

reef health. With increases in ocean temperatures, development in coastal areas surrounding coral reefs, and continued over-fishing, more and more reef ecosystems are showing signs of profound stress. These indicators include widespread bleaching events, when corals lose the ability to grow, and evidence that coral diseases such as black band disease, white band disease, and aspergillosis are increasing in frequency and extent.

Since 1994, under the United States Coral Reef Initiative, Federal agencies, State, local and territorial governments, non-governmental organizations, and commercial interests have worked together to design and implement management, education, monitoring, research, and restoration efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems.

The year 1997 was recognized as the Year of the Reef to raise public awareness about the importance of conserving coral reefs and to facilitate actions to protect coral reef ecosystems. On October 21, 1997, the 105th Congress agreed to House Concurrent 8, a resolution recognizing the significance of maintaining the health and stability of coral reef ecosystems by promoting comprehensive stewardship for coral reef ecosystems, discouraging unsustainable fisheries or other practices harmful to coral reefs, encouraging research, monitoring, assessment of, and education on coral reef ecosystems, improving coordination of coral reef efforts and activities of federal agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and industry, and promoting preservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources worldwide.

The year 1998 was declared the International Year of the Ocean to raise public awareness and increase actions to conserve and use in a sustainable manner the broader ocean environment, including coral reefs. Also in 1998, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13089 which recognizes the importance of conserving coral reef ecosystems, establishes the Coral Reef Task Force under the joint leadership of the Departments of Commerce and Interior, and directs Federal agencies whose actions may affect United States coral reef ecosystems to take steps to protect, manage, research and restore these ecosystems.

The bill would make it the policy of the United States to (1) conserve and protect the ecological integrity of coral reef ecosystems; (2) maintain the health, natural conditions, and dynamics of those ecosystems; (3) reduce and remove human stresses affecting reefs; (4) restore coral reef ecosystems injured by human activities, and (5) promote the long-term sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems.

The purposes of this legislation are to (1) preserve, sustain, and restore the health of coral reef ecosystems; (2) assist in the conservation and protection of coral reefs by supporting conservation programs; (3) provide financial resources for those programs; and (4) establish a formal mechanism for collecting and allocating monetary donations from the private sector to be used for coral reef conservation projects.

The bill establishes a Coral Reef Restoration and Conservation Program through the Secretary of Commerce. This program will provide funding for projects that: (1) restore degraded or injured coral reefs and their ecosystems, including developing and implementing cost-effective methods to restore or

enhance degraded or injured coral reefs; or (2) for the conservation of coral reefs and their ecosystems through mapping and assessment, management, protection, scientific research, and monitoring. These projects would be funded 75 percent by the Federal Government, and 25 percent by the non-Federal partner. The non-Federal partner's share could be an in-kind contribution.

The bill also authorizes a national program through the Secretary of Commerce to further the conservation of coral reefs and their ecosystems on a regional, national or international scale, or that furthers public awareness of and education about coral reefs on these broader scales. The activities under this program should supplement the programs under existing federal statutes.

For the past two centuries, abandoned vessels have damaged coral reefs to the detriment of our nation. Often times the owners of the vessels are unable or unwilling to pay for the damage these vessels cause. Section 8 of this bill is designated to address this problem by prohibiting the documentation of vessels the owners of which have abandoned vessels on U.S. coral reefs and the vessel either remains on a reef, or was removed from the reef using certain Federal funding, which has not been re-paid to the United States Government.

The bill also establishes legal liability to the United States for persons who destroy, cause the loss of, or injure any coral reef in the United States. The amount of liability is set at the cost to respond to the activity, including the costs of seizing and forfeiting the vessel causing the damage. The vessel causing the damage to a U.S. coral reef may be seized with the amount of liability constituting a maritime lien on the vessel. Costs recovered under this section would be used as reimbursement for past costs incurred under the section, and to restore the damaged coral reef, prevent future threats, or for educational purposes.

The bill directs the Secretary of Commerce to promulgate within 90 days regulations necessary to implement the provisions of the bill.

Finally, the bill authorizes \$20,000,000 to be appropriated for each of the fiscal years 2001 through 2005, and establishes percentages of appropriated amounts for the programs contained in the bill.

CENTRAL ASIA: THE "BLACK HOLE" OF HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 21, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution on the disturbing state of democratization and human rights in Central Asia. As is evident from many sources, including the State Department's annual reports on human rights, non-governmental organizations, both in the region and the West, and the work of the Helsinki Commission, which I chair, Central Asia has become the "black hole" of human rights in the OSCE space.

