

On June 19, Mrs. Pope, Cheri, and two of my staff, were leaving for Russia to attempt to visit him. That afternoon Cheri's mother passed away unexpectedly in San Diego, California. Mrs. Pope had to make the decision whether she went to bury her mother or she went to Russia to encourage her husband. She made the decision to go to Russia, and so she went. And several days later she had the chance to spend a few moments with him.

On Tuesday, June 20, they met for the first time in 3 months, just a few feet from a watchful prosecutor in Lefortovo prison. Edmond and Cheri Pope hugged and belatedly wished each other a happy 30th anniversary. Then Cheri Pope said, "The first thing he said to me was, 'Cheri, I didn't do anything wrong. I didn't.' And I said to him, I never thought for a minute you did."

In an emotional interview on Tuesday after that reunion, Cheri Pope said her husband, whom the Russians had accused of spying, was strikingly thin. He had a rash; he had lost a lot of weight; he had a pallor about him and some skin problems. She said, "Even though he didn't look well, he still looked handsome to me."

While they were there, Cheri and my staff were able to obtain a good lawyer for him. He did not have a good lawyer, and they had no way of knowing that. And since that time we have been working hard to obtain his release.

On June 26, we wrote President Putin a letter, and I will share with my colleagues some of the things we shared with him. "Mr. Putin, if you value our friendship, send Edmond Pope home. President Putin, if you value the growing business relationships beneficial to both of our countries, send Edmond Pope home." It said, "President Putin, if you value the many ways we aid you financially, send Edmond Pope home."

"Edmond Pope is a man who was there on sound financial business reasons. He is not a spy. He needs to be home with his family and with his grieving wife. He needs to be home to visit his father, who is seriously ill. He needs to be home to have his own health monitored, and he needs to be home so that our relationship between the Russian Federation and America can grow and not be destroyed."

We have not heard from that letter, though we thought we would. Today, I wrote another letter to President Putin and it has been faxed to him. One hundred fifteen days have passed. This case has no merit. His new lawyer tells us he has shredded the evidence completely. On August 5, in just a few days, his son, Dusty Pope, plans to marry a young lady named Justin. It is only fitting that Edmond Pope be home to stand with his son and his future daughter-in-law and wish them into the world of matrimony.

I hope and believe that it is important that we get this issue resolved and

that we get him home, because it is vital that we build a relationship between these two countries. I have a resolution that urges the President, with 109 signatures, and I could get many more, to discontinue our assistance to the Russian Federation, to approve no more loans to the Russian Federation, or no more technical assistance. I do not want to do that. I believe the future of Russia depends much on a friendship with this country. But it is time to send Edmond Pope home so that our relationship can grow to the benefit of both our countries. I ask President Putin to help us accomplish this today.

CALLING ON RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AND PRESIDENT PUTIN TO FREE EDMOND POPE

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to reinforce the comments of my colleague, the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON), and to call on the Russian government and President Putin to free Mr. Ed Pope. We have heard he is an American businessman that they have held without trial for months, and I rise to assure Mr. And Mrs. Pope's family that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) and I are doing everything we can to secure his release.

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Mr. Speaker, the Russian government's continued incarceration of Mr. Pope, an American citizen, is nothing short of outrageous. Not only was his arrest and subsequent imprisonment contrary to international law, but the treatment he has received while in custody has been appalling.

Until recently, I am told, he has been denied communications with his wife. We heard they went for 70-plus days without being able to exchange letters or any communication. He has been denied access to sufficient food and medical treatment by American standards and certainly every other basic right we associate with justice systems of civilized nations.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pope's imprisonment is reminiscent of those ugly dark days of the old Soviet regime when men and women were taken from their homes in the dark of night, interrogated, and sometimes never seen again. And that is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, I was told that Mr. Pope still lacks such basics as a blanket, a blanket his wife has been trying to send to him, a blanket that has been described and detailed about what they have to do to get through the Russian bureaucracy and yet continued to be denied, a blanket.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Pope's parents, Roy and Elizabeth Pope, who live in my district in Grant's Pass, Oregon. Mr. Speaker, both of them are elderly. Mr. Pope suffers from terminal cancer and dementia. They and I do not fully comprehend the diplomatic obstacles that keep their son away from his family.

Mr. Speaker, on May 9, I wrote to our own Secretary of State. On June 27, I wrote again. In neither case has this administration bothered to respond to the two letters of inquiry that I have sent directly to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Speaker, Ed's family knows that Ed is no criminal and that his imprisonment is unjust.

Mr. Speaker, we simply must do everything in our collective power to see to it that he is freed as soon as humanly possible.

Mr. Pope is no spy and he should be returned to his family. So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in sending a strong message to President Putin and the Russian government that the American people are serious about this and will not forget their actions if Mr. Pope is not returned immediately.

In an era when the opportunity exists for better relations between our two nations, now is not the time to return to the mutual antagonism and suspicion that held the entire world hostage for a half a century of the Cold War.

TRIBUTE TO HONORABLE JIMMY MORRISON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to mourn the passing of a former Member of this body, the Honorable Jimmy Morrison of Louisiana.

Congressman Morrison was one of my constituents and represented much of the district I now represent. He served in this body from 1944 through 1966.

I was only 5 years old when he left this House, so my knowledge, obviously, of his tenure here is limited to conversations with those who were privileged to work with him and to the history books. I do know that he was a Member of whom we can all be proud.

In 1944, when he was first elected to office, his district was, like much of the country, a rural area still working to recover from the Great Depression.

Congressman Morrison earned a seat on the Committee on Agriculture and the Post Office and Civil Service committee, two assignments that allowed him to address the immediate needs of his constituents.

The esteem in which my older constituents hold him speaks volumes of