

budget as the annual Legislative appropriations bill makes its way through Congress. John frequently served as point man in making sure that we had accurate information and figures as our legislation was constructed.

All too often, Mr. Speaker, in the rush of day to day activities, we elected Members of the House forget the hard work and dedication of House employees other than those in our personal offices. The American people are fortunate to have hard working public servants such as John Straub. In a hundred ways, John has made the House a better, fairer place to work and serve for literally thousands of other public servants.

In closing, besides his many practical accomplishments, Mr. Straub brought to the House a personal style that is both professional and refreshing. He always had a kind word and a smile, and applied boundless energy to every task.

While we in the House are disappointed to lose a person of his caliber, we're pleased that he'll be able to support one of the Nation's pre-eminent education institutions, Harvard University, as Associate Dean for administration of the Kennedy School of Government. On behalf of the members and the institution, we thank John Straub for his service and dedication, and wish him best of luck in his future endeavors.

---

RETHINKING FIRE IN THE WAKE  
OF FIREFIGHTER DEATHS

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, on July 10, 2001, four of Washington State's young firefighters died battling a forest fire on the Okanogan National Forest. As I have had time to reflect on this tragic event, I have come to realize that wildland fire suppression continues to be a dangerous and risky operation.

As in previous tragedies such as the Mann Gulch fire in Montana and the Storm King Mountain fire in Colorado, our hearts pour out to the families, friends, and colleagues of those who perished fighting wildland fires. The deaths of Tom L. Craven, Jessica L. Johnson, Karen L. Fitzpatrick, and Devin A. Weaver is a disturbing reminder of Mother Nature's powerful forces and unrelenting risks faced by our dedicated firefighters. Although seventeen firefighters lived, as did two campers caught in the explosive fire, I am grieved by the deaths of these four young people and I do not want this to happen again.

Their tragic deaths raise significant questions—questions that may likely go unasked in the Forest Service investigation: Could these deaths have been prevented through a different systemic response to fire? Should the Forest Service have been expending hundreds of thousands of dollars and risking the lives of dozens of firefighters to fight a fire in a remote canyon that threatened no houses or resources? Would a fire management plan have ensured that the fire would have been handled differently?

The Okanogan fire started in remote backcountry adjacent to a Wilderness Area. The nearest house was at least ten miles

away, the nearest town twenty miles away. While the cause of the fire is not yet known, we do know that the fire began in a designated roadless area. If the forest had a fire management plan in place—as is required by countless agency directives—it is likely that such a plan for the area would have provided alternative strategy options for the Forest Service.

The Okanogan fire underscores the need to re-examine our nation's approach to forest fire and to reframe the terms of debate. In the wake of this fire will come calls to reduce fire risks through aggressive thinning and full funding for fire preparedness. However, this approach merely perpetuates the culture of fire suppression that operates with few fiscal or social constraints. It also serves to exacerbate the risks of fire through fire exclusion. It perpetuates the illusion that we can and should control all fire, regardless of location and ecosystem. These suppression efforts make little sense fiscally or environmentally. A different approach would have the agency stop putting out fires in remote backcountry.

Last year, Congress allocated \$1.6 billion to the Forest Service for implementation of its national fire plan. In addition to working with homeowners to reduce vegetation around their homes, these dollars should be spent on returning fire to its natural role in the ecosystem. We can do this through targeting thinning, prescribed burns, and fire-use policies. We also should be spending money on fire management planning and sensible suppression efforts—ones that do not needlessly endanger lives.

Putting out all fires regardless of location and ecosystem simply puts off the inevitable. The West's forests have burned for thousands of years and will continue to do so. We must learn to live with fire, rather than stepping up the assault on what is still perceived by many as "the enemy." We must stop sacrificing our young people in this futile effort.

I would like to enter into the record the following op ed from the Portland Oregonian that highlights these issues:

[From the Portland Oregonian, July 17, 2001]

DEAD FIREFIGHTERS WERE SENT WHERE THEY  
DIDN'T BELONG

(By Andy Stahl)

I write this not long after four young men and women died battling the Thirty Mile fire in the remote Chewuch River canyon of the Okanogan National Forest.

Tom Craven, Karen Fitzpatrick, Devin Weaver and Jessica Johnson were sent by the Forest Service to do a job. They died in the performance of that duty.

But was the job they were doing worth their lives? Did this fire, in a steep, remote canyon that threatened no houses or valuable resources, need to be battled? During its investigation into these tragic deaths, the U.S. Forest Service had better answer these questions.

