

officials, NGOs, and UN personnel began talking about the possibility and logistics of an independent investigation. Meanwhile, in Thailand, the Royal Thai Government (RTG), concerned that such an outcry would jeopardize its policy of engagement with the SPDC, ordered those NGOs that participated in compiling the report to close their offices indefinitely.

Although License to Rape has received a notable amount of attention, the international community, including officials from various governments, suggested to Refugees International that additional evidence could assist in generating further action. It is important to ask why. Some suggested that a report about the experience of indigenous women, compiled by indigenous women, could not be objective. Others proposed that the report, written by a small, unknown group, was not credible enough.

The authors of this report reject those propositions. Few are as well-qualified to document and describe rape as those women from the brutalized communities. International advocacy without grassroots knowledge, participation, and decision-making is of extremely limited use. Consequently, the purpose of this report is not to "bolster" the claims contained in License to Rape. Rather, the purpose is both to support and build on the movement and activity generated by SWAN, and to expand the scope of understanding regarding the brutal phenomenon of rape in Burma to include a broader profile of ethnic nationalities. License to Rape documented the widespread use of rape against Shan ethnic women. Rape is not confined to Shan State or to Shan women. The Burmese military uses rape against many ethnic nationalities for the express purpose of brutalizing "insurgents," quashing ethnic dissent, and demoralizing and destroying ethnic communities.

Refugees International decided that our approach would be to broaden the scope of the Shan report by investigating the prevalence of the Burmese military's use of rape against other ethnic groups. RI's field mission focused the research on the Karen, Karenni, Mon, and Tavoyan ethnic groups. In applying our expertise in international advocacy on behalf of war-affected populations, RI sought to examine the extent of the use of rape against a variety of Burma's ethnic nationalities and determine if the abuses were widespread and/or systematic.

Karen, Karenni, Mon and Tavoyan women and men, as well as several Shan individuals, were courageous in sharing their personal stories and observations. From the 26 individuals interviewed, 43 rapes or attempted rapes were described, 23 of them confirmed by victim or witness testimony or physical evidence. Stories of rapes and other human rights abuses and the resulting mental and physical ailments dominated the interviews. Individuals still in pain from torture and beatings talked about the violations suffered by them and their families and friends. For many, the decision to leave Burma was clearly tied to the rape and other abuses they and their family members had experienced. One survivor spoke for many when she said, "To this day, I cannot sleep at night thinking about what happened." The time is ripe for the international community to hear their voices and take action.

SAN BENITO MARINE PFC. JUAN GARZA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fallen soldier who grew up in San Benito, Texas: Marine PFC Juan Garza, who we learned yesterday was killed in action by sniper fire as his unit was taking and holding the Baghdad airport.

The price we are paying as a Nation is high in terms of loss of life in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Already, sons of South Texas have been killed and wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, with another still unaccounted for in the Iraqi theatre. PFC Garza was the most recent loss for our community.

Garza, who served with the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines Regiment, was killed Monday evening by enemy sniper fire while patrolling the Baghdad airport just outside the Iraqi Capital. His mother said he was shot in the chest and died instantly. PFC Garza was based at Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he was an expert marksman and broke shooting range records there in boot camp.

PFC Garza was always a sportsman, competing in football and track. His friends and family remember him for his humor and his target practice. He always aspired to be in the military, and probably got the bug for service from watching the military movies he loved. He was also inspired to join the service by his grandfather, who served in the United States Army.

He grew up in San Benito, but moved to Michigan to live with his aunt and uncle. After graduating from Summerfield High School in Temperance, Mich., Garza enlisted in the Marines and was stationed at Camp Pendleton.

He loved his country and he loved the Marines. Like most people who join the service, he wanted to help people, to make the world a better place. The world is lonelier today without Juan in it, but the work he did will indeed make it a better place.

On the day after Christmas, 2002, he married his sweetheart, and was deployed to the Middle East the next day. This was a tragedy on so many levels. PFC Garza is survived by his young wife, Casey; his parents, Mary Ann and Juan Guadalupe Garza; his baby half-sister, Stephanie Rae Castillo; and his aunt, Jodi Bucher of Temperance, with whom he lived in Michigan.

I ask my colleagues to remember Juan Garza's family today, to pray for them as they absorb this enormous personal loss. I also ask that we all continue to pray for the safety of the men and women we have sent to do this dirty, difficult task of ridding Iraq of dangerous weapons of mass destruction.