True, not all Central Asia countries are equal offenders. Kyrgyzstan has not joined its neighbors in eliminating all opposition, tightly censoring the media and concentrating all

power in the hands of the president, though there are tendencies in that direction, and upcoming elections in 2000 may bring out the worst in President Akaev. But elsewhere, the promise of the early 1990's, when the five Central Asian countries along with all former Soviet republics were admitted to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, has not been realized. Throughout the region, super-presidents pay lip service to OSCE commitments and to their own constitutional provisions on separation of powers, while dominating the legislative and judicial branches, crushing or thwarting any opposition challenges to their factual monopoly of power, and along with their families and favored few, enjoying the benefits of their countries' wealth.

Indeed, though some see the main problem of Central Asia through the prism of real or alleged Islamic fundamentalism, the Soviet legacy, or poverty, I am convinced that the essence of the problem is more simple and depressing: presidents determined to remain in office for life must necessarily develop repressive political systems. To justify their campaign to control society, Central Asian leaders constantly point to their own national traditions and argue that democracy must be built slowly. Some Western analysts, I am sorry to say, have bought this idea—in some cases, quite literally, by acting as highly paid consultants to oil companies and other business concerns. But, Mr. Speaker, building democracy is an act of political will above all. You have to want to do it. If you don't, all the excuses in the world and all the state institutions formed in Central Asia ostensibly to promote human rights will remain simply window dressing.

Moreover, the much-vaunted stability offered by such systems is shaky. The refusal of leaders to allow turnover at the top or newcomers to enter the game means that outsiders have no stake in the political process and can imagine coming to power or merely sharing in the wealth only by extra-constitutional methods. For some of those facing the prospect of permanent exclusion, especially as living standards continue to fall, the temptation to resort to any means possible to change the rules of the game, may be overwhelming. Most people, however, will simply opt out of the political system in disillusionment and despair.

Against this general context, without doubt, the most repressive countries are Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan's President Niyazov, in particular, has created a virtual North Korea in post-Soviet space, complete with his own bizarre cult of personality. Turkmenistan is the only country in the former Soviet bloc that remains a one-party state. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, has five parties but all of them are government-created and controlled. Under President Islam Karimov, no opposition parties or movements have been allowed to function since 1992. In both countries, communist-era controls on the media remain in place. The state, like its Soviet predecessor, prevents society from influencing policy or expressing its views and keeps the population intimidated through omnipresent secret police forces. Neither country observes the most fundamental human rights, including freedom of religion, or permits any electoral challenges to its all-powerful president.

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev has played a more clever game. Pressed by the OSCE and Western capitals, he has formally permitted opposition parties to function,

and they did take part in the October 10 parliamentary election. But once again, a major opposition figure was not able to participate, and OSCE/ODIHR monitors, citing many shortcomings, have criticized the election as flawed. In general, the ability of opposition and society to influence policymaking is marginal at best. At the same time, independent and opposition media have been bought, coopted or intimidated out of existence or into cooperation with the authorities, and those few that remain are under severe pressure.

Tajikistan suffered a devastating civil war in the early 1990's. In 1997, war-weariness and a military stalemate led the disputants to a peace accord and a power-sharing agreement. But though the arrangement had promise, it now seems to be falling apart, as opposition contenders for the presidency have been excluded from the race and the major opposition organization has decided to suspend participation in the work of the National Reconciliation Commission.

Mr. Speaker, along with large-scale ethnic conflicts like Kosovo or Bosnia, and unresolved low-level conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia, I believe the systemic flouting of OSCE commitments on democratization and human rights in Central Asia is the single greatest problem facing the OSCE. For that reason, I am introducing this resolution expressing concern about the general trends in the region, to show Central Asian presidents that we are not taken in by their facade, and to encourage the disheartened people of Central Asia that the United States stands for democracy. The resolution calls on Central Asian countries to come into compliance with OSCE commitments on democracy and human rights, and encourages the Administration to raise with other OSCE states the implications for OSCE participation of countries that engage in gross and uncorrected violation of freely accepted commitments on human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me, Mr. HOYER, and Mr. FORBES in this effort and we welcome their support.

IN HONOR OF SONIA DANIELS EDWARDS, M.A., C.C.C.S.L.P.

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 21, 1999

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Sonia Daniels Edwards, M.A., C.C.C.S.L.P., who has been named "Teacher of the Year for Fountain Valley." Mrs. Edwards has been awarded the title, "Teacher of the Year" for her outstanding contributions to education. She is the first speech and language pathologist selected for this prestigious award.

