

international contributions to the rebuilding in Iraq. Such a step would also disrupt longstanding and constructive trading relationships. Dump this loser of an idea.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Oct. 8, 2003]

AN ILL-ADVISED RAID

Hours after Israel conducted a Sunday bombing raid deep inside neighboring Syria, President Bush defended the action by saying Israel "has got a right to defend herself." True. But a picture is beginning to emerge that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was doing something else—something quite possibly dangerous to his own nation, to the region and ultimately to the United States.

Israel, of course, was acting in the wake of an especially horrible suicide bombing in Haifa that took 19 innocent lives. In what has become a grim standard operating procedure in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel could be counted on to retaliate.

But retaliate against what? Israel first said it had gone after a terrorist training camp. Soon, though, credible reports began to come in that if the locale had ever been a terrorist camp, that was years in the past. Then Israeli officials confirmed that the raid's actual goal had been to "send a message" to Syria:

Wrong message.

Yes, Syria harbors terrorists. Yes, Islamic Jihad had claimed responsibility for the deadly restaurant bombing. But there is scant evidence that Islamic Jihad ever had any connection to the site that Israel attacked.

For three decades, Israel and Syria have had the mutual good sense to keep their border peaceful, even while each had plenty of reason to mistrust the other. Now Israel has breached that uneasy calm. If sustained fighting were to erupt between the two nations, Lebanon and even Iran could be drawn in.

That would be an unwelcome eventuality in the calmest of times. But incurring such risks while the United States and its handful of allies are struggling to stabilize Iraq raises the ante in ways that cannot benefit anyone. Moreover, Syria, while too militarily frail to respond directly in a meaningful way, probably has some ability to nudge Iran into exporting yet more terrorists into Iraq—where, of course, they would target U.S. and allied military personnel.

Israel and America both have ample reason to be upset over Syria's continued harboring of terrorist groups, and Israel in particular has a right to be outraged over the Haifa explosion. Both nations should press Syria in every possible way diplomatically to end its role as a safe haven for evil. But Israel's precipitous attack—Jerusalem didn't even notify Washington in advance—boosts collective tension levels at a terrible time.

Just as Israel, and the Palestinians as well, need America's help in the elusive quest for lasting peace, Washington needs Israel's assistance in keeping the region stable while Iraq is being pieced back together.

Sharon should be taking a wider and longer view. By all available evidence, this past weekend he was doing anything but.

IF I COULD CHANGE THE WORLD—
A ESSAY WRITTEN BY A DALLAS
THIRD GRADER, MARIA
BELTRAN

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on September 6, I hosted my

11th Annual Community Appreciation Day in Dallas, Texas.

A To highlight the talent of the youth in my district, Frederick Douglass Elementary School of Pleasant Grove held a student essay contest. The top 10 essays were selected from over 137 essays submitted. Each winner was awarded a Congressional Certificate of Appreciation and an Autographed Bicycle Helmet.

The Grand Prize winner of the student essay contest, Maria Beltran (3rd grade), was awarded a Congressional Certificate of Appreciation, an Autographed Bicycle Helmet and a New Red Unisex Bicycle. The grand prize winner read the following beautiful essay to the audience.

Maria provided us with words that should be shared with all. I extend her remarks for fellow Members of Congress. I know that we can benefit from her words as we face international challenges.

If I could change the world, I would change it by doing something to stop the violence, because the violence is destroying the world. I would like to have a better place to live. I wish everybody would help each other and no fighting and no pushing and no killing people. I wish I could change the drugs for food, because a lot of children are hungry, I will help the homeless because they don't have any food, water or homes to live. If the people stop smoking they could have a better life for themselves. Because smoking can make you sick, I wish the children would listen to their parents and their teachers and respect them so they can have the best information of what is the best for everybody. I wish I could stop the wars. I wish a peaceful place to live, with no wars, with out drugs, only peace and love for everybody in the whole world. I am glad when the people are nice to each other.

If I could change the world, these are the things I would do.

TAIWAN'S 92ND NATIONAL DAY

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, during a time of global conflict, it is especially important moment to recognize and thank our true friends and allies around the world. Joining us in our commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights and economic opportunity, Taiwan has been a steadfast friend to the United States for over 50 years.