ADDRESS OF DEMOCRATIC LEADER NANCY PELOSI TO THE AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to an excel-

lent speech given a few days ago by Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI, my colleague, friend and neighbor in California. Her address was given at the recent Conference here in Washington of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an organization of Americans who see strong American ties with the State of Israel as a vital element in our nation's vital interest.

Mr. Speaker, Leader PELOSI's position on terrorism was clear and unequivocal: "There is no place in the civilized world for terrorism. Not now. Not ever. . . . No injustice, real or imagined, can ever justify, and no future can ever be built upon, the calculated slaughter of innocents." She was emphatic: "The world must never accept in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or Haifa what the world would not tolerate in London, Washington, New York, or San Francisco." These words must be the basis of our country's efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

Congresswoman PELOSI understands that peace cannot come through "lowering the threshold for the cessation of violence" and any roadmap for peace in the region must, in her words "be based on real change on the ground, not artificial dates on the calendar."

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to read Congresswoman PELOSI's excellent address.

ADDRESS OF DEMOCRATIC LEADER NANCY PELOSI TO THE AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Good morning. My, how this group has grown. Congratulations.

Cissie Swig, thank you so much, first for that warm introduction, but more importantly for your friendship and your mentioning of me over the years and for your leadership on so many issues. I cherish our friendship.

President Amy Friedkin, a dear friend for so many years. It has been wonderful to see Amy rise within your great organization, from the East Bay Federation and the Northern California chapter of AIPAC, all the way to become the national President.

I am thrilled that Amy is the first woman to be President of AIPAC. And with president-elect Bernice Manocherian, perhaps it is the beginning of a wonderful trend. I commend AIPAC for breaking down another barrier and leading America closer to the ideal of equality that is both our heritage and our hope.

Cissie and Amy will appreciate this story. My daughter is Catholic. My son-law is Jewish. Last week, I celebrated my birthday, and my grandchildren—ages four and six—called me to sing Happy Birthday. And the surprise, the real gift, was that they sang it in Hebrew.

I'm so pleased to be joined by three of my colleagues—Congressman Howard Berman of California, Congressman Sander Levin of Michigan, and Congressman Bob Matsui of California. All are strong supporters of Israel. Thank you to all the members of AIPAC, especially those who have traveled so far from California and the Bay Area. The special relationship between the United States and Israel is as strong as it is because of your fidelity to that partnership and the commitment of every person in this room today.

I am honored to be here to speak about something that can never be said enough: America's commitment to the safety and security of the State of Israel is unwavering.

Today, the thoughts and prayers of all Americans are with our courageous forces in Iraq. Americans may have had our differences going into this war, but we are

united in support of our men and women in uniform.

Let me also say this: I absolutely condemn the statements or suggestions of those who seek to place responsibility for this conflict on the American-Jewish community. The Jewish community in America, like America itself, has been divided on whether to fight this war at this time. Any accusations to the contrary have no place in our discourse—public or private.

Today, Americans are seeing for themselves what I saw on my trip to the Persian Gulf in March and my previous visits with our troops at bases here at home. Our men and women in uniform are focused on their mission, enduring tremendous hardships, motivated by a profound love of country and prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

We pray for the swift and successful disarmament of Iraq with the least possible loss of life.

We pray that the end of this conflict will bring new hope for the people of Iraq. That starts by promoting a multilateral response to the potential refugee crisis along with a democratic government of, by and for the people of Iraq. We pray for the families who have lost a loved one. And we pray for the safe return of the missing, our prisoners of war, and all of our forces into the loving arms of their families.

Their noble service reminds us of our mission—to build a future worthy of their sacrifice.

That future begins with our commitment to the fundamental principles to which all people in all nations are entitled—freedom, security, peace and prosperity.

And in the Middle East, those principles rest upon a foundation that is as enduring as it is essential—the unbreakable bond of friendship between the United States of America and the State of Israel.

The United States stands with Israel because of our common history—two beacons founded on the ideals of liberty and justice, forged by pioneers, and fulfilled by immigrants in search of a better tomorrow.

The United States stands with Israel because of our common interests—our fundamental interest in the most basic of all rights: the right to exist, the right to live free from fear, the right to put our children on the school bus in the morning knowing they will come home safely in the afternoon.

Let there be no doubt—the United States of America stands with the State of Israel also because it is in our national interests to stand with the State of Israel.

I will never forget my first visit to Israel. From the moment one lands at Ben Gurion Airport, one appreciates what every Israeli knows—security is measured in miles and minutes.

