

and the people of the Virgin Islands, I invite you, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, and my fellow Americans to visit this treasure in the American paradise, and join us in celebrating the bicentennial of this national treasure.

WESTERN PAPERS DECRY ATTACKS ON RESOURCE AGENTS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 1995

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, we are all familiar with the rhetoric of the special interests who benefit from public resources—mining companies, subsidized irrigators, timber companies, coal companies. We hear the same inflated rhetoric from the leaders of the media, county rights, property rights, and Western movements:

The government is threatening our property; the government is controlling our land; the government is conspiring to take away our liberties.

And, moreover, we are told that these allegedly anti-Western actions are promoted by Eastern elites who just don't understand the Western way of life.

The fact is that vigorous defense of our public resource and environmental protection laws is spread throughout the West and the Southwest just as it is through every other region of the country. People in Utah and Montana, California and Oregon, Idaho and Arizona are just as outraged by our giving away of billions of dollars to international mining corporations as people in New York and Florida. They are just as angered by the billions we waste on subsidized forest practices or irrigation subsidies.

The so-called Western voices we hear, in many cases, are the voices of anti-government extremists and the free-enterprise spouting but publicly subsidized corporations that are conspiring to destroy sound management practices.

No aspect of the extremist assault on the environment is more outrageous than the growing threats, intimidations and assaults on law enforcement officials who defend public resources and the people who use them. This House just voted to cut law enforcement funds for the Bureau of Land Management, on whose lands more than 12,000 crimes occurred last year. We have been unable to secure formal hearings in the Judiciary and Resources Committees on the issues of militias and attacks on Federal law enforcement officials. So, the attacks go on, the threats go on, and the Republican leadership of the Congress turns a deaf ear—or worse—to this scandalous behavior.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that people in the West do not share the extremist analysis or the extremist agenda. As usual, it is a tiny fraction of people who, for whatever misguided reason, have decided that the government is the enemy. Large numbers of Western Members of the House have joined us in passing legislation to protect the environment and to reform resource policy as recently as last year.

The reason is that westerners don't like to see their lands desecrated or their resources exploited any more than southerners or east-

erners. If you're a taxpayer living in Boise or Billings, or Salt Lake, or Seattle, you're every bit as outraged as the hundreds of millions of dollars with which we subsidize grazers, or irrigators, or mining companies. People are moving to these Western areas because they treasure the land and want it preserved, not opened up, blown up and peeled back in the relentless search for private profit.

I want to insert into the RECORD a recent editorial from the Seattle Times-Intelligencer, a distinguished Western newspaper, that speaks eloquently to these issues. I am also including an editorial from the San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle that speaks to the obsession of the Republican leadership with the Waco shootout but its seeming indifference to the threats to public officials.

[From the Seattle Post Intelligencer]

RIISING TO THE DEFENSE OF FEDERAL LAND AGENTS

A member of Congress finally has stood up to defend federal land managers in the West who have been under attack from extremists who imagine that they are above the law.

Rep. George Miller, D-Calif. has called for Congress to examine what can be done about the rising tide of violence against government officials who are discharging their legal duties. He rightly chastised Western congressional colleagues who carelessly "legitimize" their paranoid fringe constituencies.

Violence toward and intimidation of federal officials is simply unacceptable, and no member of Congress should be in the business of appearing to indulge it.

Officials of the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service all report instances of violent acts and threats against their employees. The BLM has been bombed in Nevada, and guns have been drawn on national park rangers and fish and wildlife agents, Miller said.

Miller said the Western lawmakers most guilty of providing a small group of extremists "the political space to continue the attacks" are Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, who recently advocated taking guns away from law officers on federal lands; Rep. Helen Chenoweth, R-Idaho, for stating that citizens have good reason "to be afraid of their government," and Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, R-Nev., who suggested that federal officials can avoid having guns drawn on them by "exhibiting sensitivity."

All of those lawmakers ought to know better. They deserve condemnation, not to mention a generous dose of ridicule, for their irresponsible statements.

Miller also found fault with House Speaker Newt Gingrich's fulsome remark that "The thing Easterners ought to understand . . . is that there is across the West a genuine sense of fear of the federal government. This is not an extremist position in much of the West."

We beg to differ, Mr. Speaker. If there is any genuine sense of fear across the West, it's a fear of lawless lunatics, not of the duly sworn agents of representative democracy.

"Will the speaker next rise with words of sympathy for the 'genuine fear' felt by the Bloods and the Crips, by the Aryan Nation and by the Ku Klux Klan?" Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo., asked in a floor speech.

It is indeed "irrational," as Miller contends, to suggest that the federal government should retreat from its duties because of the paranoid delusions of a few frustrated citizens who fantasize that fish and wildlife agents are the vanguard of a tyrannical New World Order.

