

Always the calm in the eye of the storm, the speaker's steady hand and sharp focus have resulted in an impressive list of accomplishments, despite our razor thin majority. Some in the body may not always share his priorities or his political philosophies, but I have never heard a cross word spoken about Speaker HASTERT as a person. In this era of personal attack and partisanship, that is a real testament to the Speaker, and it has been my privilege to serve on his team.

To my constituents, I want to say that representing you has been the greatest honor of my life. I have tried to be both an effective representative and an honest steward of the incredible trust you have placed in me.

I want to thank all my colleagues who have taken to the House floor the last few days to say such nice things about me. I am humbled by their words and touched by their sentiments. While I will retire from this institution, I am not retiring from life. If there is one thing I learned from my parents, it is that public service and service to your community is a lifetime obligation. There will be new opportunities and new challenges, and I look forward to those. But serving in this body, with all of you, will forever be one of the most cherished times of my life. God bless you, God bless this institution, and God bless America.

INTRODUCTION OF H. CON. RES. 433
REGARDING BELARUS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to cosponsor House Concurrent Resolution 433, a resolution introduced on Monday by my colleague on the International Relations Committee, Mr. Gejdensen, concerning the recent parliamentary elections in Belarus.

The Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other European institutions, as well as the State Department, all concluded that these elections were not free, fair and transparent and that they failed to meet the international norms for democratic elections. Unfortunately, the Lukashenka regime did not meet the four conditions that the OSCE set back last spring—namely, a democratic election law, an end to human rights abuses, access by the opposition to the state media, and genuine powers be granted to the parliament. Instead, in the run-up to the elections, we witnessed the denial of registration to many opposition candidates; detentions and fines of individuals advocating a boycott of the elections; confiscation of 100,000 copies of an independent newspaper among other examples of harassment of the opposition; rampant governmental interference in the election process and extensive irregularities on election day itself. These elections represent a continuing pattern of violations of human rights and the erosion of democracy which has haunted Belarus throughout the last six years of Alexander Lukashenka's rule.

The Helsinki Commission, which I chair, has monitored and chronicled developments in Belarus, holding hearings which have included Belarusian democratic opposition leaders and leaders of the 13th Supreme Soviet, the legiti-

mate parliament which Lukashenka disbanded in 1996. In July, I led the US delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Buzharest where the deteriorating situation in Belarus was high on our agenda. Importantly, this resolution includes language reaffirming Congress' recognition of the 13th Supreme Soviet as the sole democratically elected and constitutionally legitimate legislative body in Belarus, which is also important, especially as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continues to recognize that to seat the 13th Supreme Soviet as well. In the last few years, I have made numerous direct and indirect intercessions, including through various OSCE institutions, to draw attention to the deplorable situation in Belarus and to encourage the establishment of democracy in Belarus and I assure you that the Helsinki Commission will continue its efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this resolution, and am eager for the House to go on record in support of the restoration of democracy in Belarus. I am especially pleased that the resolution urges the Lukashenka regime to provide a full accounting of the disappearances of several prominent opposition members and urges the release of those imprisoned in Belarus for their political views. I look forward to working with my colleagues to keep the spotlight on Belarus and to encourage the Belarusian government to comply with its freely undertaken OSCE and other international commitments.

ROFEH INTERNATIONAL HONORS
MR. ARNOLD ZALTAS AND DR.
TATSUO HIROSE

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, it has been my distinct honor over the years to take note of the extraordinary valuable work done by Rofeh International, in conjunction with the New England Chassidic Center led by Grand Rabbi Levi Horowitz. Grand Rabbi Horowitz, the Bostoner Rebbe as he is known, is a very distinguished scholar in the field of medical ethics, in addition to his eminence as a scholar of Judaism. Rofeh facilitates making the superb medical treatment that is available in Boston to people from all over the world, and if it were not for Rofeh, a large number of people who have benefitted from this medical treatment would not have been able to do so.

As part of their effort, Rofeh and the New England Chassidic Center have an annual dinner, at which they honor people who have been particularly distinguished in their service to this wonderful cause. This year Rofeh will honor two men. Arnold Zaltas and Tatsuo Hirose.

Dr. Hirose was born in Japan, and graduated from Kanazawa University School of Medicine there in 1961. His initial visit to the United States was 1965 when he was awarded with the Fulbright Fellowship, which allowed him to study clinical electrophysiology in vision at the Department of Ophthalmology, Cornell Medical School in New York. This happened when he was in the third year in the Postdoctoral School in Medicine in Kanazawa University. After spending three years in Cor-

