JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM ACT

HON. KEN BENTSEN
OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to better coordinate the Federal Government’s response to terrorism. Each year, hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens work and travel overseas, including a growing number of U.S. employees who work on behalf of the energy industry. Regrettably, as we have seen in recent years, U.S. citizens are increasingly at risk by terrorist organizations who hope to exact revenge for U.S. policies, or in the name of greed. Because of a confusing maze of differing of diplomatic and law enforcement concerns, the U.S. victims of such acts are often unable to attain justice, even when the whereabouts of the perpetrators are known.

While the Department of State and the Justice Department can work effectively with nations sharing an extradition treaty with the U.S., too often the lack of such treaties or diplomatic barriers have allowed terrorists to hide from justice behind layers of bureaucracy. Worse still, there is little effective coordination between State and Justice to provide updated information to victims and their families, and neither agency compiles a complete report accounting the federal government’s efforts to bring terrorists to justice.

Under this legislation, the Secretary of State would be required to designate an existing Assistant Secretary of State to monitor efforts to bring justice to U.S. victims of terrorism abroad. I believe this provision provides the Department of State with the necessary flexibility to designate the tasks required under this bill without dictating the creation of a new post, or elevating the Office of Counterterrorism with duties most appropriately performed at the level of the Assistant Secretary.

Under this bill, the Assistant Secretary would be required to work directly with the Justice Department and other applicable Federal agencies to identify and track terrorists living abroad who have killed Americans, or engaged in acts of terrorism that have directly affected American citizens. In addition, the Assistant Secretary would provide an annual report to Congress on the number of Americans kidnapped, killed or otherwise directly affected by the actions of international terrorists. Also included in the Annual Report to Congress would be a thorough detailing of what actions State and Justice are undertaking to obtain justice for U.S. victims of international terrorism, and a current list of terrorists living abroad.

One of the most important components of this legislation is the direct assistance of State and Justice in defining outdated or ineffective laws that prevent the aggressive pursuit of international terrorist by the Federal Government. To that end, as part of the Annual Report, the Assistant Secretary would work with the Justice Department to make specific recommendations to Congress on legal remedies needed to bring individual terrorists to justice in the U.S. Should enforcement problems exist, the Assistant Secretary would provide Congress with proposed changes to U.S. laws that would allow Justice and State to bring terrorists to justice in the U.S. Further, the Annual Report would work with State to detail known international terrorists, and make recommendations to Congress on best methods of pressuring host governments—such as cutting off aid, or imposing sanctions. To maintain adequate safeguards, the President would be provided with a national security interest waiver, which must be accompanied with an explanation to Congress when executed.

As Members of Congress, we have a profound duty to provide an effective response when our constituents have been the victims of international terrorists while traveling or working abroad. Through passage of this legislation, we can take important steps in coordinating the Federal Government’s response, and ensuring that we have the information necessary to address our laws or diplomatic policies to provide for the aggressive pursuit of terrorists. We can not stand back while our citizens are victimized, or let the lack of coordination between agencies dictate a denial of justice.

I urge my colleagues to better safeguard our citizens by supporting this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN TRESKY TOERGE

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA
OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the American Mothers, Inc., 2001 Maryland Mother of the Year, Susan Tresky Toerge. A resident of Potomac, MD, Mrs. Toerge is an example of a truly altruistic individual as shown through her efforts to her family and to her students.

As an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, Mrs. Toerge has impacted the lives of many children across the country educating them on the ways of our country during a point in time when many of these children are most likely frightened and uncertain of their new surroundings. Through her comforting and valuable life lessons, Mrs. Toerge helps these children overcome the challenges faced with being in a new country. In her work and home life, Mrs. Toerge demonstrates that it is possible for women to balance the role of a devoted parent with a full time job and still participate actively in her community. She is truly a role model for women everywhere.

The Maryland Mother of The Year program is sponsored by American Mothers, Inc. (AMI) which was founded on the objective to "develop and strengthen the moral and spiritual foundation of the home, the community, the nation and the world." AMI is also the official sponsor of Mother’s Day and has developed outreach programs that include parenting workshops, tutoring and literacy programs.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in saluting Susan Tresky Toerge, whose contributions to her family, state and community have made her truly deserving of the title of Maryland Mother of the Year.

