

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 15, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

Pursuant to Section 214(a) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15344, I am pleased to reappoint Mr. Thomas A. Fuentes of Lake Forest, California to the Election Assistance Commission Board of Advisors.

Mr. Fuentes has expressed interest in serving in this capacity and I am pleased to fulfill his request.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Republican Leader.

FREE EGYPTIAN BLOGGER KAREEM AMER

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon Egypt to demonstrate it is a force for tolerance in the Arab world by releasing Kareem Amer from prison.

While other prisoners of conscience languish in Egyptian jails, the most troubling case is that of a young human rights blogger, Abdel Kareem Nabil Soliman. Kareem Amer, as he is known on the blogosphere, was sentenced to 4 years in prison in February 2007 solely for what he wrote on his blog—condemning Islamic extremism and the treatment of women.

Tomorrow, Egypt celebrates Revolution Day, a holiday during which the Egyptian President customarily releases prisoners. I strongly urge President Mubarak to release Kareem Amer, who now has served 17 months of his sentence.

Egypt is one of the largest recipients of U.S. taxpayer aid, and we should ensure that the partners of ours of this magnitude are also dedicated to the freedom of expression. The release of Kareem Amer, the first blogger arrested in the Arab world simply for what he wrote on his blog, would demonstrate Egypt's commitment to Internet freedom and to human rights.

ENERGY PRICES

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week, President Bush removed the executive ban on offshore drilling. After the announcement was made, crude oil futures plunged. Prices fell \$6.44 in the biggest one-day drop since the Gulf War. The next day, prices dropped another \$4.50 to \$134. This is not a coincidence.

The Democratic majority says it will take years to produce oil from offshore drilling and that it won't affect energy prices.

If Congress lifts the ban on offshore drilling, we will continue to see oil prices fall. Energy traders do take government policies into account. Deciding to develop our American energy resources can immediately lower the cost per barrel of oil and can provide relief at the gas pump.

Democratic Party leaders should heed the will of the American people and should schedule a vote to increase our American energy supply.

THE 34TH COMMEMORATION OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

(Mr. ROYCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, Sunday, July the 20th marked the 34th commemoration of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. That invasion claimed the lives of 5,000 Greek Cypriots while an additional 200,000 were forced from their homes. Today, nearly 36,000 Turkish soldiers, 1 soldier for every 2 Turkish Cypriots, are embedded in Cyprus, occupying 35 percent of the island. It is one of the most militarized areas in the world.

The Turkish and Greek Cypriots, themselves, live in harmony, making the occupation all the more unacceptable and unnecessary. There have been no recent incidents of violence between the two communities. In a show of friendship, Ledra Street, which connects Greek and Cypriot Cyprus, was recently opened for the first time since 1964. Thirteen million Greek and Turkish Cypriots have crossed the border, each time without incident.

In the House, House Resolution 620, which I cosponsored, cites these crossings as evidence of the goodwill between the two communities, and it refutes the Turkish claim that a military presence is necessary.

As we remember the invasion to split Cyprus in two, it is important to note that there are concrete efforts underway by the heads of the communities to reunify.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

PASSING ALONG CONCERNS OF HIGH FUEL PRICES FROM ARKANSAS' THIRD DISTRICT RESIDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, I spent an afternoon at JV Manufacturing in Springdale, Arkansas, listening to hardworking Arkansans talk about how the high price of gas is affecting their families. I promised them that I would bring their stories back to Washington and that I would put pressure on Congress to enact a commonsense energy policy that would help lower what they're forced to pay at the pump.

Arkansans are paying an average of \$4 per gallon, and many families in my district are having a hard time just making ends meet at all as all of their disposable income is going straight into the gas tank. Now is the time for this Congress to act. Let me mention a couple of stories that I heard, and then let me urge a few actions that we could take that would have immediate relief.

I met a single mom who is working full time at a good-paying job, but she is still having trouble meeting the needs of her kids and filling up the gas tank.

I met a family who bought a Jeep, who planned to use it for recreation, but now they can barely afford the expense of driving back and forth from work.

One woman told me about her husband, who is an independent owner and operator of a diesel truck, who has already spent as much on diesel in the first half of 2008 as he had spent all last year.

So what should Congress do? First, we need to increase the production of American energy through more energy exploration and production here at home. Congress needs to open up a small sliver of ANWR in Alaska and in the Outer Continental Shelf for energy exploration. Congress needs to encourage the construction of new refineries and of more nuclear power plants. They need to promote efficiency and new sources of American renewable energy.

Each of these would reduce pain at the pump. It's very important to understand that gas prices and other types of energy prices are related to each other. For example, if we want to start using more plug-in hybrids, we're going to have to increase our electricity production to charge up these electric cars. That's why it's so important to support nuclear, clean coal and alternative energy sources.

Also, if this Congress will take these steps, it will send an immediate signal to speculators and to other investors that we are serious about increasing production, and costs will come down in the short term as well as in the long term. We saw this when the President lifted the executive order banning offshore drilling.

Congress has waited too long to help provide relief to Arkansans and to the rest of the American people. We must act now and pass sensible legislation so that residents of the Third District of

Arkansas don't have to choose between keeping gas in their cars and meeting the needs of their families.