nell, he went back to Kanazawa and finished Postdoctoral School in Ophthalmology at Kanazawa University where he was awarded Doctor of Medical Science in 1969. He came to the Schepens Retina Associates, Retina Foundation (now called Schepens Eye Research Institute) and Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary for training and studying the surgery of the retina in the spring of 1969. He became a member of Schepens Retina Associates in 1973 at the same time he continued conducting research in studying functions of the retina at the Schepens Eye Institute, Harvard Medical School. He has been specializing in difficult complex retinal detachments, such as surgical failures in adults and children. He is particularly interested in infant and children's retinal detachment particularly in premature born babies. He published more than 140 papers in scientific medical journals, edited two books, including the most recent one: Schepens Retinal detachment and allied diseases. He contributed 23 book chapters. He received a Research to Prevent Blindness award, honor award of American Academy of Ophthalmology, Senior Honor Award of American Academy of Ophthalmology, The Paul Kayser International Award of Merit in Retina Research. He has been selected in the Best Doctors in America 1996–1997, and Boston's Best Doctors in Boston Magazine, 1999. At present, he is a Clinical professor in ophthalmology, Harvard Medical School, senior Clinical Scientist at Schepens Eye Research Institutes, and Surgeon at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Arnold I. Zaltas is a partner in the Natick firm of Zaltas, Medoff & Raider, where he concentrates in estate planning, real estate and banking law.

He is a Trustee and General Counsel to the Middlesex Savings Bank, and serves as a Director of the Natick Visiting Nurse Association. He has served as Trustee of the Leonard Morse Hospital. Mr. Zaltas is a graduate of the Boston University School of Law, is past President of the Boston University Law School Alumni Association, and a recipient of the School of Law's Silver Shingle Award in recognition of outstanding service to the School. He is a Trustee of Temple Israel of Natick, where he was the recipient of the Maurice Geshelin Humanitarian Award.

Arnold is a long-time resident of Natick, where he resides with his wife, Brenda. They have three children: A. David Zaltas, an attorney, Mandi M. Kunen, an ophthalmologist, Marjorie Rubin, an attorney, and three grandchildren.

Arnold Zaltas and Tatsuo Hirose deserve hearty congratulations for the excellent work they do. Being recognized by Project Rofeh is a great honor, and I am pleased to take this opportunity to salute the work of this important organization of these two men.

A COWBOY'S LAST RIDE

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, family and friends recently said their final goodbyes to 101-year-old Paul T. Veluzat, one of the last

of the American cowboys. He leaves behind a great legacy.

Paul's travels as a cowboy and a shrewd businessman began on Dec. 6, 1898, when he was born in Summershade, KY. At age 17 he went to work in a shipyard, then made his way to Texas where he joined the Texas Rangers. Paul was one of the first people to board the German submarine that sank the Lusitania, an event that precipitated the United States' entry into World War I.

Paul's love of horses led him back and forth to Mexico, where he rode with the revolutionary, Francisco "Pancho" Villa. He eventually came to California where he worked as a bodyguard to industrialist J. Paul Getty and evangelist Aimee Semple MacPherson. He became a devout Christian—something his family and friends said was one of the most important aspects of his life. He purchased real estate throughout the Los Angeles area, including a ranch he called the "Diamond B" in Saugus where he ran cattle, and raised racehorses.

Paul's passion for horses was as strong as his passion for filmmaking. The Veluzat family owns Melody Ranch, home to over 750 "B" western movies as well as other notable films and television shows such as the beloved Gunsmoke. "Last Man Standing" starring Bruce Willis was recently filmed there.

Paul was very successful. He and his first wife, Opal, were simple and down to earth, they were astute in business and had unquestionable integrity. Paul's word was his bond. Ninety percent of his business was conducted by a handshake or over the phone. Paul's true success was measured by his deep spirituality and the love and respect he gained from his family and his many friends. He will be remembered as a generous man who was liked by all.

Paul Veluzat is survived by Rosa, his wife of 14 years, his sons, Rene, Andre and Renaud, four grandchildren, Shantel Hudson, Daniel, Paul and Marcel Veluzat, three great-grandchildren and many, many friends.

STATEMENT OF HIS ROYAL
HIGHNESS PRINCE SAYAVONG

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend to my colleagues the following letter and testimony sent by His Royal Highness Prince Sayavong to Philip Smith, of the Center for Public Policy Analysis, for the U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos that was held on September 7, 2000. My foreign policy advisor, Mr. Al Santoli, was one of the keynote speakers at this event after returning from a research mission to Southeast Asia.

As a Member of the House International Relations Committee, I appreciate the important role of the Royal Family in Laos—past, present, and future. Laos is currently ruled by a one-party Communist regime. After 25 years of communism, its people want and need change. The Lao and Hmong people are rightfully demanding freedom, democracy, human rights and economic prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to submit for the RECORD the important statement of His Royal Highness.

Paris 4 September 2000

Hon. PHILIP SMITH,

Center for Public Policy Analysis, U.S. Congress—Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

Subject: U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos—7 September 2000.

I should be most grateful if you could kindly distribute the attached paper—though unsolicited—to Distinguished Members of the Forum who are to examine the "challenges and opportunities surrounding the 25th Anniversary of the Lao People's Democratic Republic". The views expressed herein are those of the Lao people as a whole whom I am privileged to represent during the last 4 years from our operating Bureau in Paris (40bis Rue Championnet 74018 Paris—France).