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOKUM CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HON. IKE SKELTON
OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Yokum Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Malta Bend, Missouri, which will be celebrating its 120th anniversary on May 20, 2001.

Yokum Chapel Church may not have the largest membership but it has continued to serve the people of Malta Bend for the last twelve decades. Malta Bend is a small town with an African-American population of less than five percent. This church and its dedicated congregation have become an integral part of the community that it calls home.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations to the congregation of Yokum Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church for their outstanding accomplishment. It is with great pride that I honor their achievement on their one hundred and twentieth anniversary.
My sympathies go out to Norm’s wife Rhoda, their four sons Richard, Mark, Stuart and Terry, and their entire extended family.

Commending the 3M Foundation for its Preservation Efforts

HON. BILL LUTHER
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

In the House of Representatives

Mr. LUTHER, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to mention a recent action by a corporation based in my home State of Minnesota that will go a long way toward improving the quality of life of our residents.

On March 20, 2001, the 3M Foundation gave the Nature Conservancy of Minnesota a gift of $3.2 million to preserve and restore two areas of grassland in the State. Appropriately, it was also the first day of spring. This is the largest gift ever given to the state chapter. The gift will be used to purchase prairie and forest land and to promote community-based conservation efforts. This effort will have a significant and long-lasting impact on Minnesota’s wildlife and vegetation. 3M’s gift is one that will truly keep giving, offering current and future generations access to some of Minnesota’s finest natural treasures.

I commend 3M for its commitment to preserving Minnesota and it is my hope that the good work 3M does will serve as a national example to increase corporate giving and involvement in communities across the country.

The 15th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

HON. CLIFF STEARNS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM FLORIDA

In the House of Representatives

Mr. STEARNS, Mr. Speaker, I recently had the privilege to participate in an extraordinary event, the 15th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. This year it was held at Snowmass Village at Aspen, CO. Sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and others, this event provides disabled veterans the chance to engage in various outdoor and indoor sports activities.

More than 300 severely disabled veterans took to the ski slopes, tackled rock climbing, went scuba diving, or played sledge hockey. This wonderful program is much more than a vacation; it is a chance to prove that America’s veterans mean exploring service to America.

These veterans are the most noble Americans that have earned their benefits, they didn’t just happen to be here, they earned it on the battlefield, they earned it in service to America.

Serving America’s veterans means exploring new options for enhancing their quality of life. The Winter Sports Clinic in Aspen represents an innovative approach to honoring the men and women who served in uniform.

Congratulations Stanley Gwiazdowski—2001 Pal Joey Award Winner

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM WISCONSIN

In the House of Representatives

Mr. KLECZKA, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to a fellow Milwaukeean, Stanley Gwiazdowski, the St. Joseph Foundation, Inc. 2001 Pal Joey Award winner. Stan will be honored April 23rd at the annual Pal Joey dinner.

Stan is a worthy recipient of the prestigious Pal Joey Award as he has served his country, church, community and family faithfully for many years. He graduated from St. Hyacinth School and South Division High School. Drafted into the Army in 1941, Stan was chosen to attend infantry officers school at Fort Benning, Georgia. He served overseas for the first time, Stan joined the 34th Infantry Division in Africa. His later Army assignments led him to units in Italy, North Africa and France. Stan received numerous military honors, including the Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf Clusters. Upon his return to the United States, Stan transferred to the Army Reserves. He retired from the Reserves in 1980, after nearly 35 years of military service to his country.

In 1946, Stan was sworn in as a City of Milwaukee police officer. He proudly served in all of the southside Milwaukee districts and was promoted to Patrol Sergeant and Desk Sergeant positions. He retired in May of 1980.

Throughout the years, Stan also found time to serve his community. He is the current secretary of the South Side Business Club, a member of the Milwaukee Society, the St. Joseph Foundation, the secret International Mushroom Pickers Society (IMPS), the Reserve Officers Association and Retired Officers Association.

Stan married Rose Kalinowski in 1946. The couple has been blessed with seven children and 12 grandchildren. An avid sheepleader player, Stan is quick with a joke and to volunteer whenever and wherever he may be needed.