From the Golan Heights, we could see Damascus just 40 miles away. Today, Syria's and Iran's bankrolling of terror and the development of weapons of mass destruction is a clear and present danger. Today, Israelis in the north live under the constant threat of Hezbollah's rockets just across the border in Lebanon.

Ben-Gurion's famous words remain true today: Israel is 'a small nation that has suffered much, but at the same time has won for itself a special place in the history of mankind because of its spirit, faith and vision.' And yet, 'we have a long thorny path ahead of us,' he said.

More than a half-century later, our challenge is the same: how can America and Israel together walk the long thorny path and preserve Israel as a special place in the history of mankind?

First and foremost, we must be unequivocal in our words and uncompromising in our deeds.

There is no place in the civilized world for terrorism. Not now. Not ever.

Our prayers go out to the people of Israel following this weekend's attack in Netanya.

No injustice, real or imagined, can ever justify, and no future can ever be built upon, the calculated slaughter of innocents.

Let there be no doubt: whether it is called Al Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Hamas, or the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the murder of innocents is madness. It must stop. And it must stop immediately.

The world must never accept in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or Haifa what the world would not tolerate in London, Washington, New York or San Francisco.

Last spring, an overwhelming majority of Congress expressed our solidarity with Israel in its fight against terrorism and in reaffirming Israel's right to self-defense.

Second, we must ensure that Israel always has the tools and resources it needs to confront its security and economic challenges.

President Truman knew this 55 years ago when Israel was born, recognizing her just eleven minutes after independence. President Johnson knew this when Israel fought for her survival, supplying her with the tools to help win the Six Day War. And President Clinton knew this when Israel was ready to embrace peace—indeed, a peace of the brave—at Camp David two years ago, promising to stand by her as she took historic steps for peace.

Having served on the Intelligence Committee for ten years—including two years as the Ranking Democrat—I have an understanding of the threats facing the Israeli people. Having served as the senior Democrat on the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, I have always fought for the vital economic and military assistance that Israel needs—not only because it is in Israel's interest, but because it is in America's interest.

Last month, I called upon President Bush to respond to Israel's urgent request for assistance to confront its unprecedented economic and military crisis. The President answered with the aid package he submitted to Congress last week.

As House Democratic Leader, I pledge to you today: Democrats in Congress will be in the lead in the fight for passing this emergency package—and soon. As we always have, as we always will, Democrats will insist that Israel has the tools it needs—both to defeat terrorism and to work toward a just and lasting peace.

Let no one ever question our unshakable commitment to the security that Israel must have and the safety of the Israeli people and to its qualitative military edge. Israel will never stand alone, because America will never abandon Israel.

Third, for Israel to have peace, Israel needs a partner in peace. Yasser Arafat is not that partner.

At Camp David, Israel was prepared to cede territory, dismantle settlements, and recognize an independent Palestinian state. And Yasser Arafat said no to peace.

And then—even as Israel continued to negotiate and offer concessions—Arafat said yes to a campaign of violence and terror that continues to this day.

President Bush's statement last June made clear that any new Palestinian state requires a new Palestinian leadership. I applaud that. The President's clarity was a catalyst. Palestinian moderates were strengthened. Arafat was weakened. And the new post of prime minister gives us guarded hope. A cabinet is being assembled. And the world is watching for genuine change.

Therefore, as were many of you, as were many Democrats in Congress, I was seriously concerned about the timing, tone and effect

of the President's statement of March 14. Indeed, we should be worried when those with little sympathy for Israel welcomed the President's words.

Let there be no weakening in our resolve, no softening in our stance, no lowering of the threshold for the cessation of violence. Any roadmap toward peace must be based on real change on the ground, not artificial dates on the calendar.

The terror must end. The new Palestinian prime minister must have the independence, the authority, and the personal commitment to lead the Palestinian people in a new direction.

The new Palestinian leadership must be open and accountable. And the reconstituted Palestinian security services must prevent terrorism, not promote it.

Only then will we realize a future of security, statehood and stability—security for Israelis, statehood for the Palestinians, and stability for the region.

Fourth, we must address the real source of so much of the instability across the Middle East—the lack of freedom, prosperity and human rights, including women's rights.

Last year's Arab Human Development Report stated it clearly: "The wave of democracy that transformed . . . most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and Eastern Europe and much of Central Asia in the late 1980s and early 1990s has barely reached the Arab states. This freedom deficit undermines human development and is one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development."

