

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHERNOBYL REACTOR EXPLOSION

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 1996

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, at 1:23 a.m. on April 26, 1986, a test conducted on reactor No. 4 at the nuclear facility at Chernobyl, Ukraine resulted in catastrophe. An explosion in the reactor core destroyed a large part of the reactor building. Since the entire facility had been built without any containment dome, there was no way for the reactor personnel to prevent the release into the atmosphere—and into the wind—of huge amounts of radioactive materials. The total amount of radiation released in the course of this terrible incident is estimated by many to exceed that released by the atomic bomb blast at Hiroshima, Japan in 1945.

For 2 weeks after the explosion, reactor personnel and firefighters fought to extinguish the fire, which was fed by the exposure of the reactor core to the atmosphere. Official records from the former Soviet Communist regime regarding the Chernobyl explosion state that 31 individuals, mostly plant personnel and firefighters, died during or immediately after the explosion. It is very likely, however, that a greater number died at that point, with the Soviet regime choosing to cover up the extent of the damage and loss of life caused by the explosion.

Mr. Speaker, I must take a moment to mention that a group of high school students from my district were visiting Belarus at the time of the Chernobyl explosion. As the radiation from Chernobyl spread north toward Belarus, we were all concerned for the safety of these young people and, after they cut short their trip and returned to the United States, I asked the Brookhaven Laboratories to check to ensure that they had not been exposed to radiation. In fact they had been exposed, but the radiation was limited to their shoes.

Since that time, however, an effort has been mounted by those students from Ramapo High School and their faculty instructor, Mr. Don Cairns, to collect and distribute medical and other supplies for the children who are victims of radiation exposure in Belarus. To date, the Ramapo Children of Chernobyl Fund has collected over \$12 million worth of medicines and other materials for those innocent young victims. In June 1994, President Clinton commended this group and those young American students for all they had done and were doing to help these children in Belarus. Today, I want to again voice my commendation for their continuing good work.

Mr. Speaker, we are now approaching the 10th anniversary of this catastrophe, and I would like to provide my colleagues with some estimates of the damage caused over the last 10 years in the countries of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia by the catastrophe of April 26, 1986:

Up to 125,000 individuals may have died due to radiation exposure, including 6,000 people who participated in postexplosion, cleanup activities;

Millions of residents of the countries of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia live on lands contaminated by radiation;

Thyroid cancers have risen dramatically among children of the surrounding region;

Radiation continues to work its way into the food chain, and the danger of the further spread of radiation from the site of the destroyed reactor is growing—even now, the concrete sarcophagus surrounding the destroyed reactor is believed to be in danger of collapse.

Meanwhile, energy-starved Ukraine continues to operate the remaining three reactors, dependent on their electrical output to make it through the difficult time of economic transformation through which that country is now going. The danger of Chernobyl continues, however. As recently as November of last year, a serious radiation leak occurred when a nuclear fuel rod split open during refueling of reactor No. 1.

Mr. Speaker, this is a grave situation, and one that requires the world's attention and concern. On April 8–9 of this year, the Children of Chernobyl Fund, Columbia University's Harriman Institute, and Yale University's Center for Russian and East European Studies, will cohost a 2-day conference on the long-term impact of the Chernobyl explosion.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend to my colleagues' attention an article announcing this very important conference, printed in the March 17 Ukrainian Weekly, and I include the article in my statement at this point.

[From the Ukrainian Weekly, Mar. 17, 1996]

CHERNOBYL CONFERENCE SLATED FOR COLUMBIA AND YALE

NEW YORK.—On April 8–9, the Harriman Institute at Columbia University and the Center for Russian and East European Studies at Yale will co-host a two-day conference to examine the long-term impact of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and to address the broad spectrum of environmental and medical crises that continue to plague Ukraine, Belarus and neighboring countries.

The conference will bring together some of the leading international experts on Chernobyl's aftermath. Among these will be Prof. David Marples of the University of Alberta, Dr. Alexander Sich of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Dr. Murray Feshbach, author of the groundbreaking treatise titled "Ecocide in the USSR."

The opening panel will also include Alla Yaroshinska, the award-winning journalist who uncovered secret internal memos from the Soviet Politburo which proved that the government covered up the widespread incidence of acute radiation sickness among thousands of Chernobyl victims. The "secret protocols" were published in Izvestiya and provided conclusive evidence that then President Mikhail Gorbachev was fully informed of the scope of the accident and that he deliberately tried to mislead the public and the Western news media about the severity of the threat to public health and safety.

