

BELARUS DESERVES BETTER

**HON. SAM GEJDENSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 1999*

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the situation in Belarus—a country in which I have a great deal of personal interest and which I believe has a great deal of unrealized potential. My father was born and raised in Parafanyvo, Belarus when it was ruled by Poland before the Nazis invaded. He and his brother narrowly escaped the Nazi troops who massacred the rest of their family. They were hidden by two very brave families, and my father was later able to escape and eventually come to the United States.

Given this personal history, I have a great deal of admiration for the people of Belarus. Sadly, they have experienced a great deal of suffering over the years—as the victims of the Nazis, of Stalin, and of the Chernobyl disaster. I visited Belarus several weeks ago and it is clear to see that the people of Belarus are still getting a bad deal—again at the hands of their leadership.

Under the legitimate constitution of Belarus, President Aleksandr Lukashenka's term is scheduled to expire today. But regrettably, Lukashenka is not going anywhere. When dawn breaks in Minsk tomorrow, Lukashenka will be waking up at the Presidential residence.

For the last several years, Lukashenka has been wreaking havoc on his country, but tomorrow, he officially becomes Belarus' illegitimate president. In the fall of 1996, Lukashenka used bogus tactics to impose a new constitution on Belarus, to abolish the existing parliament and replace it with a rubber-stamp legislature, and to give himself an extra couple of years in office.

Lukashenka is dangerous. Among other things, he has expressed admiration for both Hitler and Stalin. He has refused to acknowledge Stalin's crimes, even rejecting forensic evidence that thousands of doctors, professors, and other professionals were murdered by Stalin's forces at Kuropaty just outside of Minsk.

Lukashenka has created a climate of fear in Belarus. He has targeted the opposition, non-governmental organizations, young people, and the press. Opposition figures have disappeared; independent newspapers are fighting for survival; and young people have reportedly been coerced to move to areas contaminated by the Chernobyl disaster.

Lukashenka has larger political ambitions. His rhetoric plays well with the most retrograde regions of Russia—the so called 'Red Belt.' He has been enthusiastically pushing for a union between Russia and Belarus. Such a union has been under discussion since 1996, but in recent weeks, the Russians too—for their own political purposes—seem to be pushing harder. Lukashenka was quoted earlier this month as suggesting that President Yeltsin could serve as president of the new union, and likely planning on an early Yeltsin departure from the scene—Lukashenka offered to serve as its Vice President.

Lukashenka is pushing his country deeper and deeper into an economic abyss. Prices remain under state control, and there has been

no privatization to speak of. The average monthly wage is somewhere around \$30 a month, and many people rely on subsistence farming in a backyard plot to feed their families.

The people of Belarus deserve better. Belarus suffered greatly during the Second World War. The war's legacy in Belarus was that it left a passive people—afraid to speak out for fear that they'd get a bullet in the back of the head. Years of Communist rule only exacerbated these feelings. During my visit, several villagers told me: "we are only 'malenki'—small people"—unable to affect the political process.

But Belarus is also home to many courageous people. For me personally, the most courageous are the women I met on my visit who at great risk to their own lives, hid my father and his brother from the Nazis in their home and in their barn.

Regrettably, Lukashenka is not going to go away tomorrow—as he should. But perhaps he is beginning to realize that he cannot continue on the present course.

There is a report out of Minsk that the OSCE special mission headed by Adrian Severin has announced that Lukashenka has agreed to hold free parliamentary elections in 2000 and enter a dialogue with the opposition. Let us hope that Lukashenka makes good on that promise.

In any case, the West should do what it can to support the people in Belarus who are willing to speak out and to help them plan for—and perhaps even hasten—the post-Lukashenka days. The West should:

Bolster the opposition by continuing to meet with the legitimately elected parliament. The U.S. is right to refuse to meet with the Lukashenka appointed rubber stamp parliament.

Provide more funding for those who are trying to battle passivity and fear. A small but vibrant NGO community in Belarus, with support from a handful of Western assistance organizations, is working to make citizens feel they can take control over issues that affect their own lives—like housing or the health of their children. Personal empowerment can lead to political empowerment.

Make clear that the future of both Belarus and Russia can be with the West. For Belarus, it is not a choice of Russia or the West. Offering a false choice pushes Belarus and Russia towards each other to our exclusion.

Continue to support private enterprise and democratic change in Russia itself. The more firmly these elements are rooted in Russia, the less likely it is that constituencies in Russia will be attracted to Lukashenka's brand of retrograde politics.

Continue to insist—as the Clinton Administration has been doing—that any integration between former Soviet states must reflect the voluntary will of the people expressed through the democratic process, must be mutually beneficial, and must not erect barriers to integration with the wider community of nations. As the Administration has rightly pointed out, since a democratic process does not now exist in Belarus, that calls into question the legitimacy of efforts to create a genuine Russian-Belarusian Union.

Weave a web of contacts with the West. Fund and encourage travel by Belarusians not only to the United States but to neighboring countries. The more they see of Lithuania and

Poland, the more they see what Belarus can be.

