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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID VITTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 522, I was late arriving on the House floor. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

CAMERA AND BASKETBALL HOOPS HELP BRIDGE CULTURAL GAP BETWEEN WEST VIRGINIANS AND PALESTINIANS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to submit for the RECORD an article which appeared in the Beckley, WV, Register-Herald, on October 17, 1999.

As you will note from reading this article, 10 men from Beckley and 2 from Huntington, WV, representing the Memorial Baptist Church and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes recently visited Gaza and the West Bank in the Middle East, where they used some very common skills to build friendships with Palestinians.

The Reverend Paul Blizzard, who lead the group on the mission to Gaza and the West Bank, said that his visit was to show their love for the Palestinian people and to extend a helping hand in any way they could. And they did so in a most astonishing but effective manner—with a camera and basketball hoops. Aided by Bernard Bostick, coach at the Beckley-Stratton Junior High School, and Mike White, area director of the fellowship of Christian athletes, the West Virginians worked with basketball camps to help the youths develop their sports emphasis.

While the language barrier was present—West Virginians don't speak Arabic as a rule, and few Palestinians speak English—they found hand signals often worked just as well as words—and learned all over again that kids are kids and people are people no matter where they are when it comes to sports.

The camera was wielded by Rod Carney who owns the Grace Book Store in Beckley, and John Brown, a computer specialist with the Mine Safety and Health Administration in Mount Hope, WV, who took pictures of the basketball games and of families. Mr. Carney noted that "family is very important in Palestine, and they don't have any way of getting pictures made of themselves. Many families have been separated and it means a lot to them to have family portraits made or to even have individual pictures of family members." The film will be developed in Huntington and the photos sent to the Baptist workers in the West Bank for distribution among the families.

Reverend Blizzard noted that "there is so much bad press and misleading information about Palestinians. We see all the rock-throwing and terrorism and are led to believe those acts characterize the people there. It just is

not true. The Palestinian people are the most hospitable, loving people you would ever want to meet."

One of the highlights of the trip was the personal meeting with President Yasir Arafat during the visit. There was a prayer, and an exchange of gifts, with President Arafat giving the group a Nativity set with the inscription Bethlehem 2000 as a gift from Gaza, and the West Virginia group gave the President a gift of the world-famous West Virginia Glass, a Bible and a West Virginia Lapel Pin from Governor Cecil Underwood. President Arafat told the group they would be welcome again anytime they desire to visit Palestine.

It was my pleasure to personally convey Rev. Blizzard's request to me to help arrange for a personal meeting with President Arafat. I was able to hand the request to President Arafat in person during his recent visit to Washington.

It is Christian efforts such as those carried out by Rev. Blizzard and his group from the Beckley and Huntington Baptist Church and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes that can help us put an end to the mindless stereotyping of Palestinians and others of Arab-descent as bomb-throwing terrorists. I know Rev. Blizzard will continue his missionary work in Palestine in the years to come.

As the Representative of Rev. Blizzard and the other 11 members of his group who made the trip, I am very proud to insert the newspaper article describing his experience in Palestine in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

TEN MEN FROM BECKLEY, TWO FROM HUNTINGTON, USED SKILLS TO BUILD FRIENDSHIPS WITH PALESTINIANS

(By Bev Davis)

A Beckley group used a basketball, a camera to build friendships in another part of the world.

The Rev. Paul Blizzard, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church in Beckley, used contacts from previous trips to the Middle East to arrange a 12-day visit to Gaza and the West Bank, where 10 men from Beckley and two from Huntington used some special skills to build friendships with Palestinians there.

"There is so much bad press and misleading information about Palestinians. We see all of the rock-throwing and terrorism and are led to believe those acts characterize the people there. It just is not true. The Palestinians we met are the most hospitable, loving people you would ever want to meet," Blizzard said.

The American team took gifts of food, shoes, sports equipment and T-shirts.

"We gave over 100 pairs of shoes to a doctor who will distribute them in a Bedouin camp in Gaza. The people are very poor there. The shoes will enable the doctor to get people to come to the clinic for vaccinations and other medical services," Blizzard said.

The group also organized a three-fold plan to provide several services to their Palestinian hosts.

Bernard Bostick, a coach at Beckley-Stratton Junior High School, and Mike White, area director of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, prepared themselves to work in basketball camps, teaching new skills and helping the Palestinians develop their sports emphasis.

"We met with a group of kids who didn't speak much English, and we didn't know Arabic, but when the balls started to bounce, there was one language," White said. "We used hand signals to explain techniques, and the expressions on the faces of the players told us immediately they were pleased with

new moves they learned from Bernie. Kids are kids, and people are people, no matter where they are. We had a wonderful opportunity to get to know these groups, and it was hard to leave."

