

COMMON STATE PROPOSAL BETWEEN NAGORNO KARABAGH AND AZERBAIJAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to spend just a short amount of time this evening talking about the optimism that many of us are seeing as a result of the meeting that took place in Geneva last week between President Kocharyan of Armenia and President Aliyev of Azerbaijan.

I am sure that many people know, particularly those of us who have been involved with the Armenia Caucus for many years, that we are very hopeful that, as a result of this meeting and some other activities that have taken place over the last few months, that we could see a resolution of the conflict in Nagorno Karabagh, which has been basically a bone of contention, if you will, between the two countries for some time.

I think many people know that Nagorno Karabagh is an independent republic that is Armenian speaking, ethnically Armenian, that fought a war, if you will, about 10 years ago that at the time when the Soviet Union broke up, and even though it has been independent and has been a state for all practical purposes, for about 10 years it is not recognized by the United States and there is a continued conflict, albeit mostly peaceful conflict, between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the future of Nagorno Karabagh.

It would certainly behoove anyone who is concerned about peace in the Caucasus region to see if these two countries could come to an agreement over the future of Nagorno Karabagh that, of course, involves the people of Nagorno Karabagh, as well.

The Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met last week in Geneva for talks that seek a political settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. President Robert Kocharyan of Armenia went to Geneva directly from Warsaw, where he had been for other business, and while there he told the news conference that he was optimistic about the meeting with President Aliyev. He said that there had been serious progress since active talks have begun with President Aliyev, most recently in April during the NATO summit conference when both leaders were here in Washington.

I must say also and give praise to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who had written to both presidents after those Washington talks urging further direct discussions between the two presidents.

The latest proposal of the OSCE Minsk Group, and the Minsk Group has been set forth by the United States and other countries to try to come to a settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict, basically last fall the Minsk Group put forth a proposal called the "common state proposal," which essen-

tially sets up a sort of confederation, if you will, between Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan where the two countries would be part of a confederation or common state with equal status.

We know that Azerbaijan very quickly after that announcement last fall by the Minsk Group rejected the common state proposal. But there have been strong indications recently that if it was not for the actual label "common state" that Baku and Azerbaijan essentially might be willing to accept the idea of what the common state proposal is all about.

In other words, they may not like the term "common state," but if another term like "confederation" or "free association" or something like that was used that they might be willing to go along with it.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that what I am hoping and I think the atmosphere is ripe for it is that after this meeting of the two presidents that it might be possible to engage in some kind of direct negotiations between the three parties, between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno Karabagh, which is something that I and most members of the Armenia Caucus have been talking about for some time, that we can see the three sides, if you will, get together perhaps at some point nearby and simply start negotiations using the common state proposal or something like it and ultimately come up with a peaceful settlement.

I wanted to praise our own House of Representatives and particularly the House Committee on Foreign Operations Appropriations because in the bill that they reported out of the subcommittee last week and I think will be considered by the full committee on appropriations tomorrow that bill incorporated several constructive initiatives to help jump start the Karabagh peace initiative.

□ 2115

If I could just give some examples, in the report language for the Foreign Ops bill, it specifically says that the primary national interest of the United States in the Southern Caucasus is peace, and it recommends continued support for the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and says that the extent and timing of United States assistance should depend on whether or not the parties move towards a peaceful settlement.

I want to commend our own Foreign Operations appropriations subcommittee for what it did and that this leads in the long run to a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. UNDERWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO ASTRONAUT PETE CONRAD, AMERICAN HERO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, earlier the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) spoke about Pete Conrad whom we laid to rest today in Arlington National Cemetery, an American hero and a member of the team that walked on the Moon, in fact the third man to have walked on the Moon. It was my honor to have represented Mr. Conrad in Congress. In fact, he lived in Huntington Beach, California. I had many, many meetings with Pete. I was very honored to not only know him but I was very, very pleased to have had the guidance that he gave me over the years in dealing with American space policy. Now as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, that advice that he was giving me was of real importance and of real value. Pete was such a wonderful person. It was a sad day, but then again knowing Pete and his spirit, it was a day that we know that the spirit of Pete Conrad lives on.

Over the years, I have observed that real heroes do not look like the ones in the movies. John Wayne never risked his life for his country, but he was certainly tall and handsome. No, the real heroes that I have met generally have been short and balding. Jimmy Dolittle was like that. I met Jimmy Dolittle on one occasion. And so was Pete Conrad.

If Pete were here today, he would be really embarrassed to hear me compare him to such a courageous and heroic man as Jimmy Dolittle. But that trait of being humble was one of the traits that made Pete Conrad himself such a great man.

When you think about it, great people, the great people of our country, just what is Americanism, who are these great Americans that people have thought about? In the past, the personification of the American ideal, perhaps let us say back in the 19th century, one would have to say that the personification of the American ideal was the pioneer or the frontiersman, with perhaps a little bit of cowboy or industrialist thrown in as well. Well, in this century, we need look no further than Pete Conrad, the man whom we laid to rest in Arlington today.

Pete Conrad was the quintessential 20th century American hero. It is fitting, then, that Pete was buried today among America's most noble champions in Arlington National Cemetery.

Pete's accomplishments in the space program, of course, speak for themselves. He was the third human being

to have walked on the Moon. He did an incredible job in front of the whole world as it watched in repairing Skylab. He piloted or commanded four different space flights. Before that, he had a career as a naval officer and, yes, during some of the other space missions, Pete was an intricate part of the team that backed up those people who were flying the missions.

