

In an effort to confound investigators, Bout continually changed the registration of his aircraft from one African country to another, all the while basing his air operations in Sharjah, one of seven emirates that make up the UAE.

Bout's alleged dealings with the Taliban and al Qaeda are the subject of an ongoing, classified U.S. operation that began in early 2000. "There was a concerted effort at the tail end of the Clinton administration, continued into the Bush administration, to put him out of business," said one former U.S. official.

U.N. and U.S. officials said Bout cut a deal with the Taliban in 1996 in UAE, one of only three countries in the world that recognized the regime.

The deal called for Bout's Air Cess to supply and service Afghanistan's Ariana Airways and the Afghan air force, both of which used Soviet-era aircraft. Another company that Bout had an interest in, Flying Dolphin, provided charter flights from Dubai to Afghanistan, the sources said, and soon there were several flights a week from Dubai to the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar.

U.N. investigators say they now believe many of those flights were loaded with weapons. When U.N. sanctions shut down Ariana in November 2000, Flying Dolphin obtained a U.N. waiver, for reasons that are not clear, and continued flying the Dubai-Kandahar route until being shut down by the United Nations in January 2001.

"Bout undoubtedly did supply al Qaeda and the Taliban with arms," Peter Hain, Britain's minister of European affairs and lead investigator into Bout's global arms trade, told the Associated Press on Feb. 19.

A 1998 Belgian intelligence report on Bout's activities, obtained by The Washington Post, says he made \$50 million in Afghanistan, selling heavy weapons to the Taliban. However, Peleman and other investigators said they had doubts that Bout had earned that much money from the Taliban and al Qaeda, in part because Bout also supplied weapons to anti-Taliban leaders, some of whom were his close friends.

Nonetheless, the United States launched an effort to disrupt Bout's arms trading, trying to freeze his assets and pressuring other nations, especially the UAE, to expel him. U.S. officials said they were limited in what they could do because they believed Bout had violated no U.S. laws. One of Bout's companies, Air Cess Inc., based in Miami, was dissolved on Sept. 19, according to public records, and its telephone number no longer works.

In late 2000 the Clinton administration asked the UAE at an "extremely high level" to shut down Bout's operation, a former U.S. official said. UAE officials repented that they had no evidence of criminal wrongdoing by Bout.

"We would have preferred they shut him down completely but they took helpful incremental steps that disrupted his operation," the source said, including imposing new and costly equipment requirements on his air fleet.

When President Bush took office, the Bout project received less attention, U.S. officials said. Then came the Sept. 11 attacks. "Suddenly, he was back on our radar screen in a very significant way," a senior U.S. official said. "His importance suddenly loomed very large."

HONORING COMMON THREADS AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sharon Clauss, Patricia Hillman, Roxie Moradian, Agnes Pelous, and Alice Peters on the occasion of their being awarded the 2002 Common Threads Award. Common Threads is a joint venture of the Agricultural Education Foundation, California State University, Fresno's College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, and AG ONE Foundation. The award is given to women in agriculture who have invested in their communities through community service and philanthropy. Honorees must live in Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, or Tulare County.

Sharon Clauss has been involved in dairy farming all her life. She and her husband, Richard, operate Clauss Dairy in Hilmar, California. Her support for agriculture and her community include active participation and financial contribution to numerous organizations including California Women for Agriculture, Agricultural Leadership Foundation, 4-H, Hilmar Covenant Church, and the American Jersey Cattle Association.

Pat (Heiskell) Hillman works with her family's farming businesses, Heiskell Family Farms and J.D. Heiskell & Co., in Tulare, California. She also volunteers with the World Ag Expo. Her involvement in her community spans six decades from co-founding of the Tulare County Symphony League in 1956 to being a founding docent of the Heritage Complex in 2000. Pat has also contributed to the Tulare Historical Museum and Society, First Congregational Church of Tulare, and Pro-Youth Tulare and Pro-Youth Visalia.

Roxie Moradian is a former owner of Penny-Newman Grain Company and has been involved in agriculture all her life. Her community service includes not only the Ag One Foundation at California State University, Fresno, with the founding of the Frank Moradian Foundation for Agriculture Scholarship for students, but also the Fresno County Library, Fresno Philharmonic Association, Saint Agnes and Valley Children's Hospitals, Salvation Army-Fresno, and many others.

Agnes Pelous began her ag life in Los Angeles County as the daughter of immigrant farmers from Italy. Agnes continued with farming when she married Alex Pelous and they relocated to Tulare County. She has been an active member in both the Orange County and Tulare County Farm Bureaus. Her other community involvement includes the Lindsay Hospital Guild, Las Madrasas Guild for Valley Children's Hospital, Parent Teacher Association, Tulare County Cotton Women, Tulare County 4-H, California Women for Agriculture, among many others.