Those words were written by dozens of leading Arab intellectuals.

If we want to achieve long-term peace and security in the Middle East, we must achieve security for Israel and a future for the Palestinian people. At the same time, it is clear that freedom, security, peace and prosperity can strengthen the hand of those in the Arab and Islamic world who want to pursue a more hopeful and peaceful path.

These ideals that we cherish can make countries plagued by conflict and despair better places to live and better partners in creating a safer world.

Finally, we must raise our voices of hope, and drown out the voices of hate.

Whether in the Middle East, around the world, or in this country, we must be intolerant of intolerance. No one should ever fear, and no American should ever have their allegiance questioned because of their faith. As we protect and defend the American people against terrorism, however, we must protect and defend the Constitution and the civil liberties that define our democracy.

Cissie and Amy told me there are hundreds of college students here today. Allow me to speak directly to the students. Thankfully, you are too young to have witnessed the darkest chapters of the last century—the Nazism, communism, and authoritarianism. But in your eyes I see the glow of one of the brightest stars of the past century—the founding of the State of Israel.

You are the messengers to a future we will never know. It is your charge to build that future in the spirit of *tikkun olam*, the repairing of the world, in the spirit of peace and security.

On behalf of all who cherish freedom, thank you for your commitment to the ideals and values that define our two democracies—the United States and Israel.

My grandchildren tell me that this week begins the month of Nisan, the month of miracles, the month of deliverance. And over the coming weeks, Israelis and Jews everywhere will mark the miracles that have brought us to this day:

The survivors who endured the darkness of the Shoah and who braved their way to the light of Israel;

The heroes of Israeli independence who prevailed against overwhelming odds;

And all those who have defended Israel through decades of struggle and sacrifice, including a fallen hero Americans and Israelis mourned together—Space Shuttle Columbia astronaut Colonel Ilan Ramon, who literally took the Torah to the stars.

This is the spirit that defines the American-Israeli partnership. America stands with Israel now. America will stand with Israel forever.

We will never abandon Israel. We will never abandon Israel.

God bless you. God bless our men and women serving on the frontlines today. And God bless our special relationship between the United States of America and the State of Israel.

VETERANS EARN AND LEARN ACT

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce H.R. 1716, the Veterans Earn and Learn Act. Joining me as original cosponsors are Ranking Member LANE EVANS, and the chairman and ranking member of the Benefits Subcommittee, HENRY BROWN and MICHAEL MICHAUD, respectively.

WHY THIS BILL

This measure promotes veterans' employment. It would modernize the on job training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reflect American business and industry today. H.R. 1716 applies to the following VA educational assistance programs: the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program (Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty), chapter 30, title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.); the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program, chapter 32, title 38, U.S.C.; the Vietnam-Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program, chapter 34, title 38, U.S.C.; the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program, chapter 35, title 38, U.S.C., and the Educational Assistance for Members of the Selected Reserve Program, (Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve), chapter 1606, title 10, U.S.C. My colleagues and I intend to introduce a separate bill to modernize Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities under chapter 31, title 38, U.S.C.

I want VA's on-job training and apprenticeship program to reflect today's workplace. I have consulted extensively with representatives of organized labor, business, and industry to obtain their suggestions for improving the design of VA's program. Congress essentially has not changed it since World War II, and we should do so now. I also have consulted informally with VA and the Department of Labor (DOL), in addition to selected states to learn of their experiences in administering these programs. This bill reflects many of their suggestions.

VA's current OJT and apprenticeship programs pay veterans to learn while they earn. Rates for the various chapters differ somewhat, but in general, for the first six months veterans receive a monthly benefit of \$675; for the second six months \$496 monthly, and for the remainder of training \$315 monthly. Con-

gress furnishes these amounts to offset the difference between the training wage and the wage of the fully-trained employee. OJT can last for up to two years. Apprenticeships often last as much as five years.

OUR CHALLENGE

Mr. Speaker, classroom training is well known and established under VA's various educational assistance programs, including the current Montgomery GI Bill. But the on job training and apprenticeship opportunities under these programs appear less known and are less used than the college classroom. For example, of the 263,175 veterans using the Montgomery GI Bill (chapter 30) in fiscal year 2001, only 11,277 (4.2 percent) were participating in on-job training and apprenticeship.