This is a difficult and threatening time among the world of nations. Taiwan is an important cornerstone in securing a free, stable and prosperous Asia.

Immediately after September 11, 2001, Taiwan became one of the first countries to come to our aid in the campaign against terrorism. President Chen, Shui-bian lost no time in condemning this brutal act and its perpetrators. Since then, Taiwan has reaffirmed its commitment to us in many forms, including intelligence gathering, increased airport security, and laws that keep laundered money out of the hands of terrorists. Taiwan has also provided generous assistance for the rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Recently, both Houses of Congress have passed by large margins, legislation that supports our friendship and commitments to Tai-

wan and endorses its desire for a wider international role, specifically in the World Health Organization and the United Nations.

Let us continue, through words and deeds, our heartfelt support for this special friend on its 92nd National Day celebration.

I offer our friends in Taiwan my own personal best wishes, and I offer good wishes to Taiwan on behalf of Texas.

TRIBUTE TO CASEY MUDROCH

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before this body of Congress and this Nation to pay tribute to the amazing courage displayed by a young boy from my district. Casey Mudroch of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, nearly lost his life this past summer when his tent was washed into a lake during a flash flood. After five grueling weeks of recuperation in the Children's Hospital of Denver, Casey finally returned home with hope for a full recovery. I am honored to stand and recognize Casey's harrowing battle for life and his remarkable recovery here today.

Casey was left critically injured this summer when a tent he and his friends were sleeping in was swept into Navajo Lake. Witnesses were able to pull him out of the water, but unfortunately by the time they got to him he was unconscious and had stopped breathing. Following CPR Casey was flown to Denver and taken to Children's Hospital, where he was treated for over a month. I can assure you that his stay in the hospital was not an easy one. After being downgraded from critical condition, Casey developed an ulcer, which ruptured, returning him to critical condition. Fortunately, Casey is expected to make a full recovery and is glad to be home among his family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, surviving such a traumatic experience is never easy, especially for someone as young as Casey Mudroch. Casey has displayed a tremendous amount of bravery throughout this ordeal, and it is my privilege to honor his recovery efforts before this body of Congress and this Nation today. I would like to wish Casey a continued recovery and all the best in the future.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS EQUITY ACT OF 2003

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to join me in co-sponsoring the "Federal Employees' Benefits Equity Act of 2003." I reintroduced this very important legislation that works to eliminate a number of inequities found in the computation of benefits for law enforcement officers, firefighters, nuclear material couriers and members of the Supreme Court police under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Additionally, this bill would correct inequities resulting from the court case *Wassenaar v. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)*, regarding benefits for survivors of law enforcement officers and firefighters who die as federal employees.

Under current CSRS and FERS statutes, certain employees immediately qualify for an enhanced annuity if separated from service after reaching age 50 and completing 20 years of service. This enhanced annuity, however, requires that these employees make retirement contributions that are 0.5 percent higher than those of the average employee.

Some employees are forced to retire due to disability, or involuntary separation (not for cause), before reaching age 50. In these cases, employees receive only a regular annuity even if he or she has had 20 years of service. This legislation remedies this problem by providing enhanced annuities to all employees who have given 20 years of service. Those forced to retire, at any age, due to involuntary separation or disability are covered by this legislation. The bill also allows for the refund of the additional 0.5 percent retirement contribution, with interest, when employees in these occupations retire or die before attaining eligibility for the enhanced annuity.

During the 106th and 107th Congresses, many federal employees contacted my office stating their concerns about the retroactive language in the bill. I listened to their concerns and worked with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to address this issue. This bill is no longer retroactive. I am extremely pleased this bill will capture federal employees from the day of enactment.

HONORING DR. ANNAMARIE ROEPER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my congratulations to Dr. Annamarie Roeper, a beloved educator, innovator, school administrator, and model global citizen.

After Annamarie and her husband, George, fled the horrors of Holocaust in Germany, they set out to provide a safe place for children to grow and become intelligent, sensitive contributors to society. Arriving in the United States in 1941, they founded the Roeper School in Detroit, which expanded to include additional schools in Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham. For over forty years, these two noted German scholars ran the Roeper City and Country School which became a well-known school for gifted children.