Alice Peters and her husband, Leon, owned and farmed orchards in the Fowler, California, area for many years and owned Valley Foundry which was connected to agriculture throughout the world. Alice has been active in many community service organizations including the Fresno Philharmonic, Valley Public Radio, Fresno Metropolitan Museum, and Fresno City and County Historical Societies. The School of Business at California State University, Fresno named their auditorium in her honor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sharon Clauss, Pat Hillman, Roxie Moradian, Agnes Pelous, and Alice Peters for receiving the 2002 Common Threads Award. I invite my colleagues to join me in commending these outstanding women for their commitment to community service and agriculture and wishing them many more years of continued success.

COMMEMORATION OF THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, Chinese American communities across this nation have gathered to celebrate the Chinese New Year. This lunar new year celebration is a special and important time for all Chinese Americans.

China is a country rich in traditional and religious holidays, but none are comparable to the New Year festivities. The New Year is a time for celebration, reflection and most importantly, family. The renewal and strengthening of family ties during this important time is not only essential to the Chinese community, but to America as a whole. In a period that has been difficult for so many of us, I am particularly moved by the Chinese New Year's emphasis on peace and happiness. We should all be well served by following such a tradition.

Our country has been greatly enriched by the many Americans of Chinese descent who have brought with them such rich customs. Michigan is fortunate to have had thousands of Chinese Americans make our great state their new home.

Mr. Speaker, in the Year of the Horse, I join the Chinese American community in celebrating this most joyous New Year or Bainian. I salute all of them for the tremendous contributions to freedom and human dignity which they have made.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TONY FORTINO

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize an extraordinary man who embodies the spirit of my district in Colorado and whose contributions to society have been honored with his induction into the Pueblo Hall of Fame. Tony Fortino is a pillar of the Pueblo, Colorado community and has dedicated countless hours to the betterment of his beloved city. As Tony celebrates his achievement, I would like to commend him for his commitment to his fellow citizens and community.

Tony's service to the City of Pueblo began when Tony took it upon himself to promote Pueblo's Downtown business corridor and the city itself. He served in leadership positions in the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, the Pueblo Economic Development Corporation and the Pueblo Development Foundation. His hard work ethic pushes him to take the initiative and provide leadership on projects, as

he has done with the Pueblo Convention Center and the Downtown Hotel. Tony's leadership abilities shine through in his position as chairman of the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority and as Pueblo's representative on the Colorado Transportation Commission.

Tony served his country as a member of the Coast Guard in World War II. After the war, he came back to Pueblo and began a successful career operating a car dealership and as a commercial real estate investor. After his retirement, Tony generously gave to the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center and the Catholic Diocese of Pueblo Foundation. He has also helped to raise money for Pueblo Community College and serves as a member and chairman of the PCC Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Tony Fortino is a man of unparalleled dedication, evident through his efforts to improve the City of Pueblo, and his philanthropic contributions. It is his unrelenting passion for each and every thing he does, as well as his spirit of honesty and integrity that I wish to bring before this body of Congress. Tony Fortino is a remarkable man, who has achieved extraordinary deeds in his community, and I would like to extend to him my congratulations on his induction to the Pueblo Hall of Fame and wish Tony Fortino the best in his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO BASEBALL GREAT
MICKEY VERNON

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute today to legendary baseball batting champ Mickey Vernon who will be honored during Strath Haven High School's presentation of "Damn Yankees" at its spring musical production in Wallingford, Pennsylvania on Saturday, March 2, 2002. Music Director, John Shankweiler, selected this work as a tribute to Wallingford-Swarthmore School District residents Mr. and Mrs. James "Mickey" Vernon.

For the past fifty years, Mickey and Libby, his wife of over 60 years, have called Wallingford their home. However, it must be pointed out that Mickey Vernon is one of the favorite native sons of my hometown of Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania. Mickey Vernon is a hero in my hometown. Marcus Hook is a close-knit, working-class town on the Delaware River. The people of Marcus Hook have community spirit and have much cause for civic pride. One of the unifying bonds in our hometown is our great pride in the career and achievements of Mickey Vernon. In the ballparks of Marcus Hook the name of Mickey Vernon is revered. Even today, more than thirty years after his retirement, kids in Marcus Hook still play ball in the Mickey Vernon Little League.

Mickey Vernon, one of baseball's greatest first basemen of all time has earned a special place in the annals of baseball history. Mickey played twenty-one years in the big leagues, thirteen of those in our Nation's Capital where he played for the Washington Senators. He was known as a slick-fielding lefthanded first baseman with a short, compact lefty swing.