The first day of the conference, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., will be held at the Luce Center for International Studies at 32 Hillhouse Ave., on the Yale Campus in New Haven, Conn.

On April 9 the conference will reconvene at 9 a.m. at Altschul Auditorium at the School for International and Public Affairs, 420 W. 118th St. (ground floor) at Columbia University.

"We hope that this will be much more than a retrospective on the events of 1986," said Prof. Mark Von Hagen, director of the Harriman Institute and a leading scholar on Ukrainian affairs. "The legacy of Chernobyl continues, and this conference is planned as a constructive step in the quest for solutions to the many problems still affecting the contaminated regions."

Titled "Chornobyl Challenge '96" the conference is part of the nationwide campaign being mobilized under the same name to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Chornobyl accident.

"Chornobyl is one of the most daunting challenges confronting the scientific community and global policy-makers," said Alex Kuzma, coordinator of the Chornobyl Challenge '96 coalition and director of development for the Children of Chornobyl Foundation.

"Beyond the immediate need for medical relief, the nations of Ukraine and Belarus are facing the massive task of cleaning up thousands of acres of contaminated land and irradiated equipment left over from the 1986 emergency. They also need to reduce their dependency on Soviet-built reactors, which everyone agrees are dangerously substandard, and to develop benign energy alternatives," he added.

A special workshop on Ukraine's energy policy will explore the potential for greater energy efficiency in the industrial sector, biomass and other promising technologies.

"We hope to offer useful insights and perspectives based on the successes of Western environmental programs, and the initiatives of other developing nations," said Susan Holmes, program director for the conference at Columbia University. "We also need to remain sensitive to the unique circumstances surrounding Chornobyl and the unprecedented nature of this accident."

Numerous government officials from Ukraine and the United States are also scheduled to address the conference. These include U.S. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Both have been outspoken advocates of greater U.S. assistance to the Chornobyl region.

Also featured will be Deputy Volodymyr Yavorivsky, a prominent member of the Ukrainian Parliament and a former commissioner for Chornobyl relief efforts, and Vice-Prime Minister Vasyl Durdynets, chairman of humanitarian affairs in the Ukrainian government's Cabinet of Ministers.

Principal funding for the conference has been provided by Columbia University with a supporting grant from the Shevchenko Scientific Society. The cost of admission to the conference will be \$35 per person for both days, or \$20 per day. Admission will be free for students and faculty with valid Columbia or Yale University identification.

For more information, contact Susan Holmes at the Harriman Institute, (212) 854-

• 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.

8487; Ellis Mishulovich at the Yale Center for East European Studies, (203) 432-3423, or the Children of Chernobyl Foundation, (201) 376-5140.

IN HONOR OF THE CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION COUNCIL OF
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 1996

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on April 18, 1996, the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County, Inc. [CAPC] will be celebrating its 20th year of providing critical services to children and families in my congressional district. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate CAPC and its staff and volunteers for their dedication, perseverance and significant contribution to the community. They truly have helped to make a difference in the lives of children and their families.

Founded in 1976 as part of an umbrella organization and incorporated in 1984 as an independent nonprofit corporation, the council serves as the county's clearinghouse for child abuse prevention information and referral, public education, and advocacy services.

The Council's message to "Stop Child Abuse" reaches over 70,000 county residents each year. As the only agency in Contra Costa County solely dedicated to child abuse prevention, the council provides a number of programs and services designed to educate, inform, and involve the general public in preventing child abuse. Also, by connecting victims, abusers and those at-risk for abuse with much-needed services, the council serves a critical function in stopping the vicious cycle of child abuse in our society at large.

The council recruits, trains and maintains an active roster of over 30 volunteers who participate in our Partnership for Prevention Program. This program is designed to provide educational presentations to colleges, schools, daycare and Headstart centers, shelters, community groups, professionals serving children, service clubs, churches, community service agencies, firefighters, and corporate employees. Its trained volunteers provide over 100 presentations throughout the county to over 5,000 people annually.

The council coordinates public and private agencies involved in the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse in Contra Costa County. In 1982, by order of the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, CAPC was designated as the coordinating agency of the Interagency Child Abuse Systems Review Committee, an ongoing committee which identifies problems in the county's service delivery system and makes recommendations to the board of supervisors. In 1988, the council was also named as the coordinating agency for the Contra Costa County Child Death Review Multidisciplinary Team, which reviews deaths of children under the age of 18 years.

