

Pam Munoz Ryan is the author of the novel *Esperanza Rising*, winner of the Pura Belpre Medal, a the Jane Addams Peace Award, and the American Library Association's Top Ten Books for Young Adults and the Americas Award. In addition, her novel *Riding Freedom* has also gained wide recognition winning the Willa Cather Award and the California Young Readers Medal. Pam Munoz Ryan is also recognized for her picture books for young and older readers, such as the award winning *Amelia and Eleanor Go For A Ride* and also her work, *When Marian Sang*, is a recipient of the American Library Association's Sibert Honor, including the National Council of Teachers in English's *Orbits Pictus Award*.

Pam Munoz Ryan was born and raised in California in the San Joaquin Valley. She is the oldest of three sisters. She grew up surrounded by her aunts, uncles, and grandparents. During her childhood many hours were spent at the local library where her love of literature was cultivated. After receiving her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from San Diego State University, she became a teacher, an administrator, and after the encouragement from a friend a writer. Through her life's passion, as writer Pam Munoz Ryan has touched many lives.

Judith Ortiz Cofer is an English and Creative Writing Franklin Professor at University of Georgia. A native of Puerto Rico, her lectures center on biculturalism and the creative processes. She is driven by a deep belief in freedom of expression and the necessity to disseminate the literature and art of the many people contributing to the culture of the United States.

Her literary work is respected through the country being awarded The Anisfield Wolf Award for The Latin Deli, a collection of essays, short fiction, and poetry. In addition, she was awarded the first Pura Belpre Medal by Reforma of the American Library Association (1996) for her book, *An Island Like You: Stories of the Barrio*, which also garnered the American Library Association Best book of the Year 1995-96. She also is the author of *Line in the Sun*, a novel, a collection of personal essay and short stories, and her work *Silent Dancing* was awarded a PEN/Martha Albarnd Special citation for nonfiction.

Judith Ortiz Cofer has been awarded several fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and Witter Bynner Foundation For Poetry. In 1998 Judith Ortiz Cofer was awarded Paterson Book Prize for her work, *The Year of Our Revolution: New and Selected Stories and Poems at Passaic County Community College*; additionally, she was the recipient of Christ Janner Award in Creative Research from the University of Georgia. The Rockefeller Foundation also awarded her residency at the Bellagio, Italy Conference Center in 1999.

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month and The National Book Festival, I hope we take time to recognize the contributions of these and many other fine Hispanic authors. America's people come from rich and diverse cultural backgrounds. Literature is at the root of America's culture. These three authors have added tremendously to our diverse American cultural fabric

## NATIONAL EARTHQUAKE HAZARDS REDUCTION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 1, 2003*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2608. This bill is the result of excellent bipartisan work by my colleagues on the Science Committee. I commend my colleagues, Congressmen SMITH and BAIRD, and Congresswoman LOFGREN for their leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program will promote good science and intelligent planning, and it will save lives. It is a smart investment in the future of this nation. This program rallies all the resources available in the federal government with expertise in earthquake response and damage mitigation, and focuses them on the task of readying ourselves for the next "big one." It brings together FEMA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the OMB, in a concerted effort to assess our needs and to make preparations.

The bill will enable us to develop effective measures for hazards reduction, and will encourage implementation of those hazard reduction measures by Federal, State, and local governments through grants, standards development, and information sharing. This is a solid approach.

I was particularly pleased that an amendment I offered in Science Committee markup was accepted unanimously and is in the bill before us today. That amendment will ensure that the research that stems from this program taps into the great expertise and resources at this nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as well as those that serve predominantly Hispanics, Native Americans, and other populations under-represented in the sciences. This will also ensure that our federal programs are inclusive of all Americans, not exclusive as they have been too often in the past.

Again, this is an excellent bill that resulted from strong bipartisan work. I was pleased to be a part of that process, and am pleased to support it today.

## RECOGNIZING OF NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the observance of National Fire Prevention Week beginning Sunday, October 5, 2003. Celebrated every year since President Calvin Coolidge's official proclamation dedicating this week to educating the public on the benefits of practicing basic fire prevention measures, National Fire Prevention Week has undoubtedly given many the informational tools essential to saving lives and preventing unnecessary fire damage.

This week begins with the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg,

Maryland to honor those heroes that lost their lives in the line of duty. To honor those that gave the ultimate sacrifice, I authored legislation, that became public law in 2001, to lower all flags on federal buildings to half staff on this day of remembrance.

During National Fire Prevention Week we must all educate and learn to protect ourselves and others. I urge all individuals to take the proper steps to ensure the safety of their families and loved-ones by installing and routinely checking smoke detectors, developing and practicing home evacuation plans, and identifying potential fire hazards throughout the home.

