

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

**KAZAKHSTAN SHOULD RELEASE
OPPOSITION POLITICAL PRISONERS**

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on March 7, I chaired a hearing of the International Relations Committee's Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights on the Department of State's annual report on human rights for the year 2000. In the section on Kazakhstan, the report states that "the Government's human rights record remained poor" and that "serious problems remain".

The report discusses one specific situation that concerns me greatly. In the section on "Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile", the report points out that two security agents who had served as bodyguards to Akezhan Kazhegeldin, the exiled leader of the main opposition party and a former Prime Minister, were sentenced a year ago to 3½ years in gulag-style prison where they are vulnerable to mistreatment by both prison officials and fellow inmates. Their names are Pyotr Afanassenko and Satzhan Ibrayev.

As stated in the Department of State's report—referring to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to international and domestic observers, their arrest was politically motivated. As a member of the OSCE, Kazakhstan should reverse what the OSCE has said were convictions for political reasons and imprisonments under conditions that violate the Criminal Code of Kazakhstan.

If, as it claims, the Government of Kazakhstan is truly paying more attention to human rights, then these two political prisoners, whose very lives are in danger, should be released. In the meantime, they should be removed from the general prison population and placed in a separate facility as provided under the Criminal Corrections Code of Kazakhstan. I call upon the government of Kazakhstan to do just that.

**THE RETIREMENT OF SHELLY
LIVINGSTON**

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to make note of the retirement of long-time House International Relations Committee staff member, Shelly Livingston.

Shelly started with the Committee in 1974 and in 1980 assumed the job of Budget/Finan-

cial Administrator, in which she developed the committee's budget requests and generally oversaw all aspects of the committee's finances. No matter how busy or pressured Shelly was, often working under tight deadlines, she always found the time to respond to the innumerable questions and requests of Members and staff with competence and good humor.

There is no question that Shelly will be greatly missed by her many friends on the committee staff and throughout the Hill. On their behalf I want to thank Shelly for her professionalism, discretion, and kindness throughout her years with us.

I hope Shelly will carry our affection with her as she begins her retirement. I have no doubt she will add to her many accomplishments as she pursues her interests in the years to come.

**TRIBUTE TO THE FORT WORTH
AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and congratulate the remarkable Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity for its efforts in transforming a neglected neighborhood into an area people are proud to call home.

The Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity should be honored for building 27 modest wood-framed homes in the 45-block area last year and a total of 100 homes over the last nine years. This has provided the opportunity for renters to become first-time homebuyers who may not have the opportunity to do so otherwise. This group will also be recognized as a standout affiliate at the National Habitual Conference this April in Florida.

I would also like to acknowledge Rev. Howard Caver of the World Missionary Baptist Church. His 70-member congregation raised funding for the group and put forth manpower in building the first half-dozen houses. The partnership between the World Missionary Baptist Church and the Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity has been very successful and has provided the community a great service.

The Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity efforts and accomplishments does not stop at 100 houses. They plan to build 30 more houses this year. This is not an easy task, with finding available land and selecting families to live in the houses are among the group's toughest obstacles. However, the group expects this to be their best year yet and I have no doubt it will be.

Once again, I am very proud to see the honorable work being accomplished in my district. The Fort Worth Area Habitat for Human-

ity has made so much progress in such a short amount of time and is continuing to contribute countless charitable hours. Thank you for everything you've done for the district, your work is appreciated.

**SCRAPPING MINING RULES WOULD
BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE**

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that experience is what enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.

If that's true, then the Bush Administration may be demonstrating its experience by repeating—for at least the third time—the serious mistake of lessening the protection of the environment.

The first mistake was to break a promise that the Administration would work to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. The second was to move to weaken the protection of drinking water from the risk of arsenic. And now it looks like there will be a third mistake, this time to weaken the regulation of mining on the public lands.

Yesterday, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced that it will act to suspend recently-adopted regulations to limit adverse effects of mining on these lands, which are the property of all the American people. The announcement indicated that BLM would take public comments for 45 days, and then decide whether to replace these new regulations with prior regulations first adopted two decades ago.

I understand why the new administration might want to review these new rules—but I hope that it will not make the mistake of simply trying to turn back the clock.

I seriously doubt that there is a need for further delay in implementing rules that were years in the making and on which the mining industry and the public have had ample opportunity to be heard.

And, as an editorial in today's Denver Post noted, if the Bush Administration overturns these rules, it would be "committing the very mistake for which it eviscerated the Clinton regime: running roughshod over legitimate concerns of Western communities and putting the federal treasury at risk."

In Colorado, we understand the importance of mining—but we are also very aware of the damage that unregulated or careless mining can bring. From the 19th century's mineral rushes we have inherited a rich lore of history—and miles of poisoned streams and scarred slopes.

And the dangers remain, even though the modern mining industry is more regulated and

● 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.

much more responsible. So, the Bush Administration should proceed with caution, and avoid repeating the past mistakes of overly-lax safeguards against those dangers.

For the information of our colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I am attaching the Denver Post's editorial on this subject:

MINING MISTAKE REDUX

MAR. 22, 2001.—The Bush administration wants to toss out important rules about mining on public lands, thereby committing the very mistake for which it eviscerated the Clinton regime: running roughshod over legitimate concerns of Western communities and putting the federal treasury at risk.

A decade ago, during the reign of George H.W. Bush, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management tried to revamp environmental rules and financial accountability standards for hard-rock mines operating on public property. But the effort got sidelined while Congress debated major changes to the underlying federal statute. After the congressional push fizzled in 1997, then-U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt started a formal process to modernize the mining rules.