Support increased information flow into Belarus—including efforts by the Lithuanians and others to conduct radio broadcasts into Belarus.

In the end, Belarusians' fate is in their own hands. But even as Lukashenka clings to power, their is far more that the West can and should do to help tip the balance towards Belarus joining the democratic community of nations.

**HONORING DR. GEORGE PAULIKAS****HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 1999*

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, on July 18, 1999, Dr. George Paulikas celebrated 50 years in the United States, during which he and his brothers have made significant contributions to their adopted homeland. The Paulikas family arrived as Lithuanian refugees in Boston Harbor on July 18, 1949, having escaped the atrocities of Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler. George's brother Arvyd has worked for 34 years as a physicist at Argonne National Laboratories. His youngest brother Ray served in the United States Air Force and then continued his career at Lockheed-Sanders.

I honor George Paulikas today for his service to the United States. He retired in 1998 as Executive Vice President of the Aerospace Corporation, a career which spanned 37 years, and which has garnered him with numerous awards and commendations. He is the recipient of the National Reconnaissance Office Gold Medal, was named a General James Doolittle Fellow, served on the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, was given the Aerospace Trustees Distinguished Achievement Award. He continues to serve as a Trustee of the Los Angeles Science Center and he sits on the Los Angeles Area Boy Scouts Council. He is the author of "Thirteen Years: 1936-1949", a book describing his family's journeys through war-torn Europe in their search for stability and freedom from the ravages of despotism and war. Our country has been enriched by George Paulikas' service to the United States of America, and we celebrate with him on this 50th anniversary of his family's passage to freedom.

**A TRIBUTE TO MARILYN BEYES****HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 1999*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to commend Marilyn Beyes of Smithboro, Illinois for her unparalleled volunteer activity in the community. She travels 18 miles almost every day to work as a volunteer at a number of community establishments. Marilyn may be seen laying ten-pound bricks in the Fayette County Museum Garden or organizing an art show with over 250 entries and 350 people in attendance.

When asked about why she puts in such long hours as a volunteer she said, "I see a

need, and I want to lead this community with something good." When Vandalia Mayor Sandra Leidner was asked about Marilyn she said, "She's the epitome of volunteerism. I think she sets a fine example for others." It is great to see such determination and willingness to lend a hand to the community. Marilyn is a perfect example of not only a community volunteer but also a community leader.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 1999*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 308, due to travel restrictions, I was unavoidably detained and unable to cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

#### OPEN LETTER FROM COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN CALLS ON SIKHS TO STOP SUPPORTING INDIAN TYRANNY

##### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 1999*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the conflict in Kashmir has been in the news a lot lately. The conflict stemmed from an attack on the Kashmiri freedom fighters in Kargil. While it looks as if the conflict may be receding, there is still fighting. The Sikhs in Punjab are afraid that it will spread to Punjab, Khalistan. The fighting will continue as long as India uses force to suppress the freedom movements of South Asia.

While the fighting was at its height, the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh freedom struggle, issued an open letter on the situation. The letter told Sikh troops that if they died for India, they would die as mercenaries, but if they died for Sikh freedom, they would die as martyrs. It urged them to go home and join the struggle to liberate Khalistan.

In the letter, the Council of Khalistan pointed out that an Indian colonel said that the troops were "dying like dogs" and that 60 percent of the soldiers killed were Sikhs. This is typical of India's strategy to keep the minority nations of South Asia within their artificial borders. They send draftees from one minority to kill another. They don't put Hindu lives at risk. "Are you willing to die for a country that practices a policy of mass cremations against our Sikh brothers and sisters, a policy the Indian Supreme Court called, 'worse than a genocide?'" said the letter.

It is essential that we help bring real peace to South Asia. Both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons, and we must do what we can to prevent these weapons from being used. So far, American involvement in the situation has been mainly to lean on Pakistan to bring an end to the conflict. But it is only India that can end the conflict. Only when India stops its efforts to repress the freedom movements can the conflict in South Asia end.

India is anti-American and has tried to organize a security alliance against the United States, and in May the Foreign Minister orga-

nized and led a meeting with Cuba, China, Russia, Serbia, Iraq, and Libya "to stop the U.S." Amnesty International reported that thousands of political prisoners remain in illegal detention without charge or trial. Some have been there for 15 years. India has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984 in its quest for "Hindutva." It has also killed tens of thousands of Christians in Nagaland, Muslims in Kashmir, Dalits, and other peoples in this pursuit. Sooner or later, India is doomed to break up. I only hope that it does so peacefully. We must not allow another Yugoslavia to emerge in South Asia, where nuclear weapons are present.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for our country to support freedom for all the people of South Asia. If India cannot learn to respect basic human rights as we do in this country, then it should not receive any aid or trade from the United States. It is time for the Congress to put itself on record in support of the freedom movements in Khalistan, Kashmir, Christian Nagaland, and the other nations of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put the Council of Khalistan's open letter on Kashmir into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,  
Washington, DC, June 16, 1999.