In 1992, the Council established the county-wide Multidisciplinary Interview Advisory Committee for the purpose of providing planning for a future Multidisciplinary Interview Center in Contra Costa County. This center would provide a one-stop interviewing for child sexual

abuse victims, and streamline investigation, and prosecution processes for child sexual abuse cases.

In 1982, the CAPC special needs fund was established—with assistance from the Oakland Tribune—to provide small cash grants to help meet the special needs of families in which children may be in jeopardy and/or need. Each year the council disburses approximately 15 grants to families in Contra Costa County.

In 1985, an interagency task force was convened by the council to develop a comprehensive resources directory of primary prevention and support services available to residents of Contra Costa County. The directory, "Surviving Parenthood," is now in its 5th edition and has been established as the leading resource for families in crisis.

More recently, CAPC developed a "Kids: Instruction for Care" campaign which includes the distribution of T-shirts and bookmarks designed to highlight basic parenting skills. The bookmarks are distributed in daycare facilities, schools, and libraries throughout the county, and the T-shirts and now in more than 25 States and 11 countries.

Next month, the council will celebrate its 20th anniversary, and I am pleased to see that the council has as much energy today as when it first began. The council is expanding its programs to meet the growing needs of the county. This year the child abuse prevention council will be opening a second office in Richmond, CA, to provide more accessible services to families and children in west Contra Costa County.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I salute CAPC on its 20th anniversary and hope that they not only continue their important efforts but can serve as a model for other communities in their efforts to combat the scourge of child abuse.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 1996

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 28, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote No. 106. I would have voted "no" on rollcall No. 106, final passage of H.R. 3103, the Health Coverage Availability Act.

CITIZENSHIP USA

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 1996

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 18, 1996, the INS announced the Chicago kickoff of Citizenship USA, a major nationwide initiative designed to help eligible immigrants become U.S. citizens. The goal of this worthwhile initiative is to ensure that by September 30, 1996, eligible persons who apply for citizenship will become citizens within 6 months. In Chicago alone the INS is expected to conduct more than 850 interviews each day, 4 days a week. This historic announcement was made before a crowd of 1,100 new citizens, representing 71 nations,

who took the citizenship oath at the Navy pier ceremony.

As a proud participant of the development of this very important initiative in Chicago I would like to include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD my remarks during the Chicago Citizenship USA kickoff.

CITIZENSHIP USA

(By Luis Gutierrez)

I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this day possible and make it such a success, and for giving me the opportunity to be with all of you today. I want to say a particular word of thanks to Mayor Richard Daley. In a time when far too many elected officials across our nation have found that exploiting people's fears and ignorance about the immigrant community can be the road to a few extra votes, our Mayor has demonstrated a consistent commitment to immigrants to our great city.

Mayor Daley, I thank you for that commitment. And most importantly, I thank all of you who are here before us today, allowing us to share in this very special day of accomplishment for all of you. The elected and appointed officials who are on this podium today have the easy part of the program. We are fortunate enough to be able to congratulate you and share in your success.

All of you have done the hard part. You have left family and friends in your native country. Overcome barriers of language and culture and custom. Endured the frustrations of government bureaucracy and paperwork and frequent indifference. And weathered the words and policies and efforts of some of us here in America who still, after 220 years of our nation growing and thriving because of the contributions of immigrants, who still don't want you in our land.

And yet, here you are, about to make our country stronger and greater and better by becoming citizens of the United States of America. For your effort, and dedication, and commitment to reaching your dream, I thank you. And today, as you make your dream come true, you are doing more than just taking a big step forward for you and your family. You are sending a message to the people of Chicago, the people of Illinois, the people of America.

Two days from now, I will go to Washington. And in Washington this week, we are debating H.R. 2202. It's a bill about immigration and naturalization. And the people who wrote that bill are blind to all of you who are here today. They are blind to your hopes and dreams and contributions and efforts to build a better America. And that blindness is reflected in one of the most horribly anti-immigrant bills to be introduced into Congress in our lifetime.

So we will debate in Washington this week just how many of these types of ceremonies we should really have in our country. The people who wrote that bill say a lot less. I say we should have a lot more. Because when we debate the question, "what should our immigration policy be," we are really asking ourselves something much more important.

We are asking, "what kind of nation should we be?" "What kind of America should we be?" Should we be the proud, and confident, and vibrant America that has welcomed immigrants from across our globe, and grown better and stronger because of their contributions? Or should we be a small, and fearful, and declining America that shuts our borders and closes our minds and turns our back on people who want nothing more than to help make America great?

That is the real choice of our immigration debate this week. To listen to the red-hot rhetoric about the dangers of immigration, and about immigrants who are making our