

THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, this week-end Ukrainian-Americans across the country will commemorate the ten year anniversary of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since the devastating news of the explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine. While the official death count remains at 33, we all know that the number of lives affected by this tragedy reaches well into the thousands. Besides those who have died because of the exposure, others have lost their health, their economic well-being, their environment, and their spiritual outlook on life.

We have been, however, successful in providing some of the most needed assistance to those who have suffered. The work of so many dedicated relief organizations has paved the way for aid, medical care, and government programs which have provided invaluable care for the victims of the Chernobyl calamity. Unfortunately, it is not likely we have experienced the full consequences of the disaster. Nor have we provided all the resources needed to help those living through this nightmare. As we remember this event this weekend, we must renew our pledge to continue our help in the future.

I am proud to represent a large and energetic Ukrainian community—an active and spirited community which has dedicated itself to helping the people of Ukraine. As we all work together to support Ukraine's flowering democracy and strong economic growth, we continue to hold a special place in our hearts for those affected by the Chernobyl disaster. We will remember Chernobyl.

REMEMBERING THE GENOCIDE OF THE ARMENIANS

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, today is the day we have set aside to commemorate a painful time in world history—the 81st anniversary of the deaths of more than 1½ million Armenians. While the magnitude of the loss and the depth of the sorrow do not dim with time for the descendants of those who died, I join my colleagues in this observance today in the hope that a day of remembrance can bring a measure of healing.

This is what good and caring people do the world over when a tragedy occurs—grieve, console, reminisce. The first anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing was recently the occasion of such a day of thought and remembrance. The shocking jolt that the bombing last year wreaked on the security that Americans have long enjoyed in this country will never be forgotten and will join the all-too-long list of events that, through their sheer awfulness, forever alter a country or a people. Indeed, we are even now watching with empa-

thy the victims of the war in Bosnia, who, even as they struggle to get their footing as they emerge from their national nightmare, learn of atrocities such as mass graves and, as incredible as it may be that this could be happening again, watch as individuals—so-called leaders—are being turned over to the appropriate authorities for serious war crimes.

As much as this day of remembrance brings home the moral frailty and potential for cruelty, however, it is, more important, also proof that the majority of us firmly denounce the hateful actions of a few. For us, there is no political jargon, ancestral enmity, or religious fervor that could ever justify the deeds perpetrated in Armenia that we commemorate today, the slaughter that we revisited last week in Oklahoma, or any similar actions anyplace, anytime.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, I affirm my strong support for a strong and vibrant relationship between Armenia and the United States. I will work to do my part to ensure that the legacy of future generations of Armenians is not marked by persecution, but rather by personal and national security, democracy, freedom, and prosperity.

THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE AND PERSONNEL ENFORCEMENT ACT

HON. SUSAN MOLINARI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Ms. MOLINARI. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R.—, the Federal Railroad Administration Performance and Personnel Enforcement Act. The bill will provide for institutional reforms at the Federal Railroad Administration and other improvements to the rail safety statutes aimed at promoting a safer, more secure rail safety network. I would like to emphasize that the railroad system is essentially safe today, thanks to the substantial gains in safety that have been achieved since the late 1970s. In 1978, the train accident rate was nearly 15 accidents per million trainmiles, or 3.9 times what it was in 1995. Railroads are safe when compared to other modes of transportation as well. About 40,000 people are killed each year on the Nation's highways, compared to about 600 fatalities that are attributed to railroad operations.

Yet rail travel is becoming increasingly complex and we must ensure that our safety requirements keep up with today's operational realities. Traffic on the mainlines continues to grow and the increased use of freight, intercity passenger and commuter traffic on the same corridors poses new challenges for ensuring safety. Unfortunately, after the 2 best years in rail safety history, rail accidents appear to be on the rise. In January and February alone rail freight and passenger accidents resulted in 19 fatalities, 230 injuries, and \$64 million in property damage.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, I sponsored three hearings on the issue of rail safety during the month of March. These hearings focussed on the issues of human factors and grade crossing safety, equipment and technology in rail safety, and advanced train control technology. This last

hearing was held jointly with the Technology Subcommittee of the Science Committee.

