

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2158) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes:

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Chairman, I congratulate Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member STOKES on producing a bipartisan bill with broad support in the House.

However, Mr. Chairman, I would like to highlight the multi-Family Preservation Program in the hopes that the HUD-VA Conference Committee will appropriate funding for this essential program. This program is very important to low-income communities not only in my congressional district but throughout the Nation because it is critical to maintaining our country's dwindling affordable rental housing supply.

The Preservation Program keeps housing affordable for low-income families, the disabled and the elderly by allowing private owners to transfer their rental properties to tenant-endorsed nonprofits who will continue to serve this vulnerable residential population. As a consequence of HUD's Preservation Program, over 800,000 units of affordable housing have been preserved.

Currently, there are 260 projects nationwide, consisting of more than 29,000 units, that need funding to avoid their conversion to market-rate rentals and prevent the displacement of thousands of low-income tenants.

The Preservation program continues to have solid bipartisan support. As recently as June 20th, I joined 27 of my California colleagues from both sides of the aisle in sending a letter of support for the Preservation Program. In our letter, we stressed that California alone has 25 percent of the country's unfunded preservation properties. This represents approximately 5,000 units awaiting preservation funding in California alone.

The Preservation program has been criticized as being too expensive and many references have been made to a pending GAO report, which is critical of the program. While there have been some high costs associated with the program, the fact is that it is relatively inexpensive. In its findings, GAO cites almost exclusively the high cost preservation projects, which are not representative of the entire group of properties in the national queue. While I have no doubt that the GAO findings are accurate for the small sample studied, this report does not mean that Congress should make hasty or ill-advised conclusions about the program's overall true costs to the taxpayer based on an unrepresentative sampling.

It is important to note that temporary enhanced vouchers—which are being proposed to mitigate the loss of housing for thousands

of displaced low income families and the elderly—are not a viable or cost-effective substitute for this important housing stock. Vouchers will not protect the physical housing stock, nor will they guarantee the current residents any long-term security because it is dependent on annual congressional appropriations.

The HUD-VA Conference Committee has consistently recognized the value of the Preservation Program and provided adequate funds over the past 2 years. I rise to ask the conference committee to mirror the sensible and cost-effective efforts of past years and fund the Preservation Program at a level of \$350 million for fiscal year 1998.

TRIBUTE TO COL. WILLIAM D. CUMMINGS

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the dedication, public service, and patriotism of Col. William D. Cummings, U.S. Air Force, on the occasion of his retirement after a career of faithful service to our Nation. Col. Bill Cummings' strong commitment to excellence will leave a lasting impact on the vitality of our modern warfighters, commanding admiration and respect from his military and civilian colleagues as well as Members of Congress.

Colonel Cummings of Summerfield, NC, is a graduate of East Carolina University. He is serving his last assignment in the Air Force as Deputy for Program Integration and Congressional Activities, Deputy Chief of Staff, Air and Space Operations, in the Pentagon.

After earning his pilot's wings at Vance Air Force Base, OK in 1968, Colonel Cummings worked as a C-130 pilot at Sewart Air Force Base in Tennessee. As an AC-130A gunship aircraft commander in Thailand, Colonel Cummings accumulated 118 combat missions during the Vietnam War with the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing. After returning to the United States he was assigned as a tactical airlift director, and in June 1982 he was selected to command the 375th Transportation Squadron.

Just 4 years after he was named senior airlift controller, Colonel Cummings became vice commander for the 322d Airlift Division at Ramstein AB, Germany in 1991. As commander of the 621st Air Mobility Support Group, he directed strategic airlifts in 12 countries through Europe and Saudi Arabia. Upon his return to the United States he assumed his current responsibility of Deputy for Program Integration and Congressional Activities for Deputy Chief of Staff, Air and Space Operations.

The colonel is a command pilot with over 3,000 flying hours. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal with seven oak leaf clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal. He has also received the Outstanding Unit Award with "V" for valor and five oak leaf clusters, the Organizational Excellence Award, the Combat Readiness Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two service stars, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm.

