

SKYROCKETING LEVELS OF VIOLENT CRIME

Violent crime rates in Guatemala have risen to astronomical levels. According to the PDH, there have been 16,788 incidents of violence between January and June of this year, 15 percent more than the 14,606 cases recorded during the same period last year. Of this total, 1,662 people have been shot, 254 have been stabbed and 108 murdered with blunt instruments; there were also 43 strangulations and five lynchings. While an international outcry was mounted over the infamous murders of 300 women in the last decade in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, little attention is paid to the fact that one woman is murdered every day in Guatemala.

To strike a sardonic note, in the same month that the PDH announced these hideous statistics, Guatemala celebrated the 50th anniversary of the CIA-sponsored invasion that ousted democratically-elected Jacobo Arbenz president. This wanton act of intervention on Washington's part plunged Guatemala into a bloody civil war that pitched government forces against guerrilla commandos, resulting in the brutal murders and disappearances of more than 200,000 people over the decades. The impact of the war was so extensive that it militarized every aspect of society. Despite the arrival of a nominal peace agreement in 1996 with the UN-peace accords, the country has struggled to deal with its oppressive violence. Alfonso Portillo (2000-04), the first to be elected president after the peace accords, paid little better than lip service to the accords while allowing impunity to reign and endemic corruption to flourish, especially when it came to the special treatment he afforded the country's most notorious human rights violator, the infamous General Rios Montt.

NEW PRESIDENT, BUT NO NEW SOLUTIONS

When President Berger took office on January 14, a new opportunity for peace and reconciliation seemed to present itself. During his election campaign, Berger portrayed himself as a man firmly committed to democratizing Guatemala. He pledged to fight crime, corruption and poverty and to apply the still dormant provisions of the peace accord. However, since taking office, his policies have been somewhat less than coherent.

The cornerstone of his reforms has been a commitment to implementing the international community's recommendations; especially those aimed at reducing the size of the military, the institution that was responsible for many of the worst human rights atrocities during the country's 36-year-long civil war. Although Berger was seen as substantially reducing the military from 27,000 to 15,500 active members as well as spearheading a campaign to close 13 of the country's 60 military bases, these statistics are somewhat misleading. While his moves to demilitarize the country generated immediate praise from the international community, Marvin Perez of the Rigoberta Menchu Foundation asserted that more than 6,000 of these soldiers never actually existed. They were "ghost soldiers," the result of creative auditing by the previous administration to siphon money away from the government for alleged salaries and food parcels for senior personnel. Moreover, of the remaining 5,663 soldiers who agreed to take early retirement, 99 percent were infantry recruits. This means that the high-ranking members of the officer corps—those who were subsequently found responsible for 93 percent of the atrocities committed during the civil war—are likely to still be on active duty.

UNSUCCESSFUL PLAN OF ATTACK

Berger's latest plan to stop the wave of violence has been to triple the number of soldiers and police officers on joint patrol in

danger zones termed "red areas." Yet, the plan only makes it more likely that those who are now patrolling Guatemala's streets are the same military personnel who raped, tortured and murdered some 200,000 people during the civil war.

At a recent meeting in Washington, Vice President Eduardo Stein told COHA that the reason violent crime has reached a "level never seen before was because organized crime was reacting very violently against the reforms the government has enacted." Yet placing the blame on organized crime is too simplistic an answer to a complex question. Senior officials in the army and police force stand accused not only of being involved in this crime network, but of actually orchestrating criminal activities. If the government intends to blame today's increasing violence in Guatemalan society on shadowy networks of crime cartels, it must be willing to accept the involvement of its own functionaries in the country's burgeoning law and order calamity. Guatemala's historic tradition of violence will not be solved by simply increasing the presence of security forces on the streets. The problems are rooted too deeply in Guatemalan society for such superficial measures alone to be truly effective.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Berger is clearly vulnerable in the eyes of the Guatemalan population. His public approval rating has slipped from 83 percent (the level recorded at the time of his inauguration) to 48 percent according to the latest CID-Gallup poll published in *El Periódico*. This is further compounded by the significant protest of thousands of anti-government marchers—it is clear that Berger must take more assertive action if he wants to retain the populace's backing.

If the president wants to combat the situation, he must create an environment where every Guatemalan is equal in the eyes of the law. He needs to purge the military of not simply infantry soldiers, but also of those officers of superior rank who, as junior officers, planned and carried out unspeakable atrocities.

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF INDONESIA ON THEIR RECENT ELECTIONS

HON. JAMES A. LEACH

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, on September 20, 2004, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won a decisive victory in the final round of the first direct presidential election in the history of the Republic of Indonesia. However, the election was an even greater victory for the people of Indonesia in their remarkable transition to democracy.

This has been a pivotal year for democratic institutions in Indonesia. Indonesia has conducted not one, but three complex national elections in 2004. They were the largest single-day elections in the world, and involved hundreds of millions of ballots, and more than 500,000 polling stations spread across that vast archipelago. In April, I had the opportunity to visit the Indonesian National Elections Commission in Jakarta, and was impressed by the energy and determination with which its officials were confronting those logistical challenges. By any measure, their efforts were a profound success. Approximately 116 million

people voted in the final round of the presidential election, over 10 million more than voted in the last presidential election in the United States.

The people of Indonesia have effected credible, orderly, and peaceful elections of which they are deservedly proud. The magnitude of this accomplishment becomes apparent when we recall that Indonesia emerged from authoritarianism only six years ago, during an extended period of acute economic and social turmoil.

