

I am proud to report to my colleagues that Colonel Glantz Trojan's personal awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, as well as several Army meritorious and commendation medals and the Southwest Asia Campaign and Kuwait Liberation medals.

Mr. Speaker, this exemplary soldier, my friend Colonel Roslyn Glantz Trojan, deserves the thanks and praise of this grateful nation she has faithfully served for so long. I know the Members of the House will join me in wishing her and her husband all the best in the years ahead.

ELECTIONS IN AZERBAIJAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on November 5, parliamentary elections were held in Azerbaijan. In anticipation of those elections, the Helsinki Commission—which I chair—held hearings in May, at which representatives of the government and opposition leaders testified. While the former pledged that Baku would conduct a democratic contest, in accordance with OSCE standards, the latter warned that Azerbaijan's past record of holding seriously flawed elections required the strictest vigilance from the international community and pressure from Western capitals and the Council of Europe—to which Azerbaijan has applied for membership.

Subsequently, I introduced a resolution, H. Con. Res. 382, which called on the Government of Azerbaijan to hold free and fair elections and to accept the recommended amendments by the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to the law on elections.

From the start, there was pressure to withdraw the resolution from the Azerbaijani government and others. They argued that President Aliiev had made, or would make, the necessary changes to ensure that the election met international standards, claiming to render the resolution either irrelevant or out of date. That pressure intensified as the election drew near; in fact, the resolution never came to a vote before Congress went out of session in early November.

It is worth recalling this brief history in light of what actually happened during Azerbaijan's pre-election period and on November 5. With respect to the election law, one of ODIHR's concerns was ultimately addressed by a decision of Azerbaijan's constitutional court, but on other important issues, Baku rejected any concessions and refused to incorporate ODIHR's suggested changes. From the beginning, therefore, the election could not have met OSCE standards, as ODIHR made plain in several statements.

During the registration period, the Central Election Commission (CEC) rejected several leading opposition parties. Claiming that government experts could tell which signatures were forged, fraudulent or otherwise invalid merely on the basis of a visual examination, the CEC maintained the Musavat and the Azerbaijan Democratic Party had failed to get 50,000 valid signatures. The same thing hap-

pened to Musavat in the 1995 parliamentary election. At that time, the OSCE/UN observation mission emphasized the need to amend or get rid of this obviously flawed method of determining the validity of signatures, but Azerbaijan's authorities did not heed that advice.

The exclusion of leading opposition parties drew strong criticism, both inside and outside the country, including the OSCE and the U.S. Government. In early October, in apparent reaction to international concern, President Aliiev "appealed" to the CEC to find some way of registering excluded opposition parties. Some CEC members objected, arguing there was no constitutional basis for such a presidential appeal or a changed CEC ruling, but the Commission moved to include opposition parties. Though their participation certainly broadened the choice available to voters, the manner of their inclusion demonstrated conclusively that President Aliiev controlled the entire election process.

ODIHR welcomed the decision by the CEC and urged a reconsideration of the exclusion of over 400 individual candidates—about half of those who tried to run in single-mandate districts. But the CEC did not do so, and only in very few cases were previously excluded candidates allowed to run. As 100 of parliament's 125 seats were determined in single mandate districts, where local authorities exercise considerable power, the rejection of over 400 candidates signaled the government's determination to decide the outcome of the vote.

Though coverage of the campaign on state media favored the ruling party, opposition leaders were able to address voters on television. They used the opportunity—which they had not enjoyed for years—to criticize President Aliiev and offer an alternative vision of governing the country. Their equal access to the media marked progress with respect to previous elections, as noted in the ODIHR's election report.

However, the voting and vote count on election day itself, according to the ODIHR's election observation mission, failed to meet OSCE standards. That is the usual dry ODIHR formulation to characterize an election that was not fair—i.e., the conditions for the participants were not equal—and in which the official results are not reliable or credible. The November 6 statement elaborated: "The elections were marred by numerous instances of serious irregularities, in particular, a completely flawed counting process." Moreover, "observers reported ballot stuffing, manipulated turn-out results, pre-marked ballots, and production of either false protocols or no protocols at all."

The international observers express their concern at what seems to be a clear manipulation of electoral procedures."

This would be bad enough, considering that the election was the fourth since 1995 that failed to meet OSCE standards, even if some progress was registered in opposition participation and representation in the CEC. Much more interesting and disturbing, however, were the words used in a post-election press conference by two key international observers: Gerard Stoudman, the Director of ODIHR, who generally employs measured, diplomatic language, said he had not expected to witness "a crash course in various types of manipulation," and actually used the phrase "primitive falsification" to describe what he had seen. Andreas Gross, the head of the observer dele-

gation of the Council of Europe—an organization to which Azerbaijan has applied for membership and which is not particularly known for hard-hitting assessments of election shenanigans—amplified: "Despite the positive changes observed in Azerbaijan in recent years, the scale of the infringements doesn't fit into any framework. We've never seen anything like it."

