EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

May 5, 2001

REGARDING CHINA, IS IT GETTING PERSONAL?

HON. DOUG BEREUTER
OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member wants to call his colleagues attention to the article by Jim Hoagland in the Washington Post on April 4, 2001. He most assuredly is correct that it is highly unlikely that the collision between a U.S. Navy EP–3 surveillance aircraft and the high performance F–8 fighter intercepter was caused by the American aircraft. That collision, undisputedly, took place in international airspace, so no apology is owed or should be delivered by our Government. The recent harassment of our surveillance aircraft by Chinese interception in the region, as reported by Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander-in-Chief Pacific, in a recent news conference referred that these intercepters have been flying dangerously close to our aircraft and that we had filed a formal protest. Any apology is not the responsibility of the United States. Unfortunately, the immediate comments from the highest level of the Chinese Government informed the Chinese people and the world that the U.S. aircraft invaded Chinese airspace, but it didn't inform them that was the case only after the EP–3E pilot sought the closest landing base for his damaged aircraft on Hainan Island.

April 5, 2001

REGARDING CHINA, IS IT GETTING PERSONAL?

By Jim Hoagland

In the Washington Post, Apr. 4, 2001

The plane incident comes as Bush moves toward a decision later this month on Taiwan's request to buy new U.S. weapons, in- cluding four destroyers equipped with sophisticated Aegis phased radar systems. It was to
head off this sale that Jiang dispatched Dep- uty Prime Minister Qian Qichen to meet with Bush last month.

Bush refused to give Qian any assurances on a subject that Jiang has made into the make-or-break issue in the Sino-American relation.

Pride dictates this stand more than strategic calculation, since the radar system would take nearly a decade to deliver. Jiang began his term by promising his colleagues on the Politburo to bring China to the point of reabsorbing Taiwan at a time when Beijing’s choosing, according to U.S. intelligence reports, the Aegis sale would be a powerful symbol of failure in Jiang’s quest for what he said would be his most “historic accomplishment.”

Bush must make the decision on the Aegis sale on its own merits and not allow Jiang to gain leverage over the sale through the spy plane incident. There may be other weapons systems that would meet Taiwan’s immediate needs as well as the Aegis, but that decision must be made on military and national security criteria, not under the threat of Chinese backlash.

The Pentagon may have acted unwisely in sending the espionage plane so close to China at this particularly sensitive moment. But there can be no apology for arriving at the false Chinese version of events, as Beijing demands. That is not just a matter of pride. It is one of justice.

ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS FIND UNWITTING ALLIES IN CENTRAL ASIAN DICTATORSHIPS

HON. TOM LANTOS
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. LANTOS, Mr. Speaker, I am utterly appalled by the Taliban regime’s vicious campaign to stamp out freedom and religious tolerance in Afghanistan. But the Taliban’s zeal to propagate a warped version of Islam—and the support it has recruited from drug traffickers that goes along with it—is not limited to Afghanistan. Already, an Islamic movement which was designated as a terrorist group by the United States Department of State has taken root in the Fergana valley area where the borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan meet. This insurgency has the full support and assistance of the despotic Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

So far, Kazakhstan has not been directly affected by this insurgency. However, because of its oil and mineral wealth, Kazakhstan is the crown jewel of the region and is thus almost certainly the ultimate target of the Islamic extremists. Kazakhstan’s authoritarian regime has taken note of the alarming developments with its neighbors to the south and has taken steps to strengthen its defenses. That’s the good news. However, it is that President Nursultan Nazarbayev has also stepped up domestic repression.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Kazakhstan know that they inhabit a rich country, but they also know that very little of that wealth trickles down to them. They are also not blind to the questionable elections, the stifling of press freedom, and the jailing of opposition leaders that have characterized the country’s political life. They are losing hope, and thus they are vulnerable to the siren calls of the Islamic extremists. The parallel to the situation under Suharto in Indonesia is too true.

Fortunately for Indonesia, Islamic extremists were not the beneficiaries of Suharto’s ouster, but the same could not be said for Kazakhstan and some of its neighbors.

In the March 3 issue of The Economist, there is an excellent article on Kazakhstan’s political security situation. The author of the article concludes: “Government repression and mismanagement help to nourish extremism and terrorism in Central Asia. An effort to improve social and economic conditions and freedom of expression might make Kazakhstan less fertile ground for militant zealots.”