Under Secretary for Benefits Daniel L. Cooper advised me by letter on September 11, 2002, that the OJT-apprenticeship "low participation rate is not due to a low number of employers but a low veteran participation. The number of participating employers is constantly changing, but State approving agencies are currently reporting about 7,000 employers who offer one or more VA-approved OJT or apprenticeship programs. Only about 2,200, or not quite 32 percent, have at least one veteran in training and receiving VA education benefits for the training." This is unacceptable. I intend to contact the Secretary of Labor and ask her to place more veterans in these jobs as soon as possible. I also note that 7.2 percent of veterans who used the Vietnam-era GI Bill trained through apprenticeship or OJT. For World War II veterans, about 18 percent trained in this manner. We must do better.

DOL reports that 858 occupations in America offer apprenticeships. Apprenticeable occupations can be categorized as follows: arts; business and administrative support; installation, maintenance and repair; production; science, drafting and computing; and service. Occupations range from boilermaker to bricklayer, carpenter to cook, electrician to emergency medical technician, and pipefitter to police officer.

The state of Missouri is showing the way. Missouri's aggressive efforts to place veterans into OJT and apprenticeships with Missouri employers produces about \$38 million annually in VA education and training benefits. Pennsylvania is reporting similar success. The Governor of Pennsylvania sends each separating servicemember a letter to encourage use of VA education and training benefits.

EARNING AND LEARNING

About two-thirds of active-duty servicemembers are married when they separate from the military. "Earning and learning" on the job through an OJT or apprenticeship program approved for veterans' training can be an excellent way for a servicemember to make the transition to civilian life. Because some military occupational skills are not transferable to the civilian economy, the veteran will have to train for a new occupation, or retrain to transfer their military skill to the civilian market. Veterans with military job skills that are transferable to civilian life benefit as well. They can continue working and training on-the-job while meeting the necessary licensing and certification requirements. Employers benefit because hiring veterans is plain and simple a good business decision.

The resourcefulness and reliability former servicemembers bring to the workplace is exemplary. As First Lady Laura Bush has noted,

veterans bring something else to the workplace that is hard to find—"the greatest in character, commitment, and resolve."

WHAT OUR BILL WOULD DO

Mr. Speaker, here is what the Veterans Earn and Learn Act would accomplish:

Section one would state Congressional purposes for VA's OJT and apprenticeship programs in both the private and public sectors of our economy. These include: helping employers hire and retain skilled workers; establishing a link between training afforded to servicemembers while serving in the Armed Forces and training available in civilian settings for purposes of occupational licensing and credentialing; and developing a more highly educated and productive workforce.

Section two would modify OJT and apprenticeship benefit entitlements computation under the chapter 34 and 35 programs to be the same as the entitlement rate for the chapter 30, 32 and 1606 programs. Under current law, VA calculates chapter 30, 32, and 1606 programs based on monthly VA payment amounts rather than based on the amount of time spent in training. This "dollars used" versus "time spent" method helps the trainee conserve entitlement while participating in the OJT or apprenticeship program. This approach makes additional entitlement available for other educational pursuits, such as earning an associate degree in a specialized technology or meeting other licensing or credentialing requirements.

Section three would establish an incentive payment for program participants who finish their apprenticeship training early. As an incentive for trainees to complete their apprenticeship or attain journeyworker status early, our bill would require VA to pay the trainee a lump sum payment for the months of VA entitlement remaining that would have been needed to complete the apprenticeship. This approach would remove the current disincentive to gain journeyworker status in competency-based apprenticeships as soon as the veteran is ready.

Section four would increase the monthly VA benefit for trainees who simultaneously pursue apprenticeships or on-job training and related post-secondary classroom education training. This provision would apply whether the trainee was pursuing both forms of training as a requirement of the apprenticeship or voluntarily under the trainee's own initiative. For example, under this measure, the total VA would pay for simultaneous training could not exceed the full-time classroom rate, which currently is \$900 per month. Current law increases the benefit to \$985 per month on October 1, 2003.

Section five would codify and strengthen VA authority to pay benefits for competency-based apprenticeships. In today's workplace, apprenticeships may be structured based upon a specific period of time, commonly known as a time-based program. Apprenticeships may also be based on the demonstration of successful mastery of skills, commonly known as a competency-based program, or training may be based upon a combination of the two. In the case of a competency-based learning program, the bill requires VA to take into consideration the approximate term of the program recommended in registered apprenticeship program standards recognized by the Secretary of Labor. Apprenticeships offered in industries that choose not to register with the Secretary of Labor, and that are approved for