THE 34TH COMMEMORATION OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SPACE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, 34 years ago, on July 20, 1974, Turkish troops illegally invaded Cyprus in violation of international law. Thirty-four years have passed since 200,000 Greek Cypriots were expelled from their homes and 5,000 Greek Cypriots were murdered. More than 1,400 still remain missing today. Thirty-four years later, Turkish troops continue to occupy nearly 37 percent of Cypriot territory. There are approximately 43,000 Turkish troops on Cyprus. That's about one Turkish soldier for every two Turkish Cypriots.

The situation remains untenable after 34 years with Greek Cypriots whose homes were taken—the homes where they were raised, where their children were raised, where their parents and grandparents were raised, and where they were never compensated for these homes.

The desecration of the Greek Orthodox churches remains ongoing, many now serving as bars, nightclubs, casinos or hotels. Icons, artifacts and frescoes have been destroyed, looted, vandalized, and sold illegally. Here we are 34 years later, and the situation remains, once again, untenable.

In spite of all of this, the Greek Cypriots have continued to promote peace for 34 years. The Cypriot President is committed to working toward a bicomunal and bizonal federation with a single sovereignty citizenship and international standing.

Indeed, Turkish Cypriots have shown a like commitment. Turkey, however, must show a commitment to this same solution. At a time of increased global destabilization, it is in the best interest of the international community to see that this problem of Cyprus, the injustice in Cyprus, is rectified.

A resolution of this ongoing injustice would, indeed, constitute a reflection of respect for human rights, of the rule of law, of peace and prosperity, of all of these things, which are values that we in this country cherish.

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Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of this injustice and the need to rectify the same, and I urge the Turkish people to do the same. It is my hope that the need to recognize the anniversary of the invasion, which we do yet again for the 34th time, is someday replaced with a cause to recognize the agreement and reunification of Cyprus.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON S. 294, PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees on S. 294:

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of the Senate bill and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Messrs. CUMMINGS, CAPUANO, BISHOP of New York, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Messrs. LIPINSKI, BRALEY of Iowa, ARCURI, MICA, PETRI, LATOURETTE, BROWN of South Carolina, SHUSTER, MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, and WESTMORELAND.

From the Committee on Science and Technology, for consideration of secs. 105 and 305 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. GORDON of Tennessee, WU, and GINGREY.

There was no objection.

THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF INVASION OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise not only as a Member of this esteemed body, but more importantly, as a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and also as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues. I stand before you today to recall a somber anniversary that has pained the Cypriot and Hellenic communities for the past 34 years.

Mr. Speaker, even though the tragic events of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus took place as long ago as July 20, 1974, believe it or not, the suffering of the victims has not subsided. This anniversary is a time for America to respectfully remember the brutal Turkish military invasion of Cyprus, to mourn those who lost their lives, and to condemn the continued occupation. Five thousand Cypriots were killed in 1974, and more than 1,400 Greek Cypriots, including four Americans of Cypriot descent, still remain missing.

Since the invasion, Turkey has established a heavily armed military occupation that continues to control nearly 40 percent of the island. Forced expulsions of Greek Cypriots on the occupied land have left nearly 200,000 people displaced. These Cypriots were kicked out of their homes, making them refugees in their own country. Those properties have been unlawfully distributed and are currently being used by the tens of thousands of illegal settlers from Turkey. To this day, Greek Cypriots are prevented by Turkey from returning to their homes and properties.

Another tragic result of this 34-year occupation is the division among Greek

and Turkish Cypriots, who have been forcibly separated along ethnic lines. This unnatural division of the island Nation is a crime against society and the people of Cyprus that can only be resolved by ending this occupation.

Mr. Speaker, 34 years is just too long. On the occasion of this anniversary, we need to take a long, hard look at our own commitment toward helping Cyprus reach a lasting and enduring peace, free from occupation, division, and oppression.

Last year, the U.S. House had the wisdom and foresight to unanimously pass H. Res. 405, a measure I introduced, which expressed strong support from this body for the implementation of the July 8 agreement. This year, a new President was elected in Cyprus. President Demitris Christofias has followed through on his promise to make the solution of the Cyprus problem his top priority and principal concern. The day of his election, he extended a hand of friendship to the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Talat, and called on him to meet face-to-face to begin implementing the July 8 agreement.

The Republic of Cyprus has also worked alongside its European neighbors to bring about a stronger integration of Turkish and Greek Cypriot interests for the good of the island. This has included a partial lifting on restrictions of movement across the cease-fire line that continues to forcibly divide Cyprus. As a result, since 2003, more than 13 million Greek and Turkish Cypriots have crossed without incident.

Additionally, the per capita income of Turkish Cypriots has nearly tripled in the last 3 years because of an aggressive integration policy by the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that because of this continued integration between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, and the economic and political successes that the Republic of Cyprus so readily wants to share with its neighbors, it is possible to bring closure to this 34-year occupation.

Cyprus has long been a strong and faithful ally of the United States. It continues to work with us in the global war on terrorism and has supported our efforts in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Aside from providing over-flight rights and port access, the Government of Cyprus has joined only a handful of Nations who have acted on their commitment to cancel Iraq's outstanding debt.

Mr. Speaker, 34 years is long enough. It is not impossible to conceive one day having a Cyprus that is unified under a bizonal, bicomunal federation with a single sovereignty, single international personality, and single citizenship with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Cypriots.

We, Americans, as friends of the Cypriot people, owe it to them to do everything in our power to support peace and an end to this illegal occupation.