

between two sides, then and only then may we find some common ground. So, how should the two sides treat each other? President Chen Shui-bian openly announced that the interaction between the two sides must be based on three premises of "peace, equality and democracy", among which peace across the Taiwan Strait is the most important. Leaders across the Strait should first put aside the political dispute and start with seeking peaceful co-existence and mutual interest, and use this kind of new thinking to begin a new era in cross-Strait relations.

As to how to resolve the cross-Strait impasse regarding sovereignties, leaders of both sides should realize that in the new century, where globalization and the emphasis on knowledge are the mainstream, people all over the world are realizing that overly stressing territory and sovereignty has become out-dated, and that a country should be ruled by its people rather than its government.

Since May 20, 2000, President Chen has on many occasions expressed goodwill toward the Chinese government as well as his sincerity to reopen negotiations. Nevertheless, Beijing is still not willing to face reality, and even further attempts to suffocate Taiwan's international living space. In the meantime, it continues to use the "One China" principle as a premise to boycott cross-Strait negotiations and create barriers in cross-Strait communications. This is indeed a pity.

The new century has arrived. Looking toward the future, human rights, democracy, peace, love and technological development are universal values in the 21st century. Governments and people across the Strait should adopt the new thinking to be able to think globally and act first in the Asia-Pacific region. We should jointly seek co-existence, prosperity and sustainable development across the Taiwan Strait.

Today, as 13 billion people in China happily celebrate the 53rd anniversary of the founding of the PRC, I sincerely wish prosperity to the country and wellbeing to all its people. I would also like to urge leaders across the Strait to jointly work on creating peace for the world.

COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAH[AACUTE]'[IACUTE] FAITH

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, the American Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] community, which has its national headquarters in Illinois, is commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the beginnings of the Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] Faith in Iran. The Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] Faith is a world religion with more than 5 million adherents in some 230 countries and territories including more than 140,000 members here in the United States. The Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] House of Worship in my district of Illinois is registered as a national historic site that has drawn more than five million visitors to enjoy its unique architecture and serene gardens since its completion in 1953.

This is a special time for the American Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] community because it was during the autumn 150 years ago that the founder of the Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] Faith, Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute], was first overwhelmed with the Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] message of love and unity while unjustly imprisoned in one of Persia's (now Iran's) worst

dungeons, the S[iaacute]yah Ch[aaacute]. After his release from this dungeon, Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] promoted this message despite being banished from Baghdad to Istanbul, from Istanbul to Edirne, and eventually from Edirne to the prison city of Acre where he died in 1892 after having lived in exile for forty years for his belief in the oneness of humanity.

The Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] Faith is based on the principles of cooperation and peace outlined by Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute]. He taught that there is only one God, that the conscience of man is sacred and to be respected, that racial diversity contributes to the overall beauty of mankind, and that women and men are equals in God's sight. He taught that a spiritual solution is required to address the disparities of wealth distribution and that religion and science must agree. He was among the first to express the need for an international auxiliary language, emphasize the importance of universal education, and advise that a commonwealth of nations was needed for establishing global peace and security. The significance of these principles could not be overemphasized in today's volatile world.

It is astounding to think how advanced these concepts were 150 years ago not only in an ancient Persian culture, but also in the United States. Slavery and persecution based on race were widely accepted facts of life at that time. Women in the United States were still 70 years away from getting the vote. Global literacy was low and universal education was unheard of in most places. Colonial exploitation was on the rise and workers enjoyed few protections.

Unfortunately, just as the Bahd'i message was met with hostility in Persia in 1852, it still faces persecution in that region today. The Islamic Republic of Iran regards Bahd'is as heretics who, according to Islamic law, should be executed. Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute], along with Iran's other religious minorities, are prevented from exercising their right to religious freedom. They are excluded from institutions of higher education, denied jobs, and have had many of their holy places, cemeteries and properties seized or destroyed. They are denied their most basic human rights.

Since 1982, Congress has adopted eight resolutions condemning Iran's treatment of the Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute], its largest religious minority. With the support of the U.S. government, the UN General Assembly has adopted annual resolutions condemning these human rights abuses. Yet, Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] is still await the religious freedom called for in those UN resolutions and promised in Iran's constitution. The Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] community remains an oppressed religious minority and is denied rights to organize, elect leaders, and to conduct freely its religious activities.