[From the San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle, July 16, 1995]

WHACKED OUT ON WACO—THE ONLY CONSPIRACY HOUSE REPUBLICANS WILL FIND IN HEARINGS ON THE BRANCH DAVIDIAN SIEGE IS THEIR OWN: TO GET THE PRESIDENT

If you believe this week's hearings into the 1993 Waco disaster will ferret out the truth, you might as well join the National Rifle Association, become a survivalist and move to Montana.

The hearings, called by House Republicans to investigate the siege of the Branch Davidian compound and its conclusion by holocaust, aren't about law enforcement. They're about politics.

They seek to embarrass President Clinton and butter up those increasingly visible radical right wingers who believe in the black helicopters and buy into the theory that maintenance marks on Indiana road signs are really secret codes for invading United Nations troops.

It's really too bad the Rev. Jim Jones isn't around to tell the House "probers" how he was harassed by government agents and forced to dispense poisoned Flavor-Aid to more than 900 of his followers in the Guyanese jungle. Just like David Koresh, Jones oozed phony charisma, stockpiled weapons and kept his enslaved and soon-to-be-slaughtered followers, including children, in brainwashed thrall.

The truth about Jonestown is that Jim Jones was a mass murderer.

The truth about Waco is that Koresh was a mass murderer. He gave the orders to start shooting when federal agents showed up in February 1993, resulting in a bloodbath. And he gave the orders to incinerate four score of his followers 51 days later when agents started to knock down the walls of his hypocrisy.

The feds made serious mistakes—but they were acting at all times to save lives, not snuff them out. After the final raid, Attorney General Janet Reno became a folk hero because she shouldered the blame. But she relied on bad information: There was no evidence children were being abused inside the compound. A September 1993 Treasury Department report—thicker than the San Francisco telephone white pages—details the bad decisions. Heads rolled, and policies changed.

Preoccupied with elections and its "Contract With America," the GOP couldn't get to oversight until now. The grotesque irony is that these congressional hearings take place when the terror of the Oklahoma City bombing is still in people's bones. How can House Republicans skip over the murder of 168 innocent Americans in order to dredge up ghosts of Waco?

Politics conquers all.

Incidentally, David Koresh is not the optimal Republican poster boy.

The hearings we need would inquire into real enemies: the paramilitary groups of disillusioned, disaffected souls who pose a threat to American values and lives. The Oklahoma City bombers—perhaps acting to "avenge" Waco—demonstrated the danger. Law-abiding citizens are, and ought to be, scared stiff of these gunslinging conspiracy nuts.

In a sense, the Waco hearings provide cover for a new-found right to hate government. The motto becomes: "Don't tread on me—or I'll blow you up." Great stuff to stamp with a congressional seal.

Congress isn't famous for consistency. Still for budget whackers, this bunch sure can spend the bucks on show hearings.

Instead of this ox goring—if we must indulge the inbred cousins of James Watt who wind up in Congress—let's throw a big, old-fashioned ox roast. Guests can eat the beast, chug Coors beer, listen to Pat Boone, snip a

little barbed wire, shoot targets in the head and maybe do a little strip mining. Everybody goes home fat and happy instead of hot to put a bullet through the first federal agent they run across.

Consider it Wise Use.

**BANNING FLAG BURNING;
"EXTINGUISHING LIBERTY"**

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 1995

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, unaccustomed as I am to quoting Cal Thomas, I would like to share his column on amending the U.S. Constitution to allow prohibitions on burning the American flag with my colleagues. The article, from the May 6 issue of *World magazine*, follows:

EXTINGUISHING LIBERTY

Watching the Fourth of July festivities in Washington (and around the country on television) showed the depth of love most Americans have for this country. That is why a constitutional amendment to ban the burning of the American flag is so silly, stupid and unnecessary.

No one forced the millions of people waving flags—who respect and honor the republic for which it stands—to love America. They exhibited a spontaneity no law can impose. When the House last month passed a constitutional amendment that would, should the Senate and states concur, outlaw flag burning, it continued a game politicians have been playing with public school prayer. The rules of the game are that the social problems confronting America can be fixed from the top—a kind of "trickle-down" morality.

Politicians love this because they have done much to promote such a view, which advances their careers and preserves their jobs. Many others hold this belief because it absolves them of responsibility for fixing what is wrong with their own priorities and transfers it to government. And when government increasingly reveals its inability to repair social damage, we blame not ourselves but government and politicians, deepening the cynicism against institutions and those who work in them.

There hasn't been a lot of flag burning since the Vietnam War. Sen. Howell Heflin (D-Ala.) says that's why now, with the heat of passion reduced, is the best time to ban it.

But any time is a bad time for such a ban. First, what constitutes a "flag"? Is it only the cloth that waves from a flagpole or can it be one that is stapled to a wooden stick? Is the reproduction of the Stars and Stripes on a napkin, patch, or coffee cup considered a flag? Some flags are made in Taiwan or in other nations. Would they count as American flags? I saw a chair upholstered in a flag. If the chair was thrown on a bonfire during a protest rally, would that violate the proposed constitutional amendment? And why is burning being singled out for prohibition? What about stomping, spitting or pouring paint on the flag?