Mr. Speaker, in the context of international election observation, such a brutally candid assessment is simply stunning. As far as I know, representatives of ODIHR or the Council of Europe have never expressed themselves in such terms about an election that they decided to monitor. One senses that the harshness of their judgment is related to their disappointment: Azerbaijan's authorities had promised to conduct free and fair elections and had long negotiated with the ODIHR and the Council of Europe about the legal framework and administrative modalities but, in the end, held an election that can only be described as an embarrassment to all concerned.

According to Azerbaijan's CEC, in the party list voting, only four parties passed the six-percent threshold for parliamentary representation: President Aliiev's governing party, the New Azerbaijan Party; the Communist Party; and two opposition parties, the Popular Front [Reformers] and Civil Solidarity. Other important opposition parties allegedly failed to break the barrier and apart from a few single mandate seats won no representation in parliament.

In the aftermath of the election and the assessments of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe, the international legitimacy of Azerbaijan's legislature is severely undermined. Within Azerbaijan, the ramifications are no better. All the leading opposition parties have accused the authorities of massive vote fraud, denounced the election results, and have refused to take the few seats in parliament they were given. Though some governing party representatives have claimed that opposition representation is not necessary for the parliament to function normally, others—perhaps including President Aliiev—understand that a parliament without opposition members is ruinous for Azerbaijan's image. New elections are slated in 11 districts, and perhaps President Aliiev is hoping to tempt some opposition parties to abandon their boycott by offering a few more seats. Whether opposition parties, which are bitterly divided, will participate or eventually agree to take up their deputies' mandates remains to be seen.

What is clearer from the conduct of the election and its outcome is that President Aliiev, who is preparing the succession of his son as Azerbaijan's next president, was determined to keep opposition leaders out of parliament and ensure that the body as a whole is supportive of his heir. If the only way to guarantee the desired outcome was wholesale vote fraud, so be it. Prognoses of possible accommodation with the opposition, or possibly even some power sharing arrangements, to facilitate a smooth and peaceful transfer of power, have proved unfounded. Indeed, President Aliiev reportedly has told the new UK Ambassador to Baku that Azerbaijan does not need to join the Council of Europe, indicating that he is not prepared to make any concessions when it comes to maintaining his grip on power and passing it on to his chosen heir, whatever the international community thinks.

Even more worrisome is that by depriving the opposition of the possibility to contend for power through parliamentary means, Aliiev has seriously reduced the chances of a "soft landing" in Azerbaijan. When he eventually leaves the scene, anything could happen. This is not only a frightening prospect for the citizens of Azerbaijan, its neighbors and hopes for resolving regional disputes, especially the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict—it is a scenario that should alarm policymakers in Washington as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to say "I told you so" to those colleagues who argued against my resolution. I would much have preferred to make a statement congratulating Azerbaijan on having held exemplary elections and making substantial steps towards democratization. Alas, I cannot do so, which should sadden and concern all of us. But I fear the consequences will be far more serious for the citizens of Azerbaijan.

NEW YORK'S HEALTHY START CONSORTIUM HELPS REDUCE IN- FANT MORTALITY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, today I praise the outstanding work of New York's Healthy Start Consortium. Healthy Start/NYC (HS/NYC), a collaborative, community-driven, Federal project was founded in 1991 to combat infant mortality and poor maternal and child health in three medically underserved areas. New York neighborhoods like Bedford-Stuyvesant, Mott Haven and Central Harlem have some of the Nation's highest infant mortality and poverty rates. From 1991 to 1997, HS/NYC served 30,000 women and their families annually which lead to a 40 percent decrease in the infant mortality rate, a drop in low birth weights and a 24 percent decline in births to teens.

The Consortium has been able to create a strong public-private network of health and social service agencies, providers, schools, churches, businesses, and individuals. It has remained committed to its community-driven, collaborative approach. I want to particularly commend the work of Ngozi Moses with the Brooklyn Perinatal Network; Arlene Bailey-Franklin with the Bronx Perinatal Consortium; Sharon Rumley with the Queens Comprehensive Perinatal Council; Goldie Watkins-Bryant with Healthy Start/New York City Project; Luci Chambers, with Downstate New York Healthy Start Project; Mario Drummonds, with Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership; Cheryl Brown-Hoyte with Nassau County's Healthy Start Project and Dara Cerwonka with Suffolk County Perinatal Coalition.