One thing is clear from these hearings: the Federal Railroad Administration needs to be reformed. In three significant areas where rulemakings are pending (power brake safety, two-way end of train devices and track safety standards), the Federal Railroad Administration has missed the statutory deadlines for completing the rulemakings by as much as 2 years. In the wake of the Burlington Northern Sante Fe accident at Cajon Pass, CA, the Federal Railroad Administrator issued an emergency order requiring use of the two-way end of train device for operations in the area. Sadly, the emergency order would not have been needed had the FRA met its statutory deadline for the rulemaking.

And in another area of concern, the Hours of Service Act, the FRA and rail labor and management have all been guilty of foot dragging in establishing pilot projects that were supposed to form the basis for changes to the act during the next authorization cycle. A report on the subject is due at the end of the year, and to date not a single pilot project has been implemented. This is unacceptable and I believe that my bill, through a combination of institutional reforms that will force FRA to be more accountable in carrying out congressional mandates, and improvements to the rail safety statutes will help ensure safety on the Nations' railroads.

HONORING THE WESTMORELAND VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Westmoreland Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "There fireman must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in firefighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee Fire Training School in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

EARTH DAY

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, we have just celebrated Earth Day here in the United States and, I hope, rededicated ourselves to protecting our environment. But at the same time, there are others on this planet commemorating the anniversary of an environmental catastrophe.

I'm speaking of the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. On April 26, in Kiev as well as in many other cities around the globe, including many here in the United States, people will gather to discuss the aftermath of that accident. But more importantly, they will be looking to the future, and not only to seek assurances that there will be no more such disasters but to rededicate countries and citizens to environmental protection.

I am particularly proud, Mr. Speaker, to note a most unique and important partnership which has developed around the anniversary. The Children of Chernobyl Relief Foundation [CCRF], a group based in Short Hills, NJ, and Hamden, CT and formed 5 years ago, has already turned about \$2 million in donations into about \$40 million in airlifted supplies to the people of Ukraine, most urgently needed pharmaceuticals.

CCRF has now received a large grant from the Monsanto Co. and together this charitable organization and this American firm are launching on this anniversary a major healthcare initiative for children and women in outlying areas. It will enable CCRF and the Ukrainian doctors and hospitals with whom it works to extend vital care to people in farm communities. The initiative will have strong focus on prenatal care and education for pregnant women.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a great model for the other groups, other companies, other countries, not just a one-shot, one-day commemoration of an environmental disaster but a longer-term commitment by an American-based charitable group and an American corporation.

I might add that our State Department, especially Ambassador Richard Morningstar, the Coordinator of Assistance to the CIS, and our United States Ambassador in Ukraine, William Miller, have been most cooperative in assisting the development of this project.

Today in Kiev there was an airport event welcoming a United States Government airlift of more than \$11 million of needed drugs and medical equipment. At that event, both Ambassador Morningstar and Ambassador Miller as well as high-level Ukrainian officials praised the Monsanto/CCRF project as a model for companies and charitable organizations everywhere and a sign that the Chernobyl commemoration is not just a 1 day event.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. SERVICE MEN
AND WOMEN IN BOSNIA

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, there is an old military saying which alerts us to expect the unexpected. This time-tested adage is as true today as we send young fighting men and women to Bosnia as it was two generations ago in World War II.

On April 27, 1996, the New Jersey Exercise Tiger Association and the VFW Post 3729 will commemorate the 52d anniversary of Exercise Tiger. Exercise Tiger was designed to be a dress rehearsal for the D-Day invasion of France. But as is so common in the "fog of war," the best laid plans are always subject to the unexpected, the unanticipated, the unforeseen.