Those who would ban flag burning have placed the American flag in a category and context that is idolatrous. Idolatry is defined as "the worship of a physical object as a god; immoderate attachment or devotion to something." While we don't worship or devote ourselves to the flag as we might be a religious symbol or being, the attachment some would force on the rest of us comes pretty close to resembling that definition.

The Fourth of July overwhelms us all with the number of displayed and waved American flags. As with speech, the best way to overcome the ugly variety is with more and more beautiful speech, along with a common rejection of the ugly speaker and his words. When a flag is burned, it is the protester, not the flag, who is demeaned. He reveals his base ingratitude when he burns a symbol of a nation great enough even to allow him to indulge in moronic behavior.

Banning flag burning will increase the probability flags will be burned. Allowing it removes the political stinger.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN RUSSIA—AN ISSUE OF HIGHEST PRIORITY

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 1995

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call the attention of my colleagues to an incident that took place in Russia in the last few days—an incident that raises serious questions about freedom of the press and also about the future of democracy in Russia. NTV, the only major independent television network in Russia, broadcasts a political satire program in which puppets are easily recognizable caricatures of leading Russian political figures. The program satirizes public figures. The program—called "Kukly" ("Puppets")—is similar to programs that are broadcast in Britain, France, Hungary, and a number of other countries.

After a recent show, however, the Russian Prosecutor General brought criminal charges against the producers of the show on the grounds that the country's leading public figures were victims of "a conscious and public humiliation of their honor and dignity, expressed in an indecent way." If that standard were observed in the United States, David Letterman, Jay Leno, a host of radio talk show hosts, and any other number of television and movie producers would have been slapped into prison long ago. In a democracy, one of the consequences of a free press and freedom of expression is that public figures are subject to public scrutiny by both responsible and irresponsible media. It is not pleasant to be inaccurately or derisively treated by the media, but I dare say that most of my colleagues have some experience in this regard.

The action of the Prosecutor General in Moscow, however, raises the most serious and the most fundamental questions about democracy in Russia and about future developments there. Initiating criminal proceedings against the producers of a political satire puppet program may be the source of witty headlines in the press—the *Washington Post* headlined its story yesterday "Satirists Skewer Russian 'Puppet' Government"—but the matter is extremely serious.

The prosecution of these criminal charges, however, is suspect on its face. Why is the Prosecutor General focusing his attention on supposedly criminal actions on a political satire television program? There are far more serious crimes—real crimes—which do not seem to attract the attention of the prosecutor. The suspicious murder of the popular Russian television journalist Vladimir Listeyev of Ostankino TV remains unsolved after nearly a year. Furthermore, the prosecutor and law enforcement

officials still has not found the murderers of journalist Dmitri Kholodov of Komsomolskaya Pravda, who was killed by a package bomb while he was in the final stages of an investigation into corruption in the military. There are real issues of unsolved crimes—real crimes—which the Prosecutor General could deal with. Why undertake proceedings against the producers of a television program?

The answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is that this criminal proceeding is only a small part of a much larger effort to intimidate the media and to bring the independent television and other media into line, particularly since parliamentary elections in Russia are scheduled for this December and Presidential elections are to follow 6 months later. The independent television station NTV, which is being charged for its irreverent puppet-treatment of the Russian leaders, has also been particularly hard-hitting in its coverage of the government's military actions in Chechnya. The station recently broadcast an interview with the leader of the group of Chechen guerrillas who held more than a thousand Russians hostage in southern Russia last month. Criminal charges are also pending against NTV for broadcasting that interview.

The effort of government agencies to intimidate the media in Russia is a serious challenge to efforts to institutionalize democracy. Freedom of the press and the right of free expression are the most fundamental of the rights of any democratic society. Freedom of speech is absolutely essential if democracy is to exist, and without it, true democracy cannot exist. Russia does not have a tradition of an independent and free and open media; therefore, this effort at intimidation is intended as a warning to journalists throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we in the Congress of the United States affirm our concern and interest in freedom of expression and an unfettered independent media in Russia. With our distinguished colleague, the chairman of the International Relations Committee, Congressman BEN GILMAN of New York, I am today introducing legislation that expresses the strong concern of the Congress that freedom of expression and freedom of the press be protected and guaranteed in Russia.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the Congress to join us in cosponsoring this important affirmation of our concern for freedom of expression in Russia. Our Nation has a strong interest in the positive and democratic development of Russia, and freedom of the press is essential to that process. There should be no question about our commitment to that vital principle.

The text of our resolution is as follows:

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 84

A resolution expressing the sense of the Congress concerning freedom of the press in Russia.

Whereas the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union has brought new and unique opportunities for democratic political change and market-oriented economic reform in Russia;

Whereas the commitment to the spirit of these democratic reforms and to the full implementation of these reforms has been tentative and inconclusive thus far;

Whereas one of the fundamental tenets of democracy and one of the most important means of assuring the continuation of democratic government is an independent and free press, which can exist only in an environment that is free of state control of the