This year's National Fire Prevention Week theme is "When Fire Strikes: Get out! Stay out!" As a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, I know the vital importance of this message. In the United States nearly 6,000 people die each year in their homes, nearly 80 percent of all fire fatalities. Tragically, many fires can be prevented if only individuals practice the proper preventative measures.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the National Fire Protection Association for their work each year in commemorating Fire Prevention Week. I also would like to thank the fine men and women of our fire and emergency services teams for the outstanding job they do in fighting fires and saving lives. I ask my colleagues to join me in urging all Americans to take the basic precautions that could save their lives.

## WHITE HOUSE RECERTIFIES AN ILL-DESERVING GUATEMALA

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a memorandum on Guatemala's many problems from the highly respected Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) was placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The following timely memorandum authored by William McIntire, a research fellow at COHA, is a continuation of COHA's analysis of the ominous situation in Guatemala. COHA, a non-partisan organization that has long been committed to addressing issues associated with human rights, democracy and economic justice throughout the Western Hemisphere, has been referred to by Senator EDWARD KENNEDY a number of years ago as "one of our Nation's most respected bodies of scholars and policymakers."

## WHITE HOUSE RECERTIFIES AN ILL-DESERVING GUATEMALA

(By William B. McIntire, COHA Research Fellow)

On Monday, September 15, the White House recommended to Congress that their certification of Guatemala, which was previously revoked due to failure of that country's authorities to be faithful allies in Washington's war on drugs, be renewed. This move, a stunning reversal of a Bush administration decision made last January to decertify for reasons of non-performance, qualifies the country to receive U.S. financial aid to fight drug traffickers. Applied to Guatemala, however, U.S. recertification remains a largely symbolic action as Washington waived all sanctions against Guatemala last January and

never halted the flow of aid to that country. Guatemala will now, nevertheless, gain the prestige of being a U.S. ally when it comes to the drug war, when the whole process is actually a sham. Alongside similar actions against Burma and Haiti, the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) announced its original decertification decision last January, which was a reflection on the escalating ineffectiveness of Guatemala's counter-narcotics efforts, as a result of President Alfonso Portillo's lackluster performance. The quantity of drugs seized by the Guatemalan government, which was rising annually until Portillo took office, plummeted in 2000 to only 13 percent of the amount seized the year before. In 2002 the Guatemalan police reportedly embezzled more than twice the quantity of drugs than they confiscated. The government's patently spurious commitment to the UN-brokered 1996 peace accords was also cited as a basis for Washington's decision to decertify last January. By its present action, the Bush administration graphically shows Latin America that when it comes to Washington's much touted war against drugs, there is no doubt that trade comes first.

#### WHITE HOUSE HOPES TO CHANGE GUATEMALA'S WAYS

In his briefing on the president's certification determination, INL Acting Assistant Secretary Paul Simons observed that last year's "suspension of assistance to Guatemala would result in further deterioration of precisely those Guatemalan institutions that are essential to combating the influence of organized crime." As a result, the State Department decided that, despite its decision to decertify Guatemala, financial sanctions that would normally accompany such a decision would not be exercised because they would only further undermine the country's already highly delicate democratic institutions.

More directly, President Bush's decision to rescind last January's largely symbolic decertification will be an obvious effort to woo Guatemala, which has the region's largest population and economy, into supporting a Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). CAFTA is a prototype of Washington's Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) scheme, which has been one of its highest priorities, and because of Guatemala's economic significance, it is a prime target for Washington's courtship. As a result, Bush's drug war is being crucified on the cross of free trade. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Bush administration would not permit a small matter like Guatemala's abysmal drug interdiction record of late to jeopardize the achievement of CAFTA. As negotiations for the trade pact continue, Washington has also received criticism for not pursuing strong labor and environmental regulations as part of its core.

#### CAFTA: IS IT WORTH THE SACRIFICE?

To the chagrin of some in Washington, Guatemala's Constitutional Court recently gave former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt its blessing to run for the presidency despite a constitutional provision that bars all coup participants from doing so. Ríos Montt rose to power during a military coup in March 1982 and promptly set about a "scorched earth" campaign, murdering thousands of Mayan peasants. U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala John R. Hamilton has publicly warned that U.S. relations with Guatemala would be compromised if Ríos Montt made his way back to power. Still, in the face of reaching a free trade accord, the recertification of Guatemala reveals the true stripes of Washington's foreign policy, and the insignificance it accords to the anti-drug war and the

rising human rights toll in Guatemala. In the name of Washington's free trade blitzkrieg, the White House has sacrificed the integrity of its professedly unwavering commitment to fight corruption and drugs in the very same Central American countries in which it allegedly endeavors to expand democracy, while promoting its all-important trade accord.