Thank you most sincerely for your kind assistance and understanding.

H.R.H. PRINCE SAYAVONG,

Brig. General, The Lao National Army—

Surviving son of King Sri Savangvong (1885–1959) and Half-brother of King Sri Savang Vatthana (1907–1980).

[U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos, U.S. Congress—Capitol Hill, Washington, DC 20510 Sept. 7, 2000]

THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LPDR): AN APPRAISAL AFTER 25 YEARS OF COMMUNIST RULE.

[By Brig General Tiao Sayavong

The year 1975 should go down in Laos' history, indeed in Indochina's as the most tragic date in our common memory—where our beloved country suddenly sustained a horrible cataclysm of gigantic magnitude, plunging that part of the world in total darkness. That was the year where millions of peoples—young and old—had to leave behind their most cherished treasures in order to escape forced-labour camps and death, and to seek freedom in foreign lands.

For us free Laotians we consider December 2nd of each year as the time of mourning—of national mourning—of national mourning since it brings back to memory the death of our age-old traditions and way of life, of our fertile soils and rivers and mountains which we inherited from our forefathers. The Kingdom of Laos was one of the most ancient nations in Asia—the cradle of post-angkorian civilization. Of course, we will never forget that we were the victims of world politics, and we know too that we were the sacrificial lambs of the American foreign policy at that time. That the Pathet-Lao were able to overwhelm us so massive support—politically, militarily and logistically from the Soviet stooges who at the very moment run the show from Hanoi which incidentally will become the future capital of the Socialist Republic of Indochina by the year 2020!

DISASTROUS BALANCE SHEET

After 25 years behind the bamboo curtain what do we see today? Politically we see that the following inhumane abuses are daily occurrence: violation of basic human rights; non-respect of fundamental freedoms; brutal suppression of democratic dissent; imprisonment without due process of the law; arbitrary arrest upon simple denunciation and torture. Economically the LPDR ranked among the ten poorest countries in the world today according to the United Nations. Per capita income is less than \$300; foreign debt amounts to well over \$3 billion or more; local currency (the Kip) is almost worthless; inflation averaged 300 percent annually thus pushing the rate of the Kip up to almost 10,000 to a dollar. Without substantial external assistance the government will not be able to function normally. The inevitable consequence is that ordinary citizens find their daily existence totally unbearable—

fueling pervasive resentment against the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is obvious to everyone that the LPDR is actually on the brink of explosion at any moment! Socially peaceful Lao traditional society is turned upside down—forcing thousands of young men and girls to flee across the borders in order to escape misery and seek good fortune in neighboring Thailand. Meanwhile millions of foreigners, mostly from North Vietnam—keep pouring into the country to fill the void—thus bringing destruction and irreparable damage to our thick forests and wildlife and driving local inhabitants to abandon their lands with apparent impunity. Recently Hanoi promised to triple the Lao population—actually estimated at 5 million—by the year 2020!

PATH TO SALVATION

Since the Lao people are being prevented from changing their government for the better through democratic means external intervention—essentially from Western powers, the United States and Japan therefore become critical in order to bring about needed radical reforms in our country.

Even before S. Res. 240 and H. Res. 169 were officially adopted by the US Congress we have had numerous opportunities of submitting to The Honorable Senator R. Grams, Senator C. Thomas, US Representative B. Vento and Chairman J. Helms for consideration of a number of concrete proposals aimed at restoring social justice, liberty and democracy in our homeland. They still remain valid to these days, viz:

1. We humbly request that S. Res. 240 and H. Res. 169 be transmitted to the Executive Branch as soon as feasible together with ample budgetary appropriations necessary for their implementation;

2. We humbly request that the US government set up a Special Lao Task Force (SLTF) to be charged with the responsibility of translating the sense of the US Congress into practical reality without further delays; the SLTF should be required to work closely with all truly anti-communist groupings (such as the Lao Liberation Front led by Major-General Vang Pao and the Party of Vientiane Government—PGVT—under the chairmanship of Phagna Houmphan Saignasith) put in place by Lao refugees in the United States, Europe and elsewhere—excluding those openly or discreetly in favor of power-sharing with the communist Pathet-Lao;

3. We humbly request the US government to take the lead in choosing the future Lao political leaders from among the Lao anti-communist elite to all ethnic groups residing abroad; these selected intellectuals should form the backbone of the Kingdom's political, economic and administrative framework;

4. We humbly request the US government to solicit the concurrence, support and commitment of the countries signatory of the Geneva Accords of 1962 on Laos neutrality and of those which were party to the Paris Agreements of 1973;

5. We humbly request that the US government resolve in collaboration with ASEAN and the United Nations—to exert maximum diplomatic and military pressure upon the marxist authorities in Vientiane in order to compel them to relinquish power and be replaced by a new power structure freely elected by the Lao people; and

6. We humbly request that the US government, with the concurrence and support of its allied, announce a massive assistance programme designed to help the newly-elected government of the Kingdom of Laos to reconstruct the country anew on the basis of respect for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.