Now that the Healthy Start Program has been reauthorized, I look forward to working with the Healthy Start/New York City Consortium in the months ahead. The Consortium hopes to broaden its work with consumers. I am certain that the Consortium will be able to bring new families into its program during the next fiscal year. Once again, I offer my congratulations to the Consortium on a job well done.

TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN HENRY B. GON- ZALEZ

SPEECH OF

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our colleague, the late Henry B. Gonzalez, who died on November 28, 2000, and who served the House and the Nation for 37 years as one of its most revered public servants. To his family, his wife Bertha, his son CHARLIE who now serves in the House as our colleague, and to all of his constituents in the 20th District in Texas, I extend my most sincere condolences. My prayers are with all of you in the hope of giving comfort against the grief of your great loss.

What to say about Henry B., as he was affectionately known in his San Antonio Congressional District. In the House, Henry B. was known as a fierce activist for the poor and for minorities in the field of housing, small business, community development, and consumer fairness. He was an unbridled advocate for what he believed was right for his constituents and the Nation.

For Members like me, he was a friend, a mentor and an educator—because without his knowledge and willingness to share, many of us who did not have the privilege or opportunity to serve with him on the Banking and Housing Committee would not have known what was going on, or how to resolve the problems facing the Nation—from affordable housing to community development to salvaging the savings and loan industry, naming only a few of his many struggles to secure the American dream for all Americans.

From the beginning of his adult life, Henry B. was on fire to help his people and his State and his country. A feisty first-ever Mexican-American to serve in the State Legislature, he was also the first to be selected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1963—and in both jobs he went about kicking down ethnic barriers, facing civil rights issues with searing defiance that meant a 36 hour filibuster in the Texas State Senate, defeating 16 segregationist bills, to punching out a restaurant patron in the 1970's for calling him a "communist." When an apology was demanded, Henry B. said only that he was sorry he had pulled the punch.

During his 37 years in the House of Representatives, Henry B. Gonzalez spoke out for the people—all people—on behalf of the needs of the working poor—long before it was popular to do so. He held in his hand the day of his swearing in as a Member of this House a bill to abolish the Poll Tax which was eventually enacted, and he never stopped working against all kinds of discrimination against the poor and the disenfranchised in our country.

And so we say goodbye to Henry Gonzalez, knowing that the rich, the poor, the powerful, the disadvantaged, the young and the old, are better off than they would have otherwise been without his caring and compassion, and without the fire in his heart and the courage of his convictions as a public servant that left so much good in its wake—enough to last a lifetime.

We celebrate the life of Henry B. Gonzalez, who served under eight presidents and be-

came a legend in his own time, by conferring upon him the titles of statesman, warrior, pioneer, patriot, hero and a national treasure. We also remember him as funny, brilliant, a maverick, and a coalition builder who lived his life and served his people with exuberant ardor. Most of all he was genuine, and he was honest to a fault.

But Henry B. Gonzalez said it best: "I have never failed myself, and I have never failed you."

He provided the opportunity for all of us to follow in his footsteps, and none more so than his beloved son, the gentleman from Texas, CHARLIE GONZALEZ, our colleague now serving the 20th District of Texas, and I again extend to him and his family my heartfelt sorrow and tell them, Henry B. will never be forgotten.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION ADDRESSING THE FLU VACCINE SHORTAGE

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2000

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, influenza is a serious illness that afflicts millions of Americans each year. While most Americans recover after a few days, influenza causes thousands of deaths each year, mostly among the elderly. Fortunately, vaccination can prevent a person from becoming infected with influenza.

Influenza vaccines are developed each year because the flu virus naturally mutates and changes. This year's strain of flu vaccine has been a particularly difficult strain to produce for all manufacturers, and as a result, there are lower than normal yields. Although we expect there will be sufficient vaccines for this year, there has been a delay in releasing vaccines to the public.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended vaccinations first be given to individuals who are at particularly high risk for developing complications. This group includes individuals who are 65 years or older, people who suffer from chronic illnesses, individuals in nursing homes, children who are undergoing long-term aspirin therapy, and pregnant women.

Ninety percent of vaccines are distributed by private sector distributors for use by health care providers. This resolution urges these private sector distributors to follow the CDC's recommendations to ensure that those at highest risk for influenza complications be given priority in receiving their vaccine.

H. RES. —

Whereas influenza is a contagious viral infection that affects the respiratory tract;

Whereas people of any age can become infected with influenza;

Whereas, although most people who become infected with influenza recover within a few days, some people develop serious complications that can become life-threatening;

Whereas influenza causes thousands of deaths each year, mostly among the elderly;

Whereas vaccination can prevent a person from becoming infected with influenza;

Whereas the periodic mutation of the influenza virus requires the influenza vaccine to be annually updated to contain the most recent influenza virus strains;