

place to shower and do their laundry, but it also aids in giving those less fortunate the tools needed to look for employment. These simple services greatly increase the odds of getting a job for those with very few resources.

Bob Kelsey has been the director of the Catholic Outreach Day Center since its creation in 1997, but at the age of seventy he is passing his responsibilities on to another. In the four years of the day center's existence, Bob, with the help of over 40 volunteers, has helped to provide more than one thousand jobs to the less fortunate members of the community.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Kelsey has dedicated many resources and provided many opportunities to those members of his community who are less privileged. The Catholic Outreach Day Center has become a very valuable asset for many people. Mr. Kelsey has touched the lives of so many and will be greatly missed, but through the ongoing support of his community his vision will survive to make a difference. Thanks Bob for your efforts on behalf of others.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF DOUGLAS G. SPORLEDER

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Chief Douglas G. Sporleder on his retirement from the Santa Clara County Fire Department. Chief Sporleder is retiring after 21 years of service to the people of Santa Clara County.

Santa Clara County Fire Department services an area of 137 square miles and a population of 259,000, and consists of 270 paid personnel and 40 volunteers operating a regional network of sixteen fire stations with a \$32 million budget.

Chief Sporleder is third-generation fire service. His father and grandfather were also chief officers in the fire services. Upon his retirement, Douglas Sporleder will have been fire chief for over 21 years, nearly half the time that the Santa Clara County Fire Department has been in existence.

Starting as a volunteer firefighter in 1963, Chief Sporleder attained the rank of chief in 1980 after progressing through the ranks of firefighter, captain, training chief and assistant chief. He is also the Santa Clara County Fire Marshal and the Local Mutual Aid Fire and Rescue Coordinator, and a member of the Governor's Special Arson Task Force and the California Fire and Rescue Service/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors.

Chief Sporleder's other professional accomplishments include: speaking at the National Fire Academy and the International Association of Fire Chiefs conference; certificates of appreciation from Santa Clara County, the American Heart Association; and the recipient of the American Legion Certificate of Commendation for Heroism. He has served as president of the Santa Clara County Fire Chiefs' Association, and is a member of the

International Association of Fire Chiefs, the IAFC Metro Chiefs Division, the Western Fire Chiefs' Association, the California Fire Chiefs' Association, the National Fire Protection Association, and the Special Fire Districts' Association of California.

An active participant in community service and community affairs, Chief Sporleder will be sorely missed by the Fire Department and the County. I cannot thank Chief Sporleder enough for his years of service to the people of Santa Clara County, and wish him nothing but the best in the future. He is a leader as well as someone I am proud to call my friend.

IN MEMORY OF SUSAN M. FAGAN

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life and service of Susan M. Fagan, a Peace Corps volunteer, who lost her life after serving in Ghana in November. At the time of her death, Susan was visiting her family in Ohio. The cause of death is believed to be malaria.

Mrs. Fagan, of Barefoot Bay, Florida, had served in the Peace Corps from November 29, 1999, to November 2, 2001, in Akwida, Ghana, where she started tourist management committees so that the villagers could benefit directly from the burgeoning tourist industry in Ghana. Before completing her service, Susan had developed and presented to the Ghana Tourist Board a longterm plan for promoting tourism in the Akwida region. Thanks to Susan's hard work, that plan is being utilized today.

Susan is survived by her father, William Wilson, her stepmother, Linda Wilson, her sisters, Debra Moore and Shelby Wilson, and stepbrothers, Terry and Brandon Zastrow. A memorial service was conducted in East Liverpool, Ohio, on Thursday, December 6, 2001. A second memorial service was held in Florida on December 13, 2001. Susan is also survived by her deceased husband's family, father and mother-in-law, Raymond and Dona Fagan, brother-in-law, William Fagan, and sister-in-law, Dori Ziomek.

Susan embodied the best traditions of Peace Corps Volunteers, and her life and work will be deeply missed by all who knew and worked with her. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends. In memory of Susan Fagan, the Peace Corps flag was flown at half-staff on December 6, 2001.

Susan helped the people of interested countries and helped promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people she served. Susan always saw the humor in a situation and never allowed the frustrating things about living in a developing country get her down. She considered herself very lucky to have had such an opportunity.

