

FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO ROUBEN SHUGARIAN, OUT-GOING AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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, earlier this week I spoke about the 8th anniversary of the Independence of the Armenian Republic, which is celebrated by the citizens of Armenia and by people of Armenian descent here in the United States on September 21. But one individual who has played a significant role in solidifying the bonds between the United States and Armenia during these early years of Armenian independence is the current ambassador, Rouben Shugarian. Mr. Shugarian has represented Armenia in Washington since March 1, 1993, and in a few weeks Ambassador Shugarian will be leaving Washington to take another post in the foreign ministry in Yerevan, Armenia's capital. Still only in his late 30s, Ambassador Shugarian obviously has a great future ahead of him in service to the Armenian Republic.

During his very distinguished tenure here, Ambassador Shugarian has done a great deal to help raise the profile of Armenia in the Capitol of the free world. For his efforts, he has earned the respect of Members of Congress, the administration, and his colleagues from many other nations in the Washington diplomatic corps. He has also earned the gratitude of the Armenian-American community for helping to advance Armenia's cause, while making the embassy an important focal point for Armenian Americans.

When Ambassador Shugarian arrived in Washington, Armenia did not really have an embassy per se, making do with cramped office space. But during his tenure, the Armenian mission in Washington moved to a beautiful facility in the embassy row area near Massachusetts Avenue. The physical presence of the embassy and its central location serves to symbolize Armenia's arrival as one of the emerging nations of the post-Cold War world.

Yesterday, Wednesday, September 23, The Washington Post had an article on Ambassador Shugarian entitled "A Reflection on Washington's Ways." The article says, "The image of a nation that is coming back home," was the way the ambassador described to The Washington Post how he has sought to represent his country abroad. Again quoting from the article, it says, "In a speech at a farewell reception at the Armenian embassy last Friday, Shugarian joked that in the first 2 years he and his staff learned what not to do in Washington, and in the next 5 years they learned about what to do."

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Washington is considered the most prestigious and high-profile post for international diplomats. Ambassador Shugarian's appointment to this pres-

tigious post at such a young age demonstrates the high regard he was held in by the leaders of the newly independent Armenian Republic. Indeed, his relative youth in some ways symbolized the energy and optimism of the newly born country that he represented. His success here shows how well deserved that reputation was.

Since becoming an independent country, Armenia has signed a wide range of agreements with the United States on trade and investment, on science and technology, on humanitarian issues, and the establishment of a Peace Corps program in Armenia. Ambassador Shugarian has played an important role in much of this progress, and his leadership will be sorely missed.

As The Washington Post article notes, Ambassador Shugarian recently had an opportunity to interact with his Turkish counterpart, Ambassador Baki Ilkin in the aftermath of last month's devastating earthquake in Turkey. Since Armenia came through a devastating earthquake in 1988, it has some experience with this type of natural disaster. Armenia offered to help its neighbor, despite their strained relations. Although the initial delivery of aid was rejected at the insistence of certain extreme nationalists in Turkey, eventually Armenian relief supplies did arrive in the stricken earthquake area.

A further hopeful sign was seen here last week when Turkish Ambassador Ilkin made an appearance at Ambassador Shugarian's farewell party. And that really was the first time in the annals of Washington diplomacy that the ambassadors of the two countries had met together formally.

Mr. Speaker, Ambassador Shugarian is in the process of completing a book on his recollections of his service in Washington, entitled *On the Overgrown Path*. And as he leaves Washington to return to Armenia, I want to wish Ambassador Shugarian, his wife Lilit Karapetian, and their two sons all the best. I hope we will have the opportunities to receive them as visitors in the country they called home for more than 6 years.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD the article I referred to above.

[From the Washington Post, September 22, 1999]

DIPLOMATIC DISPATCHES—A REFLECTION ON WASHINGTON'S WAYS
(By Nora Boustany)

Seven years after arriving as Armenia's first ambassador to Washington, Rouben Robert Shugarian is moving on to greener pastures at the Foreign Ministry in Yerevan. The former university professor, specialized in American and English literature and philosophy, said that despite the maddening tempo of diplomatic life here, every day has been a revelation and a discovery.

"There is never a second chance to make a first impression," Shugarian noted stoically about his stiff learning curve in Washington. He is completing a book on some of his recollections here titled "On the Overgrown Path," which looks at his homeland's inde-

pendence since it broke away from the Soviet Union eight years ago tomorrow. It offers a conceptual look at U.S.-Armenian relations, touching on stereotypes and real perceptions of Armenia here and focusing on how best to represent Armenia abroad in its new incarnation.

"The image of a nation that is coming back home," was the way he described it. He said Armenia is a country that has suffered from extensive man-made and natural disasters, that is now trying to build its future differently. In a speech at a farewell reception at the Armenian embassy last Friday, Shugarian joked that in the first two years, he and his staff learned what not to do in Washington and the next five years they learned about what to do.

"This is a tough city. Any sign of exhausted creativity or ineffectiveness is not easily pardoned. This is an open society. Old career diplomacy tricks and buttoned up social graces don't get the job done," he said in an interview yesterday. "This is a country where you have to be engaged in a sincere dialogue to reach your objectives." A country that had no diplomatic representation, Armenia now has 15 students at Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy who Shugarian hopes will benefit from his impressions. The book will not be a memoir as such because he will not be able to share some secrets until some time has elapsed. His most exhilarating moments in Washington came in 1993 when he celebrated Armenia's second anniversary of independence at Meridian International House.

"We did not have an embassy at the time. One felt the country becoming a reality, however, and that we were really going back home," he reminisced.