A Baptist group arranged for Rod Carney, owner of Grace Book Store in Beckley and John Brown, a computer specialist with the Mine Safety and Health Administration in Mount Hope, to take pictures of people living in the West Bank.

"Family is very important there, and they don't have any way of getting pictures made. A lot of families have been separated, and it means a lot to them to have family portraits made or to even have individual pictures of family members," Carney said.

He shot 16 rolls of film and sent them to Huntington, where a photo shop will develop the photographs at no charge and send them back for Baptist workers in the West Bank to distribute to the families there.

"We were in homes of people who had very little, and yet they always welcomed us warmly and offered us food and beverages. We knew sometimes they were offering us all they had. We were all deeply touched by their hospitality," Carney said.

"When people asked us why we came, we told them we believe God wanted us to go there to show our love for the Palestinian people and to extend a hand to help them in any way we could," Brown said.

Huntington Audiologist Tom Waybright accompanied the group and did volunteer work in a school for the hearing-impaired.

"This was a unique opportunity to learn more about the people and to provide a service for them," Blizzard said. "Everywhere we went, people were so appreciative and they just treated us like family."

One unexpected highlight was the opportunity to meet with Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat and exchange greetings and gifts with him, Blizzard added.

"Through the efforts of Abu Tariq, the president's personal representative, our whole group was invited into the national headquarters to meet him. We talked with him and prayed with him. We gave him gifts from Gov. Cecil Underwood's office—lapel pins in the shape of the state of West Virginia and a piece of glass from our state. The president gave us a Nativity set with the inscription "Bethlehem 2000". One of our men gave him a Bible. It was quite an experience for all of us," Blizzard said.

"It was reported the next day that Arafat enjoyed our visit very much and he sent word that we are welcome again," Blizzard said.

Several of the men said they would like to go back.

"We have made wonderful friends in the Middle East and are eager to see them again. We have come to love the Palestinian people, and we look forward to our return there," Blizzard said.

TRIBUTE TO ARTURO RODRIGUEZ

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my close friend, Arturo Rodriguez, who has been the president of the United Farm Workers since 1993. Arturo assumed the presidency of the UFW following the death of the organization's founder, Cesar Chavez. Although no one could ever replace Cesar

Chavez, just as no one could ever replace Martin Luther King, those of us who care deeply about the UFW and the plight of farmworkers have been tremendously impressed by Arturo's leadership and accomplishments these past 6 years.

Under Arturo's direction, the UFW won 16 straight secret-ballot elections—most by big margins—and signed 21 new contracts with growers. He also organized some highly publicized, well-attended marches on behalf of the UFW. The marchers always include many teenagers too young to have personal memories of Cesar Chavez, but eager to continue the work of the UFW.

When he was a teenager living in San Antonio, TX, in the mid 1960's, Arturo first heard from his parish priest about Cesar Chavez and the burgeoning UFW. Inspired by the struggle, Arturo became an active supporter of the farmworkers. At the University of Michigan in 1971, for example, Arturo organized support for UFW boycotts.

In 1973, Arturo met Cesar Chavez, which changed his life in two ways. For one, he joined the UFW, working for two decades to plot and implement strategy. The second was a bonus: Arturo met and fell in love with Linda Chavez, Cesar's daughter. The couple were married in 1974 at La Paz, the UFW's headquarters near Bakersfield, CA. Today Arturo and Linda live at La Paz with their three children.

Prior to becoming its president, Arturo worked on many key issues for the UFW. In 1975, Arturo helped organize union representation elections in the Salinas Valley, including the UFW campaign at Moler Packing Co.—the artichoke ranch where the first election under the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act took place. Two years later, he organized union elections in Imperial Valley vegetable fields and Ventura County citrus orchards.

From May through September 1992, Arturo coordinated UFW help for grape workers walking off their jobs in the largest Coachella and San Joaquin Valley vineyard demonstrations in 20 years. He became president in May 1993, a few weeks after the death of Cesar Chavez.

Arturo has renewed UFW's presence both in the fields and in the halls of government. In Sacramento and in Washington, he joins our struggle to prevent the restoration of the discredited and disgraced bracero program.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Arturo Rodriguez, whose lifelong commitment to civil rights and economic justice inspires us all. I am proud to be his friend and to fight by his side against further exploitation of America's farmworkers.

UNVEILING OF STAMPS HONORING THE UNITED STATES SUBMARINE FORCE ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate members of the United States Submarine Force as the U.S. Postal Service unveils a series of stamps which pay tribute to

the Force for "A Century of Service to America." Earlier today, I was privileged to join the Postal Service, the U.S. Navy and veterans from across eastern Connecticut in introducing these stamps, which commemorate the Centennial of the Submarine Force. In this series, we can witness the stunning progress we have made from the Navy's first submarine—the U.S.S. *Holland*—to the *Ohio* and *Los Angeles* Class submarines of the late Twentieth century. However, these stamps honor much more than technological prowess. They remind us of the selfless service of tens of thousands of veterans who patrolled the depths of the world's oceans guaranteeing victory over tyranny and security for all Americans.