"I am very proud to say that Susan's life embodied the Peace Corps goals," said Ghana Country Director Leonard Floyd. We will all miss her—her family, friends, the Peace Corps staff, the Peace Corps Volunteers and all of the people who considered her

a friend and family in her Ghana home of Akwida." Indeed, her example will continue to inspire us.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, December 21, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev will be meeting with President Bush. Sometime in January, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov is likely to arrive for his visit. The invitations to these Heads of State obviously reflect the overriding U.S. priority of fighting international terrorism and the corresponding emphasis on the strategic importance of Central Asia, which until September 11 had been known largely as a resource-rich, repressive backwater.

As Co-Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I have chaired a series of hearings in recent years focused on human rights and democratization in the Central Asian region.

Clearly, we need the cooperation of many countries, including Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbors, in this undertaking. But we should not forget, as we conduct our multi-dimensional campaigns, two vitally important points: first, Central Asian leaders need the support of the West at least as much as we need them.

Unfortunately, Central Asian presidents seem to have concluded that they are indispensable and that we owe them for allowing us to use their territory and bases in this fight against the terrorists and those who harbor them. I hope Washington does not share this misapprehension. By striking against the radical Islamic threat to their respective security and that of the entire region, we have performed a huge service for Central Asian leaders.

Second, one of the main lessons of September 11 and its aftermath is that repression of political opposition and alternative viewpoints is a key cause of terrorism. Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice have declared that the war on terrorism will not keep the United States from supporting human rights. I am hopeful the administration means what they have said. But given the sudden warming of relations between Washington and Central Asian leaders, I share the concerns voiced in many editorials and op-eds that the United States will downplay human rights in favor of cultivating ties with those in power. More broadly, I fear we will fall into an old pattern of backing repressive regimes and then being linked with them in the minds and hearts of their long-suffering peoples.

In that connection, Mr. Speaker, on the eve of President Nazarbaev's meeting with President Bush and in anticipation of the expected visit by President Karimov, as well as possible visits by other Central Asian leaders, I want to highlight some of the most glaring human rights problems in these countries.

To begin with, corruption is rampant throughout the region, and we should keep

this in mind as the administration requests more money for assistance to Central Asian regimes. Kazakhstan's President Nazarbaev and some of his closest associates are under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for massive corruption. Not surprisingly, to keep any information about high-level misdeeds from the public—most of which lives in dire poverty—the Nazarbaev regime has cracked down hard on the media. Family or business associates of President Nazarbaev control most media outlets in the country, including printing houses which often refuse to print opposition or independent newspapers. Newspapers or broadcasters that try to cover taboo subjects are harassed by the government and editorial offices have had their premises raided. The government also controls the two main Internet service providers and regularly blocks the web site of the Information Analytical Center Eurasia, which is sponsored by Kazakhstan's main opposition party.

In addition, libel remains a criminal offense in Kazakhstan. Despite a growing international consensus that people should not be jailed for what they say or write, President Nazarbaev on May 3 ratified an amendment to the Media Law that increases the legal liability of editors and publishers. Furthermore, a new draft religion law was presented to the Kazakh parliament at the end of November without public consultation. If passed, it would seriously curtail the ability of individuals and groups to practice their religious faith freely.

Uzbekistan is a wholesale violator of human rights. President Karimov allows no opposition parties, permits no independent media, and has refused even to register independent human rights monitoring groups. Elections in Uzbekistan have been a farce and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) rightly refused to observe the last presidential "contest," in which Karimov's "rival" proclaimed that he was planning to vote for the incumbent.

In one respect, however, Karimov is not lacking—brazen gall. Last week, on the eve of Secretary Powell's arrival in Tashkent, Uzbek authorities announced plans to hold a referendum next month on extending Karimov's tenure in office from five years to seven. Some members of the tightly controlled parliament urged that he be made "president for life." The timing of the announcement could have had only one purpose: to embarrass our Secretary of State and to show the United States that Islam Karimov will not be cowed by OSCE commitments on democracy and the need to hold free and fair elections.

I am also greatly alarmed by the Uzbek Government's imprisonment of thousands of Muslims, allegedly for participating in extremist Islamic groups, but who are probably "guilty" of the "crime" of attending non-government approved mosques. The number of people jailed on such dubious grounds is estimated to be between 5,000 and 10,000, according to Uzbek and international human rights organizations. While I do not dismiss Uzbek government claims about the seriousness of the religion-based insurgency, I cannot condone imprisonment of people based on mere suspicion of religious piety. As U.S. Government officials have been arguing for years, this policy of the Uzbek Government also seems

counterproductive to its stated goal of eliminating terrorists. Casting the net too broadly and jailing innocent people will only inflame individuals never affiliated with any terrorist cell.