The Thirty Mile fire started in roadless, backcountry land immediately adjacent to the remote Pasayten wilderness. Perhaps the fire started from an unattended campfire; the investigation has yet to pin down the cause.

The fire began in a designated Research Natural Area, at 6,000 acres, one of the largest RNAs in the nation.

This is important in what happened next: It appears fire managers did not even know the fire was in a Research Natural Area. Had they known, they would not have aggress-

sively attacked the fire with aerial retardants and firelines, which are banned in RNAs. Instead, they would have held back and taken a more cautious approach to fighting this fire—an approach that sought to allow the fire to mimic natural processes within this fire-dependent ecosystem.

Admittedly, hindsight can be 20-20, but it is worth considering that a more cautious approach to fighting this fire might also have saved lives.

The Thirty Mile fire exemplifies the need to take a hard look at our nation's approach to wildland fires. A century of aggressive fire suppression, combined with logging of the biggest and most fire-resistant trees, has damaged ecosystems throughout the West. Continuing to put out every fire in the remote backcountry makes little sense economically or environmentally. We must carefully restore fire to its prominent role as nature's cleansing agent in our public forests.

Last year the Congress allocated a record amount, \$1.6 billion, to the Forest Service for its national fire plan. The first priority should be to help private homeowners who live near fire-prone national forests to manage the vegetation within several hundred feet of their houses. That's where the biggest difference is made between a home burning up in a forest fire and a home surviving. The next priority should be to return fire to its natural role in the environment.

Putting out all fires simply puts off the day of reckoning. Burn today or burn tomorrow, the West's forests have burned for thousands of years and will continue to do so.

We must learn to live with fire just as we live with the weather. And we must stop sacrificing our best and brightest young people in this futile war against an implacable enemy.

---

COMMEMORATING ROTARY INTERNATIONAL AND ITS NEW PRESIDENT, RICHARD KING

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, on July 1, 2001, Richard King, of Fremont, California, was officially named the 2001–2002 president of Rotary International, one of the largest volunteer organizations in the world. Mr. King is a trial lawyer and a member of the Rotary Club of Niles. A Rotary club member since 1968, Mr. King has served as a trustee of The Rotary Foundation and director and chairman of the Executive Committee of Rotary International's board of directors. He has been an active spokesperson at Rotary functions in more than 75 countries.

Rotarians are represented in more than 160 countries worldwide and approximately 1.2 million Rotarians belong to more than 29,000 Rotary Clubs. The main objective of Rotary is service in the community, in the workplace and throughout the world. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many critical issues, such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy, the environment, violence and children at risk. They also support programs for youth, educational opportunities and international exchange for students, teachers, and other professionals, and vocational and career development.

The Rotary motto is Service Above Self. As Richard King assumes the helm of leadership,

I am confident he will completely exemplify the Rotary motto. I join Rotarians throughout the world in congratulating Mr. King on the presidency and wishing him every success.

HONORING MAJOR CHARLES  
"CHUCK" MONGES

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Major Charles "Chuck" Monges. Major Monges died of a massive heart attack at the age of 79 on July 24, 2001, in Fresno, CA.

Major Monges joined the United States Marines Corps after graduating from high school in 1940. He served for nine years during and after World War II, earning the rank of Sergeant. In 1952, Monges joined the United States Army where he served in the Korean War. After eleven years with the Army, he retired with the rank of Major.

Major Monges earned several distinguished awards for his service in the United States Military. During intense combat in World War II, Major Monges risked his own life by dragging a wounded soldier from the battlefield to safety. After his platoon came to his aid, they managed to annihilate the enemy. This extraordinary bravery earned him the Navy Cross and the Purple Heart.

In the Korean War, Major Monges earned the Bronze Star and the Soldier's Medal for Bravery. Again, he dragged wounded soldiers away from a dangerous area, even though his own life was in danger. Once they were in a safe location, Monges proceeded to treat the wounds of the injured soldiers. Monges' actions during combat defined him as a true American hero.

After his retirement from the military in 1963, Major Monges began his charge to establish a national museum to honor members of the Legion of Valor. The Legion of Valor was established in 1890 to honor recipients of the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, and the Distinguished Service Cross. With help from other veterans and the Fresno City Council, Major Monges' dream became reality in 1991. The 10,000 square foot Legion of Valor Museum was put together by a staff of volunteers and is one of the most unique and inspiring military museums in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory and life of Major Chuck Monges. I wish to send my condolences to his family and friends.

HONORING THOMAS L. BERKLEY

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Thomas L. Berkley for his contributions to the community and to the Nation.