"A Century of Service to America" is a fitting theme for the Submarine Force. "A Century" recognizes the magnitude of the anniversary. Nearly a century ago, the Navy took ownership of its first submarine, the U.S.S. *Holland*. Since then, 648 submarines have entered the force—nearly half of which have been built in Groton, Connecticut, also known as the "Submarine Capital of the World." Our submarines have become technological marvels, the crown jewels of our nation's fleet. Consider how far we've come: the mighty *Ohio* class submarines are nearly as wide as the *Holland* was long! Today, our best and brightest are working to get the next generations of submarines, the *Seawolf* and *Virginia* Class subs, into the fleet. These will be the quietest and the most advanced submarines ever launched giving their crews an almost limitless range of new capabilities.

"Service" is a tribute to our submariners who risked their lives, everyone who supported their efforts, and the men and women who designed and built five generations of submarines. Over the past one hundred years, 400,000 men and women have either served aboard submarines or provided mission support. Over 3,500 veterans of the Submarine Force have made the supreme sacrifice for their country. Veterans of the Submarine Force during World War II paid the highest price in lives lost. Admiral Chester A. Nimitz, a submariner himself before he led the U.S. Navy in the Pacific during the Second World War, said: "It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of great peril."

In southeastern Connecticut, we also know that the men and women of Electric Boat serve their country. They design and build some of the most sophisticated machines the world has ever known. Members of the Submarine Force have been so successful in safeguarding our nation in part because of the craftsmanship and hard work of generations of EB employees.

Finally, we focus on what the Submarine Force means to America. It turned the tide in the Pacific during the Second World War accounting for fifty five percent of all enemy shipping destroyed while comprising only two percent of all Naval forces. During the Cold War, the "Forty-One for Freedom" *Polaris/Poseidon* and succeeding *Trident* submarines ensured that our nation would never be the target of nuclear aggression. Daring intelligence missions provided a clear picture of the capabilities and the goals of the Soviets and other nations which threatened our national interests. As Secretary of Defense Cohen said in urging the Postal Service to honor this anniversary, "the peaceful end to

45 years of confrontation is the modern legacy of the Submarine Force."

Mr. Speaker, America owes a great debt to the members of the Submarine Force—past and present. A series of stamps is a small gesture of a thankful nation to honor their service, their sacrifice, and their role in guaranteeing that successive generations of Americans have been able to enjoy the freedoms that make this country the greatest nation on earth.

EXCEL PROGRAM FOR GOVERNMENT OF GUAM EMPLOYEES

HON. ROBERT A UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, the governor of Guam, Carl T.C. Gutierrez, acknowledges the hard work of government of Guam employees. The governor's employee recognition program, better known as the Excel Program, is the highest and most competitive employee awards bestowed by the governor. This program showcases the outstanding employees and programs within the government of Guam.

Over 60 governmental agencies and departments participate in this program. Awardees are chosen within each department's nominees for 55 occupational groups. These groups range from clerical to labor and trades to professional and technical positions. The various awards reflect individual and group performance, valor, sports, community service, cost savings, and integrity.

My sincerest congratulations go to this year's awardees. I urge them to keep up the good work. I am pleased to submit for the RECORD the names of this year's outstanding employees.

INSPIRATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

Small Dept./Agency: Lucina Leon Guerrero, Vocational Rehabilitation Worker, DISID

Medium Dept./Agency: Lt. Kenneth R. Paulino, Customs and Quarantine Officer Supervisor, Customs and Quarantine Agency

Large Dept./Agency: Eulalia Harui-Walsh, Social Worker II, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority

SILENT ONES

Small Dept./Agency: Mary J. Sebastian, Administrative Services Officer, Military Affairs

Medium Dept./Agency: Gerard V. Aflague, Customs and Quarantine Officer III, Customs and Quarantine Agency

Large Dept./Agency: Susie B. Reyes-Wells, Administrative Assistant, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority

Community Service—Annie P. Roberto, Program Coordinator III, DPHSS

Female Athlete of the Year—Arleen M. Sahagon, Electric Meter Reader Supervisor, Guam Power Authority

Male Athlete of the Year—Kenneth Rios, Control Operator, Guam Power Authority

Sports Team of the Year—Guam Customs Golf Team, Customs and Quarantine Agency

Livesaving—Lillian S.N. Opena, Employment Program Administrator, Department of Labor

Integrity—Diogenes L. Tamondong, International Auditor, Guam Power Authority

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Small Dept./Agency: Bernard Punzalan, Administrator and Operations Manager, Guam Economic Development Authority