I would also like to pay tribute not only to his accomplishments but to those personal qualities that made him much more than a space age technician and a flight jockey. He was a man with enthusiasm for life and adventure. He had wit and optimism. His vision, his humble demeanor, his positive can-do spirit with which he approached every task, every challenge, was something that inspired and energized everyone with whom he worked. His spirit itself was an immeasurable contribution to America's space program. And, yes, his persona became a part of the personalities and the personality of America's space effort. He took his job seriously but never took himself too seriously, which was part of his charm and an example to others. He did not dwell on the past which of course is a trap for both individuals and institutions of great accomplishment.

Pete instead, yes, he looked back and he thought about that and he talked about that when he was asked about it, but he was busy laying the foundation for America's next exciting era in space, the era of space commercialization, when space becomes the arena of entrepreneurship, open to all with boundless opportunity rather than the confines of bureaucratic management and government planning. This, too, is the epitome of Americanism. We are a people who want to lead the way, maintaining a fun-loving spirit as we do but making no apologies about wanting to make a profit by doing what is right as well.

I chaired the hearing of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics on NASA's 40th birthday, its anniversary. Pete testified, his testimony was superb, or should I say, as Pete would, super. He said, "It was a crazy time of excitement and adventure and new worlds to explore," of the 1960s and 1970s. But Pete said, "I would like to go on record as saying those days are not half as exciting as the coming age of commercial space."

That was Pete Conrad, a man who was pointing the way to the future. We laid him to rest today. We are all grateful for the things he did for his country, for the world, and I am grateful tonight to have had the opportunity to speak on his behalf.

God bless Pete Conrad and God bless the United States of America.

ON HATE CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, this year the celebration of our Nation's birthday, July the 4th, was shattered by a string of hate crime attacks in the Chicago area, apparently the attacks of Benjamin-Smith who had links to the World Church of the Creator.

The targets of his attacks included African Americans, Asian Americans and Orthodox Jews. Northwestern University basketball coach Ricky Byrdsong, and Indiana University student Won-Joon Yoon died as a result of these attacks.

Followers of the church have been linked by police and civil rights groups to numerous other incidents, including the 1991 murder of an African American sailor in Neptune Beach, Florida; the 1993 fire bombing of the NAACP office in Tacoma, Washington; the 1997 beating of a black man and his son in Sunrise, Florida; and the 1998 beating and robbery of a Jewish businessman in Hollywood, Florida.

Two brothers held on stolen property charges related to the slaying of a gay couple are being investigated in arson attacks at three synagogues. The brothers' relationship to the World Church is being investigated. But hate crimes are not new or uncommon in the Chicago region. Looking over newspaper headlines, we find that in May, a mosque in DuPage County was desecrated, only the latest in a string of such desecrations.

A group of white teenagers attacked a black police officer near the Dan Ryan Woods.

A Gurnee man convicted and awaiting sentence for a hate crime against a biracial couple was arrested and charged with illegal possession of several weapons.

A 27-year-old was charged with a hate crime for intentionally running down two African American teenagers as they rode their bikes along a Kenosha sidewalk.

A Crystal Lake man was charged with shooting and killing a Japanese store owner just because of his ethnicity.

A Federal jury convicted a Blue Island man of cross burnings before the home of black neighbors in an effort to drive them from the neighborhood.

A Pakistani gas station attendant was attacked by a customer because of his ethnicity.

A retired Chicago firefighter settled a racial harassment suit, admitting his guilt of hate crimes against his Hispanic neighbors and apologizing for his acts.

Pizza Hut in Godfrey, Illinois settled a suit brought by an African American family which they refused to serve and threatened in the parking lot after they left the restaurant.

An Hispanic couple was subjected to repeated incidents of racial hate crimes, including the painting of their homes and garages with racist graffiti.

Three men who beat 13-year-old Lenard Clark into a coma because they

did not like African Americans cycling through their neighborhood were convicted.

A Chicago Heights man was convicted of attacking a biracial couple in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood.

Four teenagers, professed skinheads, were arrested for spray-painting anti-Semitic slogans on roads, signs and overpasses.

An African American man in Mokena was the victim of repeated hate crimes after receiving newspaper clippings covered with racial slurs.

A Waukegan man was convicted of kicking a Mexican-American teenager who lay dying in the street after a traffic accident.

Three white teenagers in Belleville admitted to dragging a black teen beside their sport utility vehicle.

A Rolling Meadows man was convicted of hate crimes after shouting racial slurs and attacking an African American in a bowling alley.

The list is much longer. Though the Justice Department is required to publish a report of hate crimes, police agencies are not required to report crimes to the Department of Justice. Hundreds of agencies do not report hate crimes. Many individuals are afraid to report hate crimes.

In Illinois, 114 departments reported one or more hate crimes totaling 333 for 1996. The remaining 787 agencies reported no hate crimes. It is obvious that hate crimes are running rampant throughout not only Illinois but throughout our country. They cannot, should not and must not be tolerated.

I urge America to come into the 21st century as one Nation with enough room for everybody to live.

Hate crimes are an attack on individuals or groups of individuals. But they are also an attack on our communities and our nation. The strength of our nation flows directly from the powerful notion that democracy and equality form the inseparable, interlinked foundation for our economic, social and cultural progress.

Our democracy succeeds because the notions of democracy and equality and the constant struggle to expand and deepen democracy and equality have grown and spread and taken root in the psyche of our people.

The struggle for equality for African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans and women have not been easy or painless. These struggles are far from complete.

I believe the historical record is clear: every American has benefitted, our Nation has been enriched, by breaking down the barriers which prevent some Americans from fully participating in, contributing to and benefitting from all that America has to share.

Hate crimes, and those who perpetrate such crimes, crimes which target victims based on race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, tear at the heart of America, at the ideal that people all over the world look to for inspiration. Hate crimes are twice as likely to cause injury and four times as likely to result in hospitalization as assaults in general.

Our Nation fought a bloody civil war to determine whether a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men (and women) are created equal can long endure. The resounding answer to that question,