I have traveled to Bosnia three times and have great sympathy for all of the people living on the Balkan Peninsula. I also have great respect for the accomplishments of the peacekeeping effort in Bosnia. The crisis in Kosovo, however, represents a very different threat in need of a very different solution. I do not believe that the deployment of ground troops will serve the interest of peace, the interest of human rights, or the interests of the United States.

Furthermore, I demand that President Clinton and his administration abide by the law and provide Congress and the American people the information required under the Fiscal Year 1999 Defense Authorization Act (Pub. L. 105-262). Only through full disclosure will Congress and the American people have all the facts necessary to make a fully informed decision regarding the proposed deployment.

TERRY MCGINTY HONORED

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the achievements of Mr. Terry McGinty to the attention of my colleagues. The Greater Pittston Friendly Sons of St. Patrick will honor Terry as their "Man of the Year" at this year's annual St. Patrick's Day Banquet. I am pleased to have been asked to participate in this event.

Terry is the son of Terry McGinty, Sr. and Mary Catherine McGinty of Inkerman, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of Pittston Area High School and Mansfield University, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education. Terry worked for the Luzerne Intermediate Unit for seventeen years, then moved to the Pittston Area School District to teach in the special education department. Currently, he teaches special needs students at the Martin L. Mattei Middle School. In 1990, Mr. McGinty was awarded the Annie Sullivan Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Luzerne County Intermediate Unit for his years of dedication to his special students.

Terry's love of sports has continued throughout his life. He has been a volunteer coach in several different youth sports programs including soccer and t-ball. He jointly volunteered his time with Luzerne County Commons Pleas Court Judge Mark Ciavarella at the Catholic Youth Center as coach of the

girl's swim team. Terry was honored by the Center in 1997 after leading the team to seven consecutive, undefeated championship seasons.

He has assisted coaching at the high school level in both swimming and track and has organized and coached summer programs in swimming. Terry is an avid runner and has completed two marathons and participated in triathlons and numerous other local races.

Terry and his wife, Lynn, have been hosts for Project Children which brings children from Northern Ireland to America for the summer. In 1987, the McGintys visited the family of one of their visitors in Ireland. Terry has been an active member of the Friendly Sons for many years, serving as its President in 1986 and as Program Chairman for the annual banquet for seventeen years.

Terry is a member of the American Federation of Teachers, the Knights of Columbus, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Laflin Homeowners Association. He and Lynn reside in Laflin and are the parents of two high school age children: Kelly and Terry, III.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with the Friendly Sons in honoring this fine educator and community volunteer as its "Man of the Year." I send my very best wishes to Terry and his family as he accepts this prestigious award.

HONORING MS. ELA CECILE TONEY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Ela Cecile Toney, for her exemplary community service, and for her numerous contributions to the Brooklyn community.

Ms. Toney is a registered nurse and works as a Women's Health Care Nurse Practitioner at Interfaith Medical Center. Her primary interests include reduction of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Throughout Ela Toney's tenure she has worked in many low income community health care organizations. She has practiced in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York and Coney Island. She is a dedicated nurse who is extremely concerned about the women of her community and has lobbied in Albany to make women's health top priority.

Ms. Toney immigrated to the United States from St. Vincent and the Grenadines four decades ago. Her dream was to educate herself and help others. She has achieved both goals. She is a graduate of the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital School of Nursing and she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in nursing from Jersey City State College. Ms. Toney is a grandmother and an active member in many professional and charitable organizations.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Ms. Ela Cecile Toney, who has served the Brooklyn community with pride, and is an excellent role model.