#### MORE HOLES THAN SWISS CHEESE IN WHITE HOUSE RECERTIFICATION OF GUATEMALA

On Monday, September 15, the White House, using doctored information and skimpy statistics, recommended to Congress the recertification of Guatemala, reversing a Bush administration decision made last January in response to the dramatic evidence of Guatemala's failure to meaningfully cooperate with Washington's anti-drug efforts. Recertification would normally qualify the newly reaccredited country to receive U.S. financial aid. However, for Guatemala, it remains a largely symbolic action, since Washington originally had waived all sanctions against the country, maintaining the flow of bilateral aid in the interest of preserving what meager anti-narcotics operations that remain active in the country. Shortly after the original decertification, 21 members of the U.S. Congress asserted that, until Guatemala was recertified as the result of a dramatically improved drug interdiction record, they would not vote to ratify the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

In his Monday memorandum to the State Department President Bush, using self-obfuscating language, touted Guatemala's "willingness to better its counternarcotics practices," but shied away from coming forth with any evidence to support it. Instead, the country was merely omitted from a section of the memorandum listing nations that had "failed demonstrably . . . to adhere to their obligations under international counternarcotics agreements." Whereas Guatemala, Haiti and Myanmar had been blacklisted in January, only the latter two remained in the September 15 statement. The Bush administration, understandably sheepish when it came to recertifying Guatemala only months after decertifying it, and with no tangible evidence to justify doing so, camouflaged the announcement in the memorandum, hoping not to draw too much attention to its actions. The underhanded nature of this decision represents a massive downgrading of the authenticity of both Washington's and Guatemala's supposed anti-drug efforts. Guatemala would certainly not qualify for certification if actually put to even a minimally objective test. In making its determination, Washington proved once again that its certification process was little better than a total sham.

#### A WHITE HOUSE DECEPTION

Since the White House decertified Guatemala last January, the DEA observed that the country had become the "preferred Central American location for storage and consolidation of drug loads," and boats and light aircraft regularly bring drugs into the country. The official White House report had to acknowledge that Guatemala's alleged improvements were only the "initial steps" that had to be taken and the "permanence of these improvements had yet to be determined." In other words, no significant steps have been made to curtail the flow of narcotics through Guatemala. Meanwhile, the White House is concerned mainly with fulfilling its free trade aspirations in Central America and realizes that they would not likely be achieved if Guatemala remains uncertified. Thus ignoring the true deficiency of Guatemala's anti-drug efforts, the Bush administration is trying to slyly sweep its failed anti-drug campaign in the country

under the rug, caricaturing the entire certification process just as the Clinton administration did with Mexico in 1997. As with the present Bush administration, free trade logistics, specifically the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), rather than a faithful evaluation of that country's anti-drug performance, were the order of the day.

President Bush expects "Guatemala to continue its efforts and to demonstrate further progress in the coming year," apparently hoping that recertification will self-prophetically lead to increased cooperation with his war on drugs, a trend he claims erroneously in the memorandum has already been manifest in the recent attitude of Guatemalan authorities. Interestingly, only hours before the White House announcement, Guatemalan officials announced that they had just seized record quantities of drugs, perhaps hoping to gull some ingenuos into believing that interdictions had reacquired past levels. Suspiciously, no arrests had been made, nor statistics cited, to reinforce this claim. Some allege that previously seized drugs had been recycled and "seized" again to create the false pretense of successful interdiction.

By spinning the facts of Guatemala's performance (pointing to the country's supposedly renewed dedication to counter-narcotics efforts) and continuing to use the certification process as a political weapon, the White House risks further disenchanting its remaining hemispheric allies in its fading war against drug traffickers.

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. PAUL SMITH

#### HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before this body of Congress and this nation today to pay tribute to an outstanding citizen from my district. Dr. Paul Smith of Pueblo West, Colorado is a dedicated physician who has worked tirelessly to improve the care given to our veterans. An alumnus of Colorado State University—Pueblo, Paul is being recognized by that institution with their award for Outstanding Service to the University, and I am honored to recognize his achievements here today.

Paul was instrumental in the creation of the Eastern Colorado Health Care System, which merged with the Southern Colorado Health System of the Veterans Administration and the Denver VA Medical Center. He serves as the Associate Chief of Staff for Community-Based Care, where he is responsible for overseeing seven Veterans Administration clinics in central and southern Colorado. In addition to his dedication to our nation's veterans, Paul has remained active in the Colorado State University—Pueblo community by serving on search and screening committees, advising on the restructuring of the Student Health Services, and donating his time to the university's health clinic.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Smith is the kind of dedicated and devoted citizen who makes our communities a better place. His tireless work has improved the lives of countless veterans and members of the community at large. I am honored to join with my colleagues in paying tribute to Paul Smith here today. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.