The old regulations were written in 1980, just before technological changes revolutionized the modern mining business. The old rules simply didn't reflect the new realities—to leave them in place would be akin to regulating jet airliners based on the concept of horse-drawn wagons.

The tough administrative process took four years, generated 550 pages of public comments and survived several congressional attempts to scuttle the effort. So while the rules took effect just before President Clinton left office, they'd been in the works for years and had been thoroughly and publicly discussed.

Despite the hyperbolic complaints leveled by partisan critics, the new regulations won't prevent mining on public lands. Instead, they just fixed glaring problems.

For decades, the BLM said it couldn't block any mining operation on public land, even if the mine would cause social or environmental harm. Near Yarnell, Ariz., for instance, a proposed mine would have opened within 500 feet of the town. People would have had to evacuate their homes during blasting, and would have suffered from mine dust, noise and other problems. Yet under the 1980 rules, BLM couldn't either stop it or do anything to help.

Moreover, the old rules left taxpayers liable for cleaning up environmental messes. The poster child for all mining fiascoes is Summitville in southwestern Colorado, where in the early 1990s poisons from a bankrupt mine devastated the Rio Grande's high altitude headwaters. But other states have suffered, too; Nevada alone has 36 bankrupt mine sites—all recent, modern operations—where taxpayers have been left footing the environmental clean up bill. By contrast, the Clinton-era rules require mines to put up adequate bonds, so if the companies go bankrupt, taxpayers aren't stuck with the tab.

Yet the Bush administration's announcement Tuesday indicates that the BLM may retreat to the old way of doing business. It's hypocritical for the Bush team to pretend it can provide more thought and public input on the matter in just a 45-day comment period than the issue received during four years of intense administrative and congressional debate.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO STATE COMMANDER
RONALD L. AMEND

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. BARCIA. I wish today, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to State Commander Ronald L. Amend, for his many years of devoted service to his country in the United States Air Force and as a leader of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Michigan.

As a life member of VFW Post 7486 in Fairgrove, Michigan, Ron has worked on behalf of veterans and their families since he first joined the organization after tours of duty with the Air Force in Vietnam and assignment at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane, Washington. His focused attention to duty and lead-by-example approach has provided greatly needed assistance to veterans throughout the state and helped to ensure that their sacrifices on and off the field of battle are honored by all citizens.

Ron has always given a full measure of his time and talents in all his undertakings. He has earned a reputation for turning difficult missions into successful endeavors wherever he has gone. As an Air Force enlisted man, as a veterans' advocate, as a father and husband, as a 29-year employee of Delphi Saginaw Steering Systems and as a long-time resident of Reese, Michigan, Ron has used his great skills to benefit others. While he has earned many awards and decorations during his military service and with the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization, Ron has always done his job without seeking glory or personal gain. His work stands as a model for all citizens now and in the future.

Indeed, Ron's colleagues in the Veterans of Foreign Wars have long been aware of his significant contributions. He has held many positions with the organization, including Post Commander and becoming an All-American District Commander.

Like many success stories, Ron's many achievements have been the product of his own hard work coupled with the loving support of his wife of 27 years, Sandi, and his children, Ross and Kari. Ron is quick to recognize that he could never have accomplished all that he has done without their help.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing gratitude to State Commander Ronald L. Amend for his outstanding service and wish him continued success in safeguarding the future and attending to the needs of fellow veterans everywhere.

CELEBRATING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2001

Mr. McINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the nation of Greece and recognize Americans of Greek descent in celebration of

March 22, 2001

Greek Independence Day. Their spirit and determination throughout history has been an inspiration to us all.

Throughout nearly four hundred years of Ottoman oppression, the Greeks maintained a unique cultural heritage. Toward the end of the Turkish occupation, this rich heritage instilled a new sense of nationalism in the Greek people. The ancient Greek ideal of freedom influenced them as well, and on March 25, 1821, they began a revolution that would eventually result in their liberty. This new independence was a victory not only for the Greeks but also for democracy.

The history and culture of the Greeks have had a profound influence on the United States. The democratic values of the ancient Greeks encouraged our own revolution and inspired the development of our government. More recently, Greece has been a dependable ally, providing its support and friendship. In addition, Greek Americans continually benefit this nation, blessing us with their strong work ethic and distinctive culture.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating Greece and its people on one hundred eighty years of independence.

VETERANS NATIONAL CEMETERY IN NORTH FLORIDA

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, Florida's veterans population is the largest in the nation second only to California.

When I introduced legislation in the 104th to designate 1,500 acres of Cecil Field for a veterans cemetery, the veteran populations of the Florida and Georgia counties was 314,180. Today, that number is 451,127. The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Georgia Department of Veterans Affairs provided this information. That represents a sizeable increase in the number of veterans living in this area. So, in just five or six years we have about 137,000 more veterans living in this region.

These statistics bear out the fact that there is a definite need for an additional cemetery to serve the northeast section of Florida and southern Georgia.

The nearest "open" VA cemetery serving the northeast Florida and southern Georgia veteran community catchment area is located in Bushnell, Florida, which is a three-hour drive from Jacksonville. An existing national cemetery in St. Augustine is full. The next closest in proximity is to be found in Marietta, Georgia just north of Atlanta.

I hope my colleagues, especially my fellow Floridians, will join me and Representative ANDER CRENSHAW in our efforts to get a national cemetery in the Jacksonville metropolitan area.