

May 25, 2000

SALUTE TO COMMANDER AL
BERNARD

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring a man of outstanding accomplishment, Commander Al Bernard.

Commander Bernard is retiring from the United States Coast Guard this week, and I would like to call attention to his extraordinary and meritorious service to his country.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Coast Guard is an invaluable branch of the United States military. The men and women of our Coast Guard keep our waters free of narcotics and illegal aliens, perform almost all of the search and rescue missions for the United States and provide security and safety in our waterways.

This is just a small sampling of the duties performed by the Coast Guard. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for the services they provide.

For 24 years, Commander Bernard has faithfully performed these and other duties in service to our great country. Prior to donning the Coast Guard uniform, Commander Bernard was also a proud U.S. Marine, where he served as an infantryman in Southeast Asia. He has spent more than half of his life in service to this nation and today, we are a grateful nation for his sacrifice.

From his humble beginnings operating small boats as a coxswain to his assignment as liaison officer to the House of Representatives in Washington, Commander Bernard has performed each and every job as a true patriot.

He quickly rose through the ranks of the Coast Guard and in 1979, he was accepted to Officer Candidate School. After receiving his commission, Al's first assignment was as a security officer at Training Center New York, Governors Island. Just a year later, he was promoted to First Lieutenant and deck watch officer on the USCGC *Courageous*, in Cape Canaveral, Florida. He was then chosen to be executive officer of USCGC *Shearwater* in Key West, Florida. In addition, was made the senior controller at the Pacific Area/Twelfth USCG District Rescue Coordination Center.

From there, Al Bernard's military career skyrocketed. He received command of his first ship, the USCGC *Nantucket*, in Roosevelt roads, Puerto Rico. It should be noted that Al is the first American of Puerto Rican descent to command his own ship.

Due to his exceptional abilities, Commander Bernard was relocated to Washington to serve his country at USCG Headquarters. He later received command of another cutter, the USCGC *Citrus*, which was homeported in Coos Bay, OR. After finishing another productive tour, he was made chief, Cutter Management Branch, Coast Guard Pacific Area in Alameda, California.

While on duty in California, he was selected to attend the U.S. Naval War College, where he graduated with distinction, earning a Master of Arts Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Upon graduation, Commander Bernard was given his third command, the USCGC *Decisive* in St. Petersburg, Florida; he later crossdecked to USCGC *Resolute*.

Most recently, he was selected in 1998 to become the liaison officer to the House of Representatives in Washington, where I can personally attest he has served every man and woman who wears the Coast Guard uniform with great distinction.

Over the course of his 24 years of service to the United States, Commander Bernard has demonstrated his versatility by serving brilliantly in both the military and legislative arenas. Al Bernard has been recognized for his achievements with numerous awards, such as the Bronze Star with "V" device for valor, the Purple Heart, and Meritorious Service Medal with an "O" device. He has also received seven Coast Guard Commendation Medals with "O" device, the Coast Guard Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon and various other awards.

He was also selected as the 1989 recipient of the U.S. Navy League's Captain David Jarvis award for professional competence and inspirational leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join me in congratulating Command Al Bernard on an illustrious military career. Likewise, we salute his wonderful wife, Ann, and their two children, Jason and Bernadelle, who made the many sacrifices military families make in supporting their husband and father all these years. We wish Al the best of luck in all of his future endeavors, for he is truly a fine example for all Americans.

HONORING MAKIA EPIE

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a special young man, Makia Epie, of Cedar Hill, Texas, who is proving to be an outstanding addition to the Air Force Academy. Makia, who entered the Academy in the fall of 1997, has been named Flight Commander for the upcoming academic session. I know the entire 24th Congressional District joins me in celebrating this accomplishment.

As Flight Commander, Makia will assist the Cadet Squadron Commander in developing and training the basic cadets. Makia will work to ensure that cadets develop the right military attitude and attention to duty. He will do this by setting an appropriate example in leading his flight drills.

Makia's performance in the Air Force Academy deserves the highest praise, and I extend my sincerest appreciation for his service to his country. I wish him and his family the best in their future endeavors.

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HONORING THE CITY OF
TORRANCE

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the City of Torrance. For the last 41 years, the City of Torrance has honored and acknowledged the men and women of our military during its annual Armed Forces Day Parade.

The Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade is an important event for the residents of the South Bay. Torrance boasts one of the oldest and most noteworthy Armed Forces Day parades in the country. Thousands of people, many waving American flags, lined the streets last Saturday to honor our Armed Forces. Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen was also on hand to participate in the celebration.

The parade has persevered during the last 41 years. It has been protested, glorified, and even scaled back at times. But despite the circumstances of the day, the City of Torrance has held the parade to pay tribute to the men and women of the Armed Forces. This is a valued tradition in the South Bay, one that will continue for years to come.

I congratulate Torrance Mayor Dee Hardison on the success this year's parade. I also commend the citizens of Torrance for they are the ones who have helped keep this tradition alive. We live in a great country. It is our Armed Forces who are responsible for protecting and defending our freedom throughout the world.

COMMENDING ISRAEL'S REDE-
PLOYMENT FROM SOUTHERN
LEBANON

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in commending Israel for its courageous withdrawal from Lebanon. The Israeli action sends a strong signal that Israel is very serious about pursuing a comprehensive peace with all its neighbors. At the same time, it is critical for this Congress to demand a cessation of all terrorist activities in southern Lebanon and to strongly encourage the government of Syria to remove its troops from Lebanon as well.

GRANTING PERMANENT NORMAL
TRADE RELATIONS TO CHINA

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased with the passage of yesterday's legislation to grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) to

China. Passage of PNTR is the first step in reforming China and advancing religious freedom and human rights for the Chinese people. Of course, change will not occur overnight in China. However, it will occur gradually through policies of normal trade, exchange and engagement, through peoples of faith, scholars, the workforce, and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD a powerful statement signed by a broad spectrum of religious leaders in support of PNTR. These individuals and their organizations have worked, and will continue to work, for the advancement of religious liberty and human rights.

STATEMENT BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN SUPPORT OF PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA (EXPANDED LIST OF SIGNATORIES)

MAY 23, 2000.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: Soon you will be asked to vote on an issue that will set the course for U.S.-China relations for years to come: enacting Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China. Your vote will also have an impact on how human rights and religious freedom will advance for the people of China in the years ahead. We are writing to urge you to vote for PNTR for China because we believe that this is the best way to advance these concerns over the long term.

We share your concern for advancing human rights and religious freedom for the people of China. The findings of the recent report from the U.S. International Religious Freedom Committee are disturbing to us. Clearly, the Chinese government still has a long way to go.

The question for us all is: What can the U.S. government do that will best advance human rights and religious freedom for the people of China? Are conditions more likely to improve through isolation and containment or through opening trade, investment, and exchange between peoples?

Let us look first at what has already occurred within China over the past twenty years. The gradual opening of trade, investment, travel, and exchange between China and the rest of the world has led to significant, positive changes for human rights and religious freedom in China. We observe the following:

The number of international religious missions operating openly in China has grown rapidly in recent years. Today these groups provide educational, humanitarian, medical, and development assistance in communities across China.

Despite continued, documented acts of government oppression, people in China nonetheless can worship, participate in communities of faith, and move about the country much more freely today than was even imaginable twenty years ago.

Today, people can communicate with each other and the outside world much more easily and with much less governmental interference through the tools of business and trade: telephones, cell phones, faxes, and e-mail.

On balance, foreign investment has introduced positive new labor practices into the Chinese workplace, stimulating growing aspirations for labor and human rights among Chinese workers.

These positive developments have come about gradually in large part as a result of economic reforms by the Chinese government and the accompanying normalization of trade, investment, and exchange with the

outside world. The developing relationships between Chinese government officials, business managers, workers, professors, students, and people of faith and their foreign counterparts are reflected in the development of new laws, government policies, business and labor practices, personal freedom, and spiritual seeking. Further, the Chinese government is much more likely to develop the rule of law and observe international norms of behavior if it is recognized by the U.S. government as an equal, responsible partner within the community of nations.

The U.S. government and governments around the world have a continuing, important role to play in challenging one another through international forums to fully observe standards for human rights and religious freedom. However, we do not believe that the annual debate in the U.S. Congress, linking justifiable concern for human rights and religious freedom in China to the threat of unilateral U.S. trade sanctions, has been productive toward that end.