Mr. Berkley was born in Illinois in 1915. At the age of four, he and his family moved to Southern California. In 1936, he attended Ful-

lerton Junior College, where he would later earn an Associate of Arts Degree. He went on to UCLA and completed his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and Finance. Mr. Berkley was accepted into Hastings Law School in the San Francisco Bay Area, and became active in the NAACP. He received his Juris Doctor in 1942 and was admitted to the California State Bar a year later.

After finishing his academic career, Mr. Berkley proudly joined the United States Army. He fought bravely in World War II and achieved the rank of Second Lieutenant.

At the end of the war, Mr. Berkley came back to Oakland and became the head of one of the Nation's largest integrated, bilingual law firms. He helped established the careers of notable men such as Judge Clinton White and Allen Broussard, and former Mayors of Oakland, Elihu Harris and Lionel Wilson.

Mr. Berkley was not only active in law, but also active in business and in the media. He was the president of Berkley International Ltd., Berkley Technical Services and CEO of Berkley Financial Services. Mr. Berkley also was the publisher of the Alameda Publishing Corporation, which publishes the Oakland, San Francisco, and Richmond Post newspapers.

Mr. Berkley is a visionary and a motivator. He helped turn the Port of Oakland to a world-class facility. He saw the need for guidance to our children, so he served as a director for the Oakland Unified School District. He saw the need for social and economic improvement in some of Oakland's neighborhoods, so he became an advisor to the Greater Acorn Community Improvement Association.

Mr. Berkley has led a tireless and committed crusade to better our society. He not only helped spur business development, but he also helped individuals achieve their goals and dreams.

I am honored to salute and take great pride in celebrating with his family, friends and colleagues the distinguished accomplishments of Thomas L. Berkley.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this chamber when roll call votes number 257, 258, and 259 were cast. I want the record to show that had I been present in this chamber at the time these votes were cast, I would have voted "yes" on roll call vote number 257, "yes" on roll call vote 258, "yes" on roll call vote 259.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CENTRAL ASIA  
A DECADE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as we head into our August recess, we should recall that almost ten years have passed since a group of conspirators attempted to topple

Soviet President Gorbachev. The failure of that putsch precipitated declarations of independence by numerous Soviet republics, including those in Central Asia, and led several months later to the formal dissolution of the USSR. Today, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan remain independent, a definite plus. But in other respects, we have witnessed regression from levels reached at the end of the Soviet era, when Gorbachev's programs of glasnost and perestroika mandated a certain level of tolerance for opposing viewpoints and organized opposition activity.

Specifically, with respect to democratization, human rights and the rule of law, overall trends in the region are extremely discouraging. In 1992, these countries unreservedly accepted the commitments of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). But despite the carefully crafted claims of Central Asian leaders and their spokesmen, in the region and in Washington, the trend is toward consolidation of authoritarian control and increased repression, not gradual democratization. The Helsinki Commission, which I have chaired and now co-chair, has held three hearings on Central Asia since 1999. Partly on the basis of testimony during those hearings, I introduced H. Con. Res. 397, which expressed the Congress' concern about the lack of democratization and violations of fundamental human rights throughout Central Asia. The measure was passed last November by an overwhelming majority (362-3) of the House.

In floor statements introducing the resolution, I argued that the main cause of authoritarian government and repression in Central Asia was the determination of the region's leaders to perpetuate themselves in power by any means necessary. This desire, in turn, is fueled by their corruption, which they strive to conceal from their impoverished publics. The pattern is infuriating: rulers enrich themselves, their families and favored few, while the rest of the population struggles to eke out a miserable existence. In turn, the authoritarian leaders suppress freedom of the press and the right to engage in political activity. Dissidents are harassed and jailed. Human rights defenders are tortured while being held in incommunicado detention.

Indeed, one of the greatest challenges facing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is the emergence in Central Asia of an entire region where basic OSCE principles and commitments are ignored—in fact, flouted, with increasing brazenness. Turkmenistan's President Niyazov made himself virtual president for life in December 1999. Kazakhstan's President Nazarbaev—who has extended his tenure in office through referenda, canceling elections, and staging deeply flawed elections—last summer arranged to receive lifelong privileges and perks. In Kyrgyzstan, President Akaev, who was once considered democracy's best hope, has already rigged two elections in order to keep serious contenders from running against him. He is now reportedly planning to stage a referendum on extending his tenure in office from five years to seven. Welcome to the club, President Akaev. I continue to suspect that some of these leaders who already head what are, for all intents and purposes, royal families are planning to establish family dynasties.