Our Nation, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Air Force, and his family can truly be proud of the colonel's many accomplishments. He is a man of extraordinary talent and integrity. While his honorable service will be genuinely missed in the Department of Defense, it gives me great pleasure to recognize Col. William D. Cummings. On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District of North Carolina, we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

SUPPORT VICTIMS OF FLOODS IN POLAND

HON. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring news of the severe flooding that has ravaged Poland. As we speak, the people of Poland and much of Eastern Europe are struggling bravely to resist the brute forces of nature as the flood waters continue their unrelenting rise. So far, dozens of innocent people have died in what is being described as Eastern Europe's worst tragedy since Chernobyl. As survivors of the floods can tell you, the worst part is the wait; the slow, anguished wait as the flood waters slowly consume these peoples' homes, their businesses, their property. The wait as an entire life sinks below the muddy ripples of the flood.

Thankfully, compassion is not dead in our society, and countless concerned Americans, many of Polish descent, have heeded Poland's desperate cries for help. In my own home town of Chicago, churches and community organizations have responded to the call for flood relief. I have been happy to be able to assist local leaders and communities in the effort to get disaster relief to those who need it most.

While the response so far has been impressive, the need is still greater. Congress cannot stand idly by in Poland's time of need. It has been less than a decade since Poland threw off the shackles of communism. The damage from these floods threatens the gains Poles have made in building a free and prosperous society.

The Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation as well as the American Red Cross are spearheading efforts to channel relief from America to needy families in Poland. These contributions will help provide food, medicine and shelter to victims of the flooding. Please call the Polish American Congress at (773) 763-9944, or the American Red Cross at 1-800-435-7669 (1-800-HELP-NOW), to find out what you can do to help. I urge all Americans to heed the urgent call for disaster relief in Poland.

A DEMOCRATIC VIEW ON HONG KONG

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, over the past month, we have been subjected to a barrage of Communist Chinese propaganda on the reversion of Hong Kong to China. The Communist Chinese view was amply covered in

the Western media. And in New York City, the Communist Chinese were allowed to put on a parade which glorified the takeover.

I would like to submit for the RECORD a viewpoint on Hong Kong by a democratic Chinese individual, who happens to be the President of Taiwan. President Lee has eloquently described in USA Today how democratic Taiwan, and not totalitarian Communist China, represents the model for the future of Hong Kong and indeed, China itself.

[From the USA Today, June 30, 1997]

TAIWAN YIELDS MODEL FOR A FREE HONG KONG

(By Lee Teng-hui)

Today, the era of colonial rule will come to an end in Hong Kong. This is a proud event for all Chinese wherever they are, and offers a new opportunity for creating a democratic Chinese nation. We earnestly hope that the Beijing authorities will be able to maintain the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and will ensure that the people of Hong Kong continue to enjoy freedom, democracy and basic human rights. This is the only way to act in accord with the joint values and trends of mankind today, regional peace and development, and the common dignity and interests of all Chinese people.

Taiwan's experience offers reason for optimism.

A little more than one year ago, the Republic of China successfully held a direct presidential election on Taiwan, completing a crucial objective of our political reform. At the time, the concept of constitutional government stressed by Americans over two-hundred years ago kept coming to my mind: "... all Men are created equal, ... they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, ... among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness ... to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Government."

Indeed, with the joint effort of the entire populace and their government, the Republic of China has upheld the principle of popular sovereignty on Taiwan, and has succeeded in lifting martial law, liberalizing the formation of political parties, realizing the practice of free speech, re-electing all national parliamentarians who had been in office for a long time, and carrying out a direct presidential election. Through these endeavors, the Republic of China has undergone profound change, and has become a fullfledged democracy.

However, we cannot overlook the fact that still over 20 percent of the world's population, most of whom live on the Chinese mainland, have no way to enjoy these rights. The Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait share the same cultural and racial heritage. Thus, there is no reason why we cannot jointly build a system of democracy and freedom, and fully exercise our God-given rights.

In 1979, before material law was lifted in Taiwan, a number of protesters demonstrating against government censorship of their magazine were arrested and jailed in what became known as the Kaohsiung Incident. At the same time, the Chinese communists authorities arrested the human rights activist Wei Jingsheng. Today, many of those involved in the Kaohsiung Incident have redeemed themselves through the ballot box and have become important elected political leaders on Taiwan. However, Mr. Wei remains in jail. The marked differences in systems and values between the two sides are the fundamental reason why each of the two parts of the China we all want to see reuni-

fied one day still remain separate political entities.

Democracy has become a world trend, and is without doubt the greatest achievement of mankind this century. One reason civilization continues to progress is that we have the courage to realize our dreams, and we have the heart to care about each other and provide mutual support. We must continue to uphold this spirit and sentiment, so that democracy ultimately becomes the common way of life of all humanity. May people living in every corner of the global village enjoy democracy!