That, Mr. Speaker, is the crux of the issue. I submit the full text of this article from The Economist to be placed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, some here in Washington may be tempted to urge U.S. support for President Nazarbayev and the other authoritarian regimes in Central Asia, because they claim to be bulwarks of defense against Islamic extremism. Unfortunately, however, the Central Asian domestic political environment is not a problem, not the solution. Only a democratic political system, a free press and respect for human rights will stop Islamic extremists. And the United States must stand with those governments in Central Asia who share these values.

[From The Economist, Mar. 3, 2001]

KAZAKHSTAN—IN DEFENSE

When the Soviet Union broke up ten years ago, the leaders of Central Asia’s newly independent states felt safe from possible attacks on their region. Their main concern was to promote order, economic reform and the assertion of power for themselves and their families. The were jolted out of their complacency by bomb blasts in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in February 1999 and an attack by Islamic militants in Kirgizstan in August. Last year Islamists again attacked both countries.

Although Kazakhstan was not directly affected by these attacks, they have alerted the country to look to its own problems. President Nazarbayev’s regime has been making Kazakhstan’s armed forces capable of dealing with what he believes are the main threats to the state: terrorism as a result of religious extremism, and organized crime.

He is strengthening defenses in the south, in the mountainous border regions from which an Islamic incursion might come. He wants his soldiers to be more mobile. Sniper squads are being formed. Villagers with local knowledge of the terrain are being recruited as guides. The country’s defense budget has been more than doubled this year to $171m, or 1% of GDP. Soldiers’ pay is to go up by 30-40%.

One difficulty is that Kazakhstan’s borders were not clearly defined in Soviet times, so it is difficult to decide what is a “border incursion.” Kazakhstan has 14,000 km (8,700 miles) of borders with neighbouring states. It has agreed on its border with China, but it is still negotiating with Russia, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Bulat Sultanov, of Kazakhstan’s Institute of Strategic Studies, worries that “our border troops cannot carry out any operations because there is no border.”

Last year, Uzbek border guards entered southern Kazakhstan and claimed a stretch of land. Since then, there have been several bruhs between Uzbeks and Kazakhs. Most villagers unclear about which country they are living in. All this is a distraction from the task of making the south of Kazakhstan more secure.

Then there is Afghanistan. Although Kazakhstan is not a direct neighbour, the fiercely Islamic Taliban who control most of Afghanistan are a worry to all of Central Asia. They are believed to provide training for extremists, among them the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which wants to set up a caliphate in the Fergana valley, where Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan meet. The IMU was said to be behind the attacks in Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan in the past two years and is thought to be preparing another assault before long.

Most of Kazakhstan’s military equipment dates back to the Soviet period. Replacing, say, old helicopters used in the border areas will be expensive, but necessary. In January a Mi-8 helicopter crashed in the south, injuring the defence minister, Sat Tokpakbaev, who was aboard. Another helicopter crashed near the Chinese border two weeks ago, killing six people.

Kazakhstan will receive arms from Russia this year as part of a delivery or payment for the use of a space-rocket site at Baikonur. It is due to receive over $1m from the United States to improve border security. It is clear that the government must consider some nonmilitary measures. Government repression and mismanagement help to nourish extremism and terrorism in Central Asia.

An effort to improve social and economic conditions and freedom of expression might make Kazakhstan less fertile ground for militant zealots.

TESTIMONY OF DR. IRVING SMOKLER
HON. LYNN N. RIVERS
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Ms. RIVERS, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues, the testimony of Dr. Irving Smokler, presented to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. Dr. Smokler is the president of the NephCure Foundation and testified regarding the need for increased funding for research and raising professional and public awareness on glomerular injury through the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

TESTIMONY REGARDING FISCAL YEAR 2002 FUNDING FOR NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DIABETES AND DIGESTIVE AND KIDNEY DISEASES

Presented by Irving Smokler, Ph.D., President of the NephCure Foundation, Accompanied by Brad Stewart to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies—March 29, 2001—3:00 AM

SUMMARY OF FY 2002 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue the effort to double funding for the National Institutes of Health by providing an increase of 16.5%, to $23.7 billion for FY02. Increase funding for the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) by 16.5% to $1,518,443,525 for FY02.