As a speech and language therapist, Sonia Edwards is always at the cutting edge of new research and developments in speech and language. Her ability to diagnose and develop individualized programs for students has resulted in the identification and solution to problems that were interfering with the individual students ability to learn. Mrs. Edwards ability to solve these learning "mysteries" gained her the confidence and admiration of her fellow professionals.

Mrs. Edwards speciality is autism. During the past two years, she has served as the dis-

trict's Autism Coordinator, training staff, setting up home programs, and continuing to provide solutions to many of these baffling learning disorders.

Mrs. Edwards has been known to spend many long hours on the job. She is a dedicated teacher who always has the time to talk with parents regarding their child's special needs. As an educator, she rises to new challenges and tackles the most complex situations. The word "no" is not in her vocabulary.

Respected and admired by her peers, parents and students, Sonia Edwards, is a role model for all of those who know her.

Colleagues, please join me today as I recognize and pay tribute to a gifted and talented teacher, Sonia Daniels Edwards.

IN HONOR OF THE HISPANIC SUMMER PROGRAM ON ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY AND DR. JUSTO GONZALEZ FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ORGANIZATION

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 21, 1999

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Hispanic Summer Program on its 10th Anniversary, and to recognize its Director, Dr. Justo Luis Gonzalez, for his dedication and leadership in the organization.

Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1937, Dr. Gonzalez has embodied the spiritual values of community, dignity, and ministry throughout his life. His significant contribution to theological education over the past twenty-two years has helped build a worldwide ecumenical network that serves as a model for academic globalization.

Upon completion of college studies in Cuba, Dr. Gonzalez studied at Yale University and received three graduate degrees there, including a doctorate. He was ordained as a Methodist Minister and, in 1969, he became an American citizen.

Dr. Gonzalez has educated students as a professor at the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico and at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He is the author of more than sixty books and hundreds of articles, which can be found in the Spanish, English, Chinese, Russian, and Korean communities.

Currently, Dr. Gonzalez is committed to theological education in a variety of ways, including serving as editor of "Apuntes", a journal of Hispanic theology published in the United States.

For his remarkable commitment to theological education, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Justo and the Hispanic Summer Program on its 10th Anniversary.

CONGRATULATING SOUTHPHAMPTON ELKS ON THEIR 70TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 21, 1999

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of

Southampton Elks Lodge 1574. Its long and rich history dates back to December 7, 1929, when 90 candidates were initiated by the Officers of Patchogue Lodge 1323. The fraternal organization was founded on the principles of improving the quality of life on Eastern Long Island and strengthening ties within the community. They have been fulfilling that pledge ever since. On July 10, 1930, the Southampton Lodge was awarded their Grand Lodge Charter.

Elks in Suffolk County have long been known for their dedication in assisting and comforting the veterans of our wars, especially those who are disabled or in distress. The Southampton Elks are very proud of the symbol for which they fought—our national flag. They not only promote and defend the flag but also see it as a symbol of charity. Furthermore, the efforts of the Elks to involve youth in the lives of our veterans should serve as a model for community building in this country.

We cannot overlook the close attention they pay to the individual members of society who are in dire need of assistance. In the past, they have donated such items as specially-designed bicycles, wheelchairs and other items needed by the physically-challenged, helped local families pay for medical treatments, and assisted those whose homes have been lost to fire.

I am especially proud of their local assistance when disaster strikes. During emergency situations, Southampton Elks have always been, and I'm sure always will be, prepared to assist by donating funds, volunteering their time, or doing whatever else is needed during times of difficulty.

Once again, I commend Southampton Elks Lodge 1574. Their unselfish, voluntary efforts and generosity are a credit to the communities they serve. They are an asset to Long Island, and I have no doubt that they will continue their good works and service strongly into the new millennium.

UNITED STATES JAYCEES RESOLVE SOCIAL SECURITY NEEDS REFORM

HON. BOB SCHAFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 21, 1999

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, the United States Jaycees, numbering 115,000 individual members, recently adopted a resolution entitled, "Legislation to Ensure the Future Economic Solvency of the Social Security System."

The Jaycees, whose vision is to "become the organization of choice for young people, providing direction and leadership to our communities and nation," conducted more than 75 Social Security town hall meetings across America, reporting that 79% of the surveyed participants think it needs radical or major reform. When asked if there should be implementation of a program that allows individuals to place their Social Security contributions from their current wages in their own personal retirement account and require(s) them to maintain that account for retirement only, 77% either strongly favored or favored that idea.

This resolution's recommendations include reforming Social Security, the need for personal retirement accounts and for directing