In addition, Uzbekistan has not only violated individual rights, but has also implemented policies that affect religious groups. For example, the Uzbek Government has consistently used its religion law to frustrate the ability of religious groups to register, placing them in a "catch-22". By inhibiting registration, the Uzbek Government can harass and imprison individuals for attending unregistered religious meetings, as well as deny property purchases and formal education opportunities. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, Uzbekistan's record on human rights, democratization and religious freedom is unacceptable.

I am not aware that Kyrgyzstan's President Askar Akaev has been invited to Washington, but I would not be too surprised to learn of an impending visit. Once the most democratic state in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan has gone the way of its neighbors, with rigged elections, media crackdowns and repression of opposition parties. At a Helsinki Commission hearing I chaired last week on democratization and human rights in Kyrgyzstan, we heard from the wife of Felix Kulov, Kyrgyzstan's leading opposition figure, who has been behind bars since January 2001. Amnesty International and many other human rights groups consider him a political prisoner, jailed because he dared to try to run against President Akaev. Almost all opposition and independent newspapers which have sought to expose high-level corruption have been sued into bankruptcy.

With respect to the proposed religion law the Kyrgyz Parliament is drafting, which would repeal the current law, significant concerns exist. If the draft law were enacted in its current emanation, it would categorize and prohibit groups based on beliefs alone, as well as allow arbitrary decisions in registering religious groups due to the vague provisions of the draft law. I encourage President Akaev to support a law with strong protections for religious freedom. Implementing the modification suggested by the OSCE Advisory Panel of Experts on Religious Freedom would ensure that the draft religion law meets Kyrgyzstan's OSCE commitments.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I had a meeting with Ambassador Meret Orazov of Turkmenistan and personally raised a number of specific human rights cases. Turkmenistan, the most repressive state in the OSCE space, resembles North Korea: while the people go hungry, megalomaniac President Saparmurat Niyazov builds himself palaces and monuments, and is the object of a Stalin-style cult of personality. No opposition of any kind is allowed, and anyone who dares to express a view counter to Niyazov is arrested. Turkmenistan is the only country in the OSCE region where places of worship have been destroyed on government orders—in November 1999, the authorities bulldozed a Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Since then, Niyazov has implemented his plans to provide a virtual bible for his benighted countrymen; apparently, he intends to become their spiritual as well as secular guide and president for life.

Turkmenistan has the worst record on religious freedom in the entire 55-nation OSCE.

The systematic abuses that occur almost weekly are an abomination to the internationally recognized values which undergird the OSCE. Recent actions by Turkmen security agents against religious groups, including harassment, torture and detention, represent a catastrophic failure by Turkmenistan to uphold its human rights commitments as a participating OSCE State. In addition, last January, Mukhamed Aimuradov, who has been in prison since 1995, and Baptist pastor Shageldy Atakov, imprisoned since 1999, were not included in an amnesty which freed many prisoners. I hope that the Government of Turkmenistan will immediately and unconditionally release them, as well as all other prisoners of conscience.

Rounding out the Central Asian countries, Tajikistan also presents human rights concerns. A report has recently emerged concerning the government's religious affairs agency in the southern Khatlon region, which borders Afghanistan. According to reliable sources, a memorandum from the religious affairs agency expressed concern about "increased activity" by Christian churches in the region, calling for them to be placed under "the most stringent control." Tajik Christians fear that this statement of intolerance could be a precursor to persecution. Keston News Service reported that law enforcement officials have already begun visiting registered churches and are trying to find formal grounds to close them down. Additionally, city authorities in the capital Dushanbe have cracked down on unregistered mosques.

Mr. Speaker, as the world focuses on Central Asia states with unprecedented energy, I wanted to bring these serious deficiencies in their commitment to human rights and democracy to the attention of my colleagues. All these countries joined the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe soon after their independence from the Soviet Union a decade ago. By becoming OSCE participating States, they agreed without reservation to comply with the Helsinki Final Act and all subsequent agreements. These documents cover a wide range of human dimension issues, including clear language on the human right of religious freedom and the right of the individual to profess and practice religion or belief. Unfortunately, as I have highlighted, these countries are failing in their commitment to promote and support human rights, and overall trends in the region are very disturbing.

The goals of fighting terrorism and steadfastly supporting human rights are not dichotomous. It is my hope that the U.S. Government will make issues of human rights and religious freedom paramount in bilateral discussions and public statements concerning the ongoing efforts against terrorism. In this context, the considerable body of OSCE commitments on democracy, human rights and the rule of law should serve as our common standard for our relations with these countries.