EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 280. This resolution expresses solidarity with Israel in its fight against terrorism following the recent attacks in Haifa and Jerusalem during the weekend of December 1–2, 2001. This resolution also urges the President to ensure that Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat carries out a sustained campaign against terrorism.

In the latest attacks in this troubled region, Palestinian terrorists took the lives of 26 innocent Israeli citizens and wounded at least 175 others. Those who are responsible for these attacks have committed brutal acts of murder, and no cause can justify their actions. I wish to express my deepest condolences to all of those who have been affected by these tragic events.

As we mourn for the thousands of Americans who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks of September 11th, we also mourn for the innumerable men, women, and children of Israel who have suffered at the hands of terrorists for decades. Now more than ever, the United States and Israel are bound together in the common fight for freedom, security, and tolerance for all.

During the past 15 months of violence in the Middle East, the Palestinian leadership has turned a blind eye to terrorist activity within the Palestinian territories. Terrorist groups have actively recruited new members, planned attacks and carried out violent acts against innocent citizens with little or no fear of punishment by the Palestinian Authority.

Despite numerous commitments made by Mr. Arafat to take action against these terrorists, the violence has continued. The time has come to call on Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian leadership to demonstrate a true commitment to the eradication of terrorism in all its forms. We must insist that Mr. Arafat validate his words with real actions and a demonstrable effort to arrest, prosecute and punish perpetrators of terrorist attacks. We must make clear that we will not tolerate terrorism!

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the current challenges to the Middle East peace process are monumental. The prospect for peace is not only contingent on the ability of the Palestinian Authority to combat terrorism, but it is also dependent on the level of commitment from the Israeli leadership. Both sides of this conflict must accept certain compromises, or peace efforts will be in vain. However, we must not abandon our vision of peace, security, and opportunity for all Israelis and Palestinians.

IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL J. BURKE

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Michael Burke, a community leader, a friend and a constituent who passed away on December 6.

Mike was a managing partner of the Cincinnati law firm of Keating Muething and Klekamp, PLL, and Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of KMK Consulting Company, LLC. He was dedicated, giving, and generous. One of the founders of the law firm, John Muething, said of Mike, ''He was a true leader . . . and a constant source of energy and inspiration to others . . .'' Don Klekamp, a partner of Mike's for 33 years, recalled that ''Mike was an outstanding entrepreneurial business lawyer, but he was more than a lawyer to clients. He was a confidant and trusted advisor.''

Very active in his community, Mike was President of Our Lord Christ the King Parish Council, President of the Education Committee, and co-chaired its Capital Campaign to build a parish center. At Ursuline Academy of Cincinnati, Mike was Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Chairman of the Long Tenn Planning Committee, and Chairman of the first Capital Campaign. In 1998, I had the honor of helping to present Mike with the Heart of Gold Award by Boys Hope/Girls Hope. He was also honored as Man of the Year by the Cincinnati Club of the University of Notre Dame.

A graduate of Newport Central Catholic High School, Mike received his B.B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and his J.D. from the University of Cincinnati, where he was a member of the Order of the Coif. He was devoted to his wife, Marcia, and their five children: Tricia, Jennifer, Michael, Brian and Anne.

A close friend, Jim McGraw, managing partner of KMK Consulting, said, ''While his journey was cut short, [Mike's] incredible spirit is forever ingrained in the lives of all who worked beside him.'' All of us who were so enriched by Mike's energy, courage and faith will miss him.

KEEPING THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROMISE INITIATIVE

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES W. STENHOLM

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong disappointment with the rhetoric coming from both sides of the aisle on this resolution. We do a disservice to our constituents and to future generations when we bury our heads in the sand and ignore the very real financial challenges facing the Social Security system.

Everyone who has examined the financial outlook of the Social Security system understands that we need to take action to make sure that Social Security remains strong for future generations. The Commission to Strengthen Social Security is to be commended for presenting proposals which deal with the financial deficits facing the Social Security system in a responsible and forthright manner.

Those who cry foul on the Commission's recommendations have a moral obligation to tell the American people how they would address these challenges. While it is easy to criticize those who try to deal with this issue, it is far more difficult to put together a plan that can hold up under a thorough actuarial and budgetary analysis. I would say to my colleagues who have come to the floor to criticize the efforts of the Commission that I look forward to seeing your plan to strengthen Social Security.

There is no way to eliminate the $20 trillion unfunded liability facing Social Security without making some tough choices somewhere. Folks who insist that we must preserve benefits exactly as promised under current law must explain where the money will come from to fund these promises.

We can either make some tough choices today to honestly deal with the challenges facing Social Security or we can leave a fiscal time bomb for our children and grandchildren. I, for one, do not want my grandchildren to look back sixty-five years from now and say that if only our granddad had done what he knew in his heart had to be done when he had the chance, we wouldn't be in the mess we are in today.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT AND SURVIVORS' IMPROVEMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 10, the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvements Act of 2001. This critical legislation makes important improvements in the benefit structure for retired railroad workers, especially for widows and widowers.

In the early 1900's, the rail industry was the nation's largest employer. With record levels of unemployment, the Federal Government decided to provide economic incentives to encourage the retirement of older employees, thereby creating more jobs for younger workers.

''Railroad Retirement'' was created to provide retirement benefits beginning in 1936 creating retirement incentive for many older railroad employees who otherwise would not have received Social Security benefits until 1942. This program replaced the private railroad pension plans and began to pay benefits in 1936, based on up to 30 years of past untaxed rail service.

The system is now $40 billion short of what would be required to pay benefits to all the workers who have yet to retire and their survivors.

Congress has a responsibility to provide railroad retirees and their survivors with increased benefits, as well as making necessary changes to update and modernize the railroad employee benefit system.

To that end, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 10. More than 670,000 retirees and dependents and 245,000 active rail employees will benefit from the improvements made by the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001. Please support our nation's railroad workers, rail retirees and spouses by supporting this critical reform package. Vote yes on H.R. 10.