The school's unique curriculum is based on Dr. Roeper's evolving philosophy that growth and learning is driven by a child's inner self, not just intellect. In nurturing children's creativity, Dr. Roeper challenges students to respect inherent dignity, value differences, and develop a global sense of the world around them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Annamarie Roeper, who will celebrate her 85th birthday with many of

Roeper's students, faculty and friends on October 12th at the Upper School in Birmingham. Her vision for educational excellence and her dedication to foster socially responsible citizens is her legacy to the school she founded.

92ND TAIWAN NATIONAL DAY

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, on October 10, 2003, one of our largest trading partners, the Republic of China on Taiwan, will be celebrating the 92nd anniversary of its National Day. I wish to join my colleagues in the United States Congress in sending best wishes to the twenty-two million residents of this lovely island. I also commend President Chen Shui-bian and Vice President Annette Lu as they continue to lead Taiwan to greater economic prosperity at home and greater participation in international activities abroad.

Just like our 4th of July, October 10 marks the beginning of a fantastic story of economic, social and political success that has culminated in Taiwan becoming a vibrant democracy in the Pacific Region. These are exciting times in the history of relations between the United States and Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, on this 92nd occasion of the Republic of China's National Day, it is important to remember that Taiwan has a strong relationship with the United States, and we hope this relationship will continue to flourish and grow in the years to come.

INTRODUCING THE DATABASE AND COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION MISAPPROPRIATION ACT

HON. W.J. (BILLY) TAUZIN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, two and one-half years ago, Chairman SENSENBRENNER and I agreed to work collectively to produce a database protection bill. Previous attempts at producing legislation resulted in various stalemates between the two Committees. When I took the gavel at Energy and Commerce and Chairman SENSENBRENNER took over at the Judiciary Committee, we decided we would work through this issue in a different way. It has been a long process—it was no easy chore harmonizing a Judiciary-favored copyright approach and a Commerce-favored misappropriation approach.

The two Committees have worked amicably towards the bill we are introducing today. This is a credit to the members on both Committees, and I have been delighted to see the cooperation and respect between our two Committees grow over the last few years. I would like to commend Chairman SENSENBRENNER, in particular, for his leadership and commitment through this process.

This bill is one of compromise. Through the course of the negotiations, I won some issues

and lost some issues. As we move forward in the legislative process, I will continue to invest time and effort to improve the legislation and ensure my lingering concerns are addressed. In doing so, my focus will remain on protecting the free flow of information so important to our information economy. I look forward to working with the Judiciary Committee, my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, and all interested parties to improve this legislation.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH
BENEFITS GLAUCOMA SCREEN-
ING ACT

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce the "Federal Employee Health Benefits Glaucoma Screening Act."

This bill ensures that federal employees will have access to annual glaucoma screenings. Specifically, this bill ensures that a contract or plan cannot be approved unless it provides coverage for such screenings for persons determined to be at high risk for glaucoma, individuals with a family history of glaucoma, and individuals with diabetes. The service must be furnished by or under the supervision of an optometrist or ophthalmologist who is legally authorized to perform such services in the state where the services are furnished.

Glaucoma is a specific pattern of optic nerve damage and visual field loss caused by a number of different eye diseases which can affect the eye. It is one of the leading preventable causes of blindness in America. I have read that blindness is the number three health fear for most Americans, right behind heart disease and cancer. Blindness is particularly terrible because it can strike healthy people, people in the prime of their lives.

While it can affect Americans of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, glaucoma most frequently attacks diabetics, people suffering from hypertension, and African Americans. There is no cure for glaucoma—but it can be prevented if caught early enough. Through a comprehensive screening, an eye care professional can determine how well one can see at various distances, check fluid pressure in eyes, inspect optic nerves for signs of damage and, if needed, measure one's visual field to see if there is a loss of side vision (one of the earliest findings in glaucoma).

I believe this measure will encourage persons to be screened for glaucoma, in turn, increasing the number of persons with early signs of glaucoma who can be treated by eye care professionals before blindness sets in—recognizing the importance of glaucoma screenings as an effective way to educate and prevent glaucoma or blindness.

Finally, I would like to thank Bud Grant, the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation, the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and Dr. Eve J. Higginbotham, who is Maryland's own nationally known expert on glaucoma, for all they are doing to preserve America's vision.

Please join me in cosponsoring this legislation that will help in the fight against blindness.