On the 150th anniversary of Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute]'s imprisonment and the founding of the Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] Faith, we salute along with the American Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] community the ideals of universal brotherhood, peace, cooperation, and understanding espoused by Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute]. These are Bah[aaacute]'[iaacute] values, they are American values, and they are universal values. I also would like to recognize the immense sacrifices that many around the world have made striving to ensure that true liberty and justice for all becomes not just an American dream, but also a global reality.

TRIBUTE TO CHIP PRATHER

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Chip Prather, Fire Chief of Orange County, California.

Chip Prather became Fire Chief for the Orange County Fire Authority on October 1, 1997. In this capacity he is responsible for the daily operation of one of the largest fire organizations in California. Under his direction are 1,300 career firefighters, reserve firefighters and support staff. The OCFA serves 22 cities and unincorporated areas of Orange County, with a total population of more than 1.3 million, from 59 fire stations.

Prior to becoming Fire Chief, Mr. Prather served as Assistant Director of Fire Services/Operations. He was selected by the Orange County Firemen's Association as the 1995 "Firefighter of the Year." In 1998, as a battalion chief, he was assigned to the Authority's first master plan. He was promoted to Division Chief in 1989 and a year later to Assistant Director of Fire Services.

Chief Prather served as Incident Commander for the 1993 Laguna Fire and was responsible for the after-action report that has resulted in numerous changes in policies and procedures to improve fire safety in Southern California. His report provides a case study for unified command operations and disaster management.

Chief Prather holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management and has completed the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Program for Senior Executives in state and local government. He has also attended the United States Fire Administration National Fire Academy, completing the Executive Fire Officer Program.

Chief Prather has dedicated his life to protecting our community and is noted for his favorite saying, "Be tough, be tender, be safe."

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4546, BOB STUMP NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 12, 2002

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, last night the House approved the conference report for H.R. 4546, the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003. Passage of that legislation represents an important commitment by Congress to a strong national defense and to the men and women who provide it.

As the United States continues to prosecute the war against terrorism, it is essential that our armed forces are appropriately equipped. The conference report provides vital support for homeland counterterrorism programs, increased weapons capability, and military research and development. Additionally, it recognizes the important role of our men and women in uniform by providing a 4.1 percent

pay raise and authorizing a force increase of 40,000 people.

I am particularly pleased that the conference agreement includes language prohibiting the military from requiring or strongly encouraging U.S. servicewomen in Saudi Arabia to wear the abaya—a long black garment required for women under Islamic law. I have been working with the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. HOSTETTLER, and the gentlewoman from New Mexico, Mrs. WILSON, to remove this unnecessary and degrading mandate. The Defense Authorization conference report ends this double standard and guarantees that our servicewomen are not treated as second-class citizens.

Additionally, the legislation breaks new ground by establishing a concurrent receipt program. For too long, our disabled military retirees have witnessed their military retirement pay reduced by the amount they receive in disability compensation. I have fought against this injustice since arriving in Congress and am pleased that this legislation will provide greater assistance to many of those who have made sacrifices for our nation.

The National Defense Authorization Act is a great achievement and an appropriate recognition of Chairman BOB STUMP's dedicated leadership. I appreciate having had the opportunity to serve with Chairman STUMP on the House Armed Services Committee and commend him for his deft handling of the complex matters arising from the international war on terrorism. Together with Ranking Member IKE SKELTON, Chairman STUMP helped foster a collegial and thoughtful atmosphere in the committee, thus ensuring that Congress's approach to the war on terrorism was bipartisan and well considered. I wish him well in the future and thank him again for his leadership.

As the House prepares to recess for the year, I am disappointed that we were not able to claim greater progress on appropriations bills and other important legislation. Nevertheless, passage of the Defense Authorization Act, coupled with the final agreement reached on the Department of Homeland Security, demonstrates Congress's commitment to ensuring the safety of the American people, and I am proud of the work we have accomplished in these fields.

CONCURRENT RECEIPT

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, as we enter the waning days of the 107 Congress, action has finally been taken on the issue of concurrent receipt for America's military retirees. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2003 Conference Report that has come before this body does include language to provide concurrent receipt for some of our military retirees. Unfortunately, it falls far short of the proposal I supported in the House Budget Committee, and which passed this body by a vote of 221 to 209.