And so it was on April 28, 1944 when an American amphibious assault force which was practicing for the D-Day invasion was suddenly attacked by German warships. The surprise attack resulted in the death of 946 men, the second highest death toll of that long and embittered war.

Today, over 20,000 U.S. service men and women are serving in Bosnia in an effort to again secure peace in Europe. These dedicated individuals, like those who have served so honorably before them, have the difficult task of fulfilling the commitments made by American foreign policy makers. And like those who served in uniform over 50 years ago, the unexpected can happen at any moment with devastating effect.

I wish to salute the fine men who served and died 52 years ago while conducting Exercise Tiger. There is a special kinship between those American heroes and the men and women who today are serving in Bosnia. I wish also to pay tribute to Walter Domanski of the New Jersey Exercise Tiger Association and Bill Cadmus, Senior Vice Commander of VFW Post 3729. These two fine individuals are "keepers of the flame," ensuring that Americans will remember and reflect on the sacrifices that our military has made and continues to make on our behalf.

MERCURY ELECTRONICS: FIFTY
YEARS AT THE FRONT LINES,
DEFENDING AMERICA

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a company that has provided important contributions to our national defense and to the defense of freedom worldwide. That company is Mercury Electronics, celebrating its 50th anniversary this month.

For half a century, Mercury Electronics has provided essential components for our Armed Forces in the air, on land, and at sea. In this role, they have contributed mightily to America's defense, and the part that our Armed Forces have played in protecting the free world throughout the cold war. They continue this activity, helping the United States and her

men and women serving under arms to secure the peace and safety necessary for the preservation of the American way of life.

Not only has this company been a vital part of America's defense, but it has also been an exemplar of what America is all about. For the entire 50 years of its existence, Mercury has remained in the city of York in my district, providing jobs and economic stability. By remaining in its original locality, it has provided a continuity for its workers that has allowed them to build families in the area, and to remain close to their loved ones. Mercury Electronics has been a prime example of what small business can do. Its dedicated employees have enriched the local community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House of Representatives join me in recognizing Mercury Electronics on this occasion. Mercury has served America, not only in the role of manufacturing items for our armed forces, but also by showing what can be accomplished by hard-working people enjoying the freedoms their products have played a role in preserving. I congratulate Mercury Electronics on their 50th anniversary, and wish them many more.

GRANT PERMANENT MOST-FAVORED-NATION STATUS TO ROMANIA

HON. NORMAN D. DICKS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, last month, our colleague, PHIL CRANE, chairman of the Trade Subcommittee, introduced legislation to grant permanent most-favored-nation status to the country of Romania. It is a bill that is overdue and I commend my colleague and the cosponsors of the legislation for taking this step.

Of all the Eastern European nations journeying from a centrally planned economic system to that of a free market economy, Romania has had the longest road to travel. It suffered through 40 years of a Communist economic policy. Its 1989 revolution exposed the hollowness of that economic legacy, but it also exposed how deeply ingrained that way of thinking can become. Nevertheless, despite tremendous obstacles, Romania has not faltered in its attempt to join the Western economic community of nations.

Romania is making the hard choices. It is taming inflation. Between 1994 and 1995, the inflation rate was cut in half from 62 percent to 28 percent. After selling off numerous state enterprises, at the cost of increased unemployment, Romania's rate of unemployment has shrunk from over 11 percent in 1994 to less than 9 percent in 1995.

Romania's private sector has grown into a formidable economic force. Today, 45 percent of Romania's gross domestic product comes from the private sector. By the end of this year, estimates show that 70 percent of its GDP will be generated by thousands of entrepreneurs who finally have the opportunity to determine their own economic future.

Romania is traveling a road that we in this country have encouraged by provisionally granting them MFN status. As a result, trade between our two nations has increased as United States exports take advantage of these new market opportunities. I review of Romania's economic policies, when coupled with its