Change will not occur overnight in China. Nor can it be imposed from outside. Rather, change will occur gradually, and it will be inspired and shaped by the aspirations, culture, and history of the Chinese people. We on the outside can help advance religious freedom and human rights best through policies of normal trade, exchange and engagement for the mutual benefit of peoples of faith, scholars, workers, and businesses. Enacting permanent normal trade relations with China is the next, most important legislative step that Congress can take to help in this process.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donald Argue, (Former President, National Association of Evangelicals, representing 27 million Christians in the United States of America); John A. Buehrens, (Unitarian Universalist Association); Bruce Birchard, (Friends General Conference); Myrrl Byler, (China Education Exchange, Mennonite Church); Reverend Richard W. Cain, (Emeritus) President, Claremont School of Theology); Ralph Covell, (Senior Professor of World Christianity, Denver Seminary); Charles A. Davis, PhD, (The Evangelical Alliance Missions); Father Robert F. Drinan, (Professor, Georgetown University Law Center; Member of Congress, 1971-1981); Samuel E. Ericsson, (President, Advocates International, a faith-based global network of lawyers, judges, clergy, and national leaders reaching over 100 nations for justice, reconciliation, and ethics with offices on five continents); Nancy Finneran, (Sisters of Loretto Community); Brent Fulton, (President, ChinaSource, a non-profit, Christian Evangelical organization connecting knowledge and leaders in service to China); Dr. Richard L. Hamm, (Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)); Kevin M. Hardin, (University Language Services); J. Daniel Harrison, (President, Leadership Development International); Bob Heimbürger, (Professor (Ret.) Indiana University); Rev. Earnest W. Hummer, (President, China Outreach Ministries); John Jamison, (Intercultural Exchange Network); Rodolf Mak, Ph.D., (Director of Chinese Church Mobilization, OMF International); Jim Nickel, (ChinaSource, a non-profit, Christian Evangelical organization connecting knowledge and leaders in service to China); Don Reeves, (General Secretary (Interim) American Friends Service Committee); Rabbi Arthur Schneier, D.D., (President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation); Phil Schwab, (ChinaTeam International Services, Ltd.); Dr. Stephen Steele, (Dawn Ministries); Rev. Daniel B. Su, (Spe-

cial Assistant to the President, China Outreach Ministries); Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, (The United Methodist Church); Dr. James H. Taylor III, (President, MSI Professional Services International); Finn Torjesen, (Executive Director, Evergreen Family Friendship Service, a Christian, non-profit benefit organization working in China); Joe Volk, (Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation); Rev. Dr. Daniel E. Weiss, (American Baptist Churches, USA); Dr. Hans M. Wilhelm, (China Partner, an organization serving Church of China by training emerging young leaders); Rev. Dr. Andrew Young, (President, National Council of Churches, former ambassador to the United Nations and member of Congress); Danny Yu, (Christian Leadership Exchange).

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL
BARRY BATES

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding Army leader in my District, Major General Barry Bates, as he relinquishes command of the Army & Air Force Exchanges Service, headquartered in Dallas, Texas.

Under his strong visionary leadership, AAFES has served the military community better than at any time in its history. General Bates exercised astute management which led to annual sales of \$7.3 billion and earnings of over \$351 million. This produced the highest per capita dividend (\$284 per service member) for Morale, Welfare & Recreation programs of our Armed Services. He improved the overseas school feeding program, the military family program, and encouraged youth by establishing a coupon program and Savings Bond drawing to recognize those achieving good grades.

General Bates has expanded business partnerships, improved cooperation among DOD resale activities, and partnered with other services to develop exchange-wide credit card services. He has also advanced AAFES significantly in the application of technology. Internet sales have grown by leaps and bounds to \$24.2 million in 1999. AAFES' Information Systems Directorate has won 13 major national awards and opened a state of the art Enterprise Technology Center.

General Bates has made customer service a priority, positioning AAFES as a "customer driven company." At the same time, he has focused on developing, training and caring for AAFES employees. The results tell the story: customer service has improved 25%, and associate satisfaction has increased by 14%.

I've been impressed with the work of General Bates on two vastly different fronts. On a recent trip to Bosnia I shopped at a great PX at Eagle Base in Tuzla. This kind of operation is what AAFES has become known for—they go wherever our soldiers go. General Bates has inspired his team to provide great service on all the U.S. contingency missions. His commitment to be there for the troops was most evident when AAFES established a presence in Albania just five days after our forces arrived there.