On March 20 of this year the House Budget Committee, of which I am a Member, took the initiative to include funding for concurrent receipt in its budget for FY 2003. This budget, H. Con. Res. 353, A Wartime Budget to Se-

cure America's Future, was endorsed by the Administration, and included over a half a billion dollars for partial repeal of the dollar-for-dollar offset of military retired pay and VA disability compensation. Specifically, H. Con. Res. 353 earmarked over \$500 million as a first step in FY 2003, with increasing amounts over the next five years, providing a cumulative total of \$5.8 billion to fund concurrent receipt for America's most severely disabled military retirees.

Just over one month ago, on October 10, 2002, the House reiterated its dedication to righting this long-standing injustice. We passed, by a vote of 391-0, instructions to the conferees to retain the concurrent receipt language during their negotiations with the Senate. Unfortunately, that was not enough to bring the conference to closure and give our military retirees what they deserve.

I would like to thank Rep. MIKE BILIRAKIS for his vigorous work on this issue. And I would like to thank the 402 members of this House, who in addition to myself, cosponsored his bill, H.R. 303 to provide full concurrent receipt for our veterans. Over 400 Members were committed to ending this unfair penalization of our military retirees who were disabled during their military service.

I am disappointed that despite strong support for this initiative, and budget neutral funding for the program, the conferees were unable to keep the promise made to our military retirees. I will continue to work for just treatment for all disabled military retirees and I will continue to support legislation that will provide full funding of concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees.

I have the highest respect for our departing friend Chairman BOB STUMP, and it is because of my great admiration for him, that I will vote to send this legislation to the President.

A TRIBUTE TO THOMAS SCHILTGEN, DIRECTOR OF INS LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to pay tribute to Thomas J. Schiltgen, who has performed a near-miracle in the past three years as District Director for the Los Angeles District of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Coming into the busiest—and most troubled—office in our immigration system, Mr. Schiltgen turned the Los Angeles District into one of the most efficient in the nation.

Thomas Schiltgen joined the INS out of college in 1975 as a Criminal Investigator in Chicago. He moved up through the ranks, and served in a wide range of positions that included Deputy Director in the agency's Bangkok office. Before taking over the Los Angeles office, he served for four years as Director of the INS San Francisco District.

When he was assigned to take over the Los Angeles District, the office was known throughout the country for crowds lining up every day in a desperate attempt to work through the immigration process. The office averaged 24 months to process routine citizenship and legal immigration cases. More than 400,000 cases awaited resolution.

Winning the respect of his own staff and the immigration support community, Mr. Schiltgen has managed to virtually eliminate the backlog and has reduced the waiting time to as little as six months for most naturalization and adjustment of status cases. The efficiency of the office was shown dramatically this year when nearly 5,000 applications were handled in a single day at the end of a family reunification program.

Mr. Speaker, although the Los Angeles District serves all of Southern California, I want to pay special tribute to Mr. Schiltgen on behalf of the Inland Empire. Under his leadership, the INS has opened a wonderful new office in San Bernardino, and provided a much wider range of services closer to home for thousands of immigrants who live and work in my district. The new INS office is an asset to the downtown of my home town, and provides a warm and professional face for the federal government in the city.

Mr. Schiltgen has also opened an expanded service center in Orange County, and has helped redesign the main INS facility in Los Angeles to provide heightened privacy, convenience and service for those who have come to our nation seeking the American dream.

Mr. Speaker, after 27 years with the INS, Thomas Schiltgen has decided to retire and pursue opportunities in the private sector. I ask you and my colleagues to please join me in thanking him for providing such high-quality public service, and wish him and his wife Brenda well in their future endeavors.

CONDEMNING NORTH KOREA FOR ITS FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very serious issue—the failure of North Korea to comply with a number of non-proliferation treaties, agreements, and resolutions, and the absence of any well-defined U.S. policy with that country.

The history of nuclear weapons proliferation in North Korea is a lengthy one, going back over a decade and a half when North Korea signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. When it signed that treaty in 1985, North Korea agreed not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons, and also agreed that the International Atomic Energy Agency could conduct inspections to verify fulfillment of those obligations.

When that Agency discovered anomalies in North Korea's nuclear facilities in 1993, inspectors were no longer allowed into the country.

Seeking to end the stalemate, the U.S. and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework in October, 1994. Under the terms of the Agreed Framework, the U.S. created an international consortium, which would provide North Korea with alternative sources of energy in the form of heavy fuel oil and a modern nuclear power plant. In return, North Korea pledged to freeze its existing nuclear program and allow inspectors back into the country.

Shortly after the Framework was signed, the consortium, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, was created. Despite