OPEN LETTER TO THE SIKH SOLDIERS AND

OFFICERS

Stop "Dying Like Dogs" for the Indian  
Oppressors

Will You Be a Martyr or a Mercenary?  
Join the Freedom Movement to Liberate  
Khalistan

KHALSA JI: The Indian attack on the Kashmiri freedom fighters at Kargil again shows the reality of Hindutva. You see the death of your fellow Sikhs on a daily basis. About 60 percent of the casualties are Sikhs. When India wants to suppress a freedom movement, they send other minorities to do the dirty work, pitting minorities against each other. Hindustan will just use you and discard you. Do not let yourself be a mercenary for this divide-and-rule strategy by the Indian tyrants.

India is losing this war. Casualties are

mounting. An Indian colonel admitted that the troops are "dying like dogs." A corporal is quoted as saying, "Even in war we don't have such senseless casualties." All these deaths are very tragic, but it is especially sad when Sikh soldiers give their lives for the oppressor. If a Sikh soldier must die, at least die for the Khalsa Panth. If you die for the Khalsa Panth, you will be a martyr. If you die for India, you are just a mercenary.

What are you dying for? Are you willing to die for a country that has murdered over 250,000 of our Sikh brothers and sisters since 1984? Are you willing to die for a country that desecrated the Golden Temple, shot bullet holes through the *Guru Granth Sahib*? Are you willing to die for a country that practices a policy of mass cremations against our Sikh brothers and sisters, a policy the Indian Supreme Court called "worse than a genocide"?

If you are dying anyway, come home and die for our homeland like the martyrs who were murdered in the Golden Temple attack. It is better to promote the freedom and glory of the Khalsa Panth than to promote Hindutva and the "territorial integrity" of India. When human rights are being violated on such a massive scale, "territorial integrity" is not an issue.

The political creed of India is "Hindu, Hindui, Hindutva, Hindu Rashtra." As the former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Balram

Jakhar, said, "If we have to kill a million Sikhs to preserve our territorial integrity, so be it." When India wants to protect its artificial borders, it is Sikhs who get killed. When we seek freedom, it is Sikhs who get killed. How can Sikhs put their lives on the line for a country like that?

You are all aware of the plight of Sikhs back home in Punjab. The Indian government has bribed Sikh policemen with cash and promotions to murder their Sikh brothers and sisters. The U.S. State Department reported that between 1992 and 1994 the Indian government paid over 41,000 cash bounties to policemen for killing Sikhs. One policeman collected a bounty for murdering a three-year-old boy. Why should Sikhs give their lives for that?

Are you aware that in 37 border villages back in Punjab, the people have evacuated because they are afraid that his war on the Kashmiri freedom fighters will expand to Punjab? As the people of Kosovo fled from their homes in fear of the Serbian government's brutality, the people of Punjab, Khalistan—your family, friends, and neighbors—are fleeing their homes in fear of the brutal Indian government. There has been a new deployment of troops to Punjab, raising fears that India will launch an attack on Pakistan from the Sialkot sector. If that happens, more Sikhs will lose their lives.

Every day in Ardas, Sikhs pray "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa," the Khalsa shall rule. Our heritage is "Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah," the Khalsa rules or it is in rebellion. Our Gurus teach us to oppose tyranny wherever it rears its ugly head. How can Sikhs say that and then go fight for a country that denies our Sikh brothers and sisters the most basic human rights?

India's political situation is unstable and it is losing this bloody war. In desperation, it has resorted to using chemical weapons. This is a shame on India. It shows the Indian government's complete disregard for the lives of Sikhs, Muslims, and other minorities. However, the instability provides an opportunity to liberate Khalistan.

Recently, a group of Sikhs living in Pakistan called for a common front with our Kashmiri brothers to liberate both Khalistan and Kashmir. They said that now is the ideal time for such an effort. They are right. Let us make common cause with the Kashmiri freedom fighters and liberate our countries together.

Sikhs remember their martyrs and we also remember our enemies. Sikhs ended the regime of the tyrant Indira Gandhi. A brave Sikh named Delawar Singh ended the tyranny of Beant Singh. Would you rather be remembered as a brave Sikh martyr like Delawar Singh or as a traitor like K.P.S. Gill?

I call on Sikhs in the Indian armed forces, whether officers or soldiers, to stop shooting at the Kashmiri freedom fighters and join the Sikh freedom movement. Stop "dying like dogs" for the theocratic Indian state. These Kashmiri freedom fighters have the same as the goal of the Sikh Nation: to live in freedom, peace, prosperity, and dignity.

Now is the time to join the Sikh freedom movement and liberate Khalistan. You are trained soldiers. The Khalsa Panth needs your services. You will be remembered as the liberators of Khalistan. Remember Gen. Shabeg Singh who gave his life defending the sanctity of Darbar Sahib and the honor of the Sikh Nation. We must free Khalistan. Nations don't survive without political power. This is the opportune time for us. We must not let this opportunity pass.

Panth Da Sewadar,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,  
President.