He said his first extended exposure to Turkey's ambassador, Baki Ilkin, was in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake Aug. 17 that killed more than 15,000 people. Armenia arranged to send a plane with seismologists, doctors, generators, blankets and medicine to the stricken areas. "We went through a terrible earthquake 11 years ago in which 25,000 people were killed. It was a purely moral step, not a political one and we do not expect anything in return. We went through something like that and we know what it is like," the ambassador said.

Although Turkey and Armenia do not have embassies in one another's capitals, Ilkin made a 20-minute appearance at Shugarian's farewell reception, a first in the annals of Washington diplomacy. "This is such a wonderful country where there is so much to see, to learn and to understand," Shugarian said in summing up his time here. "The most striking thing about life here is the freedom that exists, the freedom that gives you an opportunity."

AMERICANS DESERVE A BREAK WHEN IT COMES TO TAX RELIEF

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

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, the typical American family pays 38 percent of its income in taxes, more than it spends on food, clothing and shelter combined. We are taxed when we save for school, taxed when we get married, even taxed when we die. Mr. Speaker, it is about time the American family got a break. That is why this Congress passed comprehensive tax relief that includes the most meaningful tax relief passed in a generation.

The strongest evidence of all that Americans are paying too much is the size of the budget surplus. Conservatively projected at \$2.9 trillion over the next 10 years, this surplus was earned by taxpayers. They are the ones who deserve to reap the benefits of their labors. The Republican tax relief package returned only a portion of that money to taxpayers, despite all that spin from this floor and the administration to the contrary.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, our proposal returns 27 cents on each dollar of surplus over the next decade. The remainder we locked away to be used for protecting Social Security, strengthening Medicare, and paying off the national debt. Our tax relief package benefits all Americans, married couples, senior citizens, working families, the self-employed, public schools, and distressed neighborhoods.

We provide tax relief for married couples. One of the most unfair provisions in our present Tax Code requires married couples to pay more in taxes simply because they are married. Our plan eases this unfair penalty to the benefit of 42 million taxpayers.

We provide tax relief for education. Our plan helps parents and students facing educational expenses by raising the ceiling on education savings accounts and permitting their use for K through 12 costs, and changing bond rules to assist local school construction issues.

We provide tax relief for retirement. Our plan helps American workers gain access to a pension plan and enjoy greater retirement security by increasing limits to 401(k) plans and other retirement options, increasing portability of pensions, and simplifying pension rules.

We provide tax relief for medical expenses. Our plan makes health care and long-term care more affordable and accessible for all Americans. It allows a 100 percent deduction for health insurance premiums and long-term care insurance premiums, and provides an additional personal exemption for financial hardships associated with caring for elderly family members at home.

We provide tax relief for survivors. Our plan gradually eliminates the hated death tax, the Federal estate tax, a monstrous tax bite that has shut down far too many family farms, ranches and small businesses. And we provide tax relief to create jobs and growth.

Finally, our plan also promotes investment, risk-taking, and job creation. We provide pro-growth incentives to help attract business and create jobs in at-risk communities, and stimulate growth and investment by providing capital gains tax relief.

Let us compare the Republican plan with the Democrat alternative, which would have raised taxes by \$4 billion. That plan was defeated by this House 173 to 258. The minority leadership apparently does not believe American taxpayers deserve to get back at least

some of their hard-earned dollars, nor apparently does the present Clinton-Gore administration.

The President has vetoed the tax bill. He is not committed to cutting taxes, saving Social Security, strengthening Medicare and paying off the public debt. If he were, he would realize that our plan devotes \$2 of every \$3 to the tax surplus specifically for those purposes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, our logic is clear and simple. If we fail to give a portion of the budget surplus back to where it belongs, to the hard-working American taxpayers, Washington will spend every dime of it and more. Everybody knows it. That is the way this town operates. Always has been, always will be.

On the other hand, I am always happy to cast my vote for putting more money in the hands of the people who earned it, the American taxpayer, not in the hands of Washington big spenders.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WU (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal reasons.

Ms. CARSON (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FOLEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HULSHOF, for 5 minutes, September 28.

Mr. EHRLICH, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, September 27, 1999, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debates.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4437. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Regulations & Legislation Division, OTS, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule—Management Official Interlocks [Docket No. 99-36] (RIN: 1550-AB07) received September 17, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

4438. A letter from the Under Secretary Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Manufactured Housing Thermal Requirements (RIN: 0575-AC11) received August 31, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

4439. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule—Public Housing Drug Elimination Program Formula Allocation [Docket No. FR-4451-F-04] (RIN: 2577-AB95) received September 15, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

4440. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Conversion of Insured Credit Unions to Mutual Savings Banks—received August 17, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

4441. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Organization and Operations of Federal Credit Unions—received August 17, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

4442. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting the OMB Cost Estimate For Pay-As-You-Go Calculations; to the Committee on the Budget.

4443. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting Final Regulations—William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 1232(f); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4444. A letter from the Secretary, Health and Human Services, transmitting a consolidated report on the Community Food and Nutrition Program for Fiscal Years 1996 and 1997; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4445. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the report The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, 1996, pursuant to Public Law 101-354, section 2 (104 Stat. 415); to the Committee on Commerce.

4446. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Law, Office of Procurement and Assistance Management, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule—DOE Authorized Subcontract for Use by DOE Management and Operating Contractors with New Independent States' Scientific Institutes through the International Science and Technology Center—received September 7, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

4447. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Law, Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety & Health, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule—Air Monitoring Guide [DOE G 441.1-8] received August 10, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

4448. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Law, Office of Environment, Safety and Health, Department of