Thus, we cherish the young buds of democracy of the Chinese mainland. Certain forms of election in rural townships and villages have spread on the mainland in recent years. We are happy to see it succeed and call on the Chinese mainland authorities to show the courage and determination to boldly take the grand route to democracy. Join with us and bring democracy to all of Chinese society, seeking everlasting well-being and peace for the Chinese people!

Unquestionably, if Taiwan can achieve democracy, then Hong Kong should be able to maintain democracy, and there is no reason why the Chinese mainland can not do everything possible to head in that direction. This is the true way to solve the China problem.

In the 21st century, Mankind will certainly prove that "All roads lead to Democracy!"

HONORING DR. ALFRED M. BEETON, ACTING CHIEF SCIENTIST OF NOAA, UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. STEVE C. LATOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 1997

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and pay tribute to a scientist who has worked tirelessly for over 40 years to learn and teach about the Great Lakes environment. Dr. Alfred M. Beeton earned his post-secondary degrees in zoology at the University of Michigan and continued to conduct and direct research in the Great Lakes region until his appointment as acting chief scientist for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] in 1996. This brief statement can scarcely touch upon the depth and breadth of Dr. Beeton's career accomplishments, but I shall try to highlight some representative achievements.

Dr. Beeton's work has spanned time beyond that of his personal career, from investigations into the evolution of the Great Lakes to recommendations for the future of policy affecting large lakes. In over 100 publications and speeches addressing scientists and policy makers, Dr. Beeton has touched on the most pressing issues affecting the quality of the Great Lakes. Some of the topics to which he has added his knowledge and insight include human factors affecting water quality, thermal pollution from powerplants, basic ecology of fish and other aquatic organisms, and how policy can begin to address these and other issues.

Dr. Beeton's legacy will live on long after his retirement in August. Throughout his career as a professor at the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin, Wayne State University, and Oregon State University, he trained hundreds of undergraduates and over 30 graduate stu-

dents in aquatic science. In testimony before the Senate, Dr. Beeton helped to shape policies that initiated the restoration of the Great Lakes. He served for 10 years as director of the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab [GLERL] in Ann Arbor, MI, helping to shape NOAA's mission on the United States' fourth coast.

It was during his tenure as GLERL's director that I came to know Al Beeton personally. My district in Ohio is entirely within the Great Lakes basin, and includes the largest portion of Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline of any Ohio congressional district. Thus, the quality of the Great Lakes environment is inextricably tied to the quality of life for my constituents. Dr. Beeton has served as the embodiment of institutional memory for Great Lakes environmental issues. Al Beeton has been the person my staff could always turn to for an honest assessment of the status of our great natural resource.

During the past several years of fiscal restraint, GLERL has faced a flat Federal contribution to its budget. This has meant a loss of staff and reprioritization of the lab's research programs. At the same time, interest in the restoration of Great Lakes resources has steadily increased. Threats to the Great Lakes from invading species and persistent toxins have been a continuous scourge and are not made less serious by Congress' intent to control the Federal budget. Throughout this period, Dr. Beeton has successfully led GLERL's efforts to study problems as large as the control of zebra mussels and the instantaneous forecasting of weather on the coastlines. As a result, we have a much better handle on how to protect the lakes and live safely on their shores than a decade ago.

In 1996, Dr. Beeton planned to retire from his long and successful career and perhaps to enjoy the fruits of his labor while sailing. The Commerce Department tapped Dr. Beeton to serve as Acting Chief Scientist of NOAA and he began this new chapter in his life on June 21, 1996. In this position, he has coordinated with other NOAA administrators to establish the agency's scientific policy and to provide guidance to NOAA managers on scientific and technology issues. Among other things, the Office of the Chief Scientist is responsible for coordinating NOAA activities to implement the National Environmental Policy Act, managing NOAA's technology transfer program, and administering the National Climate Program.

The appointment of a Great Lakes scientist to the highest scientific office in the Nation's ocean-oriented agency is an indication of the recognition of the fourth coast as an important aquatic resource. Al Beeton has brought prominence to a natural resource which was once treated more like a sewer than the national treasure it is. His efforts have been integral to the restoration of the lakes and we owe him our gratitude. Dr. Beeton will retire from his post as Acting Chief Scientist in August, and with this I bid him a fond farewell.

A TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY DANZIS BIER

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Mrs. Dorothy