In 1946, Mickey won the first of his two American League batting titles, hitting 0.353

while banging out a league-leading 51 doubles and knocking in 85 runs. He won a second Silver Bat in 1953, when he again lead the league with a 0.337 average and 43 doubles. That year, he also smashed 15 home runs and drove in a career-best 115 runs.

For his career, Mickey batted 0.286, drove in 1,311 runs, and hit 490 doubles. He played in seven All-Star games, and held career records for first basemen in assists, put-outs, chances, and games played, 2,237. He was durable and consistent, playing 115 or more games for 14 straight years.

Typical of many ballplayers of his era, Mickey lost two years in the prime of his career, 1944-45, because he answered his country's call to service during World War II. When we honor individuals like Mickey Vernon we promote the essence of what is good and wholesome in our Nation. Individuals like Mickey Vernon represent the essence of courage and endurance—the qualities that helped make our Nation great. He is a true American hero in every sense of the word.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mickey Vernon for his outstanding career and his major league contributions to baseball, to his community, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and to the Nation with best wishes as well to his wife, Libby.

HONORING THE BORDER TEXAN
OF THE YEAR, SENATOR PHIL
GRAMM

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend, the senior Senator from the great State of Texas, who on Thursday, February 28, will be named the "Border Texan of the Year."

Every year, the people of Hidalgo County, Texas, whom I represent, hold an annual Borderfest. This is a wonderful time where the diversity, culture, music and food of the region are celebrated and enjoyed. The highlight of the festival is the presentation of the Border Texan of the Year Award. I am very pleased that this year's recipient is a man of such distinction, whom I admire and respect and with whom I have enjoyed working with in the United States Congress.

Senator GRAMM has served the State of Texas with distinction both as a member of the House and as a United States Senator since 1978. He will truly be missed in Washington once he leaves us at the end of this year, but I am confident that his service to Texas will not be ending.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Senator GRAMM for many years, and we have collaborated across party lines to improve conditions throughout our state and especially in my South Texas region on such projects as transportation and infrastructure, including improving our bridges and roads.

Senator GRAMM and I have jointly introduced legislation to vastly improve the efficiency of the U.S. Customs Service along the U.S./Mexico border, thus increasing the flow of goods and services between the two countries. The residents of South Texas experience daily the long lines at our border crossings.

Despite heroic sacrifices by Customs personnel, who work long hours and enormous amounts of overtime, there are just not enough people to make our southern border work efficiently. Before Senator GRAMM leaves the U.S. Senate, I am hopeful that we can win our fight to bring much-needed resources to our southern border.

Infrastructure is vital for economic growth and prosperity and Senator GRAMM has recognized this and has worked hard to improve border infrastructure. His dedication to secure highway funding and particularly his efforts to help secure a Presidential permit for the construction of the new Anzalduas International Bridge is greatly appreciated by all border Texans.

As Senator GRAMM leaves the Senate, I wish him much success in his future endeavors.

HONORING SYDNEY ALDERMAN
PERRY FOR OUTSTANDING
SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to join the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven in honoring an outstanding member of our community and my good friend, Sydney Alderman Perry. Sydney has been the Director of the Department of Jewish Education for over a decade and has made many invaluable contributions to the Jewish Federation during her tenure.

I have often spoke of our nation's need for talented, creative educators ready to help our children learn and grow. Sydney is a true reflection of this ideal. In the twelve years that she has served as the Director of the Department of Jewish Education, Sydney has worked diligently to improve the synagogue supplementary schools and has initiated a number of education programs for both adults and teens.

In developing "A Taste of Honey" and its offshoots, "A Taste of Milk and Honey" and "A Taste of Apples and Honey," Sydney created new and exciting educational programming for adults and teens. She spearheaded the Israel Experience Savings program, which helps young people travel to Israel and she initiated Talmud Torah Meyuchad, an individualized Jewish education program for children with special needs. She is also responsible for the development of Midrasha, a new adult institute, and the successful community Hebrew High School, MAKOM, which serves three hundred and fifty teens throughout the New Haven area.

In addition to her work in education, Sydney has also dedicated her time and energy to the Jewish Federation. For the past six years, she has served as the Associate Executive Director of the Federation and is presently the Acting Director. In this position, Sydney serves on the Long Range Planning committee; helps staff the Community Relations Council and leadership development; supervises the Holocaust Education-Prejudice Reduction Project, Stepping Stones, and the new library at the Jewish Community Center; and acts as an advocate for Jewish continuity. She has served as a consultant to the community on educational endeavors, including the Anne Frank