Other observers have correctly cited Indonesia as proof that Islam and democracy can coexist, but it is more than that. Civil Islam in Indonesia has not been merely passive or coincidental with democratization, it has been a catalyst. We understand and appreciate the critical role that Islamic civil society has played in promoting democracy in Indonesia. I fully expect that Islamic mass organizations, universities, pesantren, and non-governmental organizations will continue to play an important part in developing the political culture and public expectations necessary to make Indonesia's nascent democratic institutions truly representative.

We have high hopes for the new administration as it begins to address the significant challenges facing Indonesia. We wish them every success in promoting economic growth, peacefully resolving separatist and communal conflicts, improving the implementation of decentralization and regional autonomy, combating terrorism, and ensuring that the institutions that wield public power are fully accountable to the people of Indonesia. In sum, we share the aspiration of the Indonesian people for expanding and deepening the process of reformasi—the reformation of public institutions away from the corruption, collusion, and nepotism that have weakened them in years past.

I would like to extend my personal congratulations to President-elect Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President-elect Jusuf Kalla on their recent victory, and to thank President Megawati Sukarnoputri for her leadership and service to her country during the past three years. We look forward to the continuation of the cooperative relationship between our nations, and the steady growth in friendship between our peoples.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am re-introducing legislation that is intended to help solve the shortage of available, affordable child care facilities. In my congressional district in New York City, more than half of all women with pre-school children are in the workforce and the need for child care is enormous. This is not a local problem but one that is national in nature.

The "Children's Development Commission Act" or "Kiddie Mac," will address this problem by authorizing HUD to issue guarantees to lenders who are willing to lend money to build or rehabilitate child care facilities. It also

creates the Children's Development Commission which will certify the loans and create federal child care standards. Kiddie Mac will also give "micro-loans" to facilities which need to make the necessary changes to come up to licensing standards, as well as provide them with lower cost fire and liability insurance. Through some of the premiums paid by the lenders, a non-profit foundation will be formed which would focus on research on child care and development, as well as create educational materials to guide potential providers through the certification process.

It is late in the session but I urge my colleagues to consider the proposal and join me in enacting it this year or in a future Congress.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud passage of the Economic Development Administration Reauthorization Act of 2003, S. 1134. This Authorization allows the Economic Development Administration to provide approximately \$1.3 billion in economic development grants over the next 5 years.

The Economic Development Administration provides support for redevelopment of brownfields sites in otherwise underserved communities, like some I represent. For every acre of reused brownfields 4.5 acres of unused open space is preserved. Preserving this open space and redeveloping these sites is critical to the environment, public health, and economic stability of families in my community.

I am pleased that during Senate consideration of S. 1134, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce David Sampson testified before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee that the EDA is "not seeking to in any way relieve a responsible party from liability under CERCLA nor to provide funds to a party to undertake clean-ups required under CERCLA, since to do so would undercut the 'Polluter Pays' principle on which CERCLA was founded." Taxpayers should not be saddled with the burden of paying to clean up pollution when polluters can be held accountable, and the limited grant funds available in this legislation should not be used to fund polluters.

On October 5, 2004, I joined Ranking Democratic Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee JOHN DINGELL in sending a letter to the Economic Development Administration requesting information on the brownfields cleanup program. To the limited extent EDA is involved in funding assessment or cleanup of brownfields sites, the intent of the EDA bill is that grant funds shall only be provided consistent with the "Polluter Pays" principle. I intend to continue to follow the role of the EDA in brownfields, as successful brownfields redevelopment must be achieved without sacrificing environment and public health protections and without undermining the Polluter Pays principle.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, October 6, 2004, I was unavoidably detained, and therefore unable to cast my floor vote on roll call number 497, on passage of H.R. 5107, the Justice for All Act.

Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "aye" on roll call vote 497.

RECOGNIZING JONATHAN ADAM DAVIS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jonathan Adam Davis, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 261, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jonathan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jonathan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jonathan Adam Davis for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JUDGE DANIEL PETRE

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to Daniel Petre from Garfield County, Colorado. Daniel is an accomplished public servant who was recently chosen to succeed Thomas Ossola as a Judge in Colorado's Ninth Judicial District. His impressive service and contributions make him an excellent choice for this judgeship, and I would like to join my colleagues here today in recognizing his selection before this body of Congress and this Nation.

At fifty-three years of age, Judge Daniel Petre has established a rich legacy that will aid him on the district bench. After completing his bachelor's degree at Dartmouth, he went on to receive his law degree from Southern Methodist University. Daniel managed a law firm in Glenwood Springs for twenty-two years before becoming the Garfield County Magistrate and the District 5 water referee. Recently, Colorado Governor Bill Owens appointed him as one of three judges for the Ninth District court. Daniel also serves on the board of Garfield Legal Services and is a former member of the Re-1 School Board.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to recognize Judge Daniel Petre for his past service to Garfield County and the state of Colorado, and to congratulate him on his appointment to the Ninth District bench. I am confident he will serve with integrity and compassion, and I am honored to recognize him today before this body of Congress and this Nation.

THE LOSS OF SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER S. POTTS

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sorrow that I rise to recognize the death of Sergeant Christopher S. Potts, a brave soldier who served with dignity and honor in Iraq and as a member of the Rhode Island National Guard for 14 years. I join his family and the people of Rhode Island in mourning this great loss.

On Sunday, October 3, Sergeant Potts was killed by enemy fire while stationed at a traffic checkpoint in Taji, 13 miles north of Baghdad. That Sunday was also Sergeant Potts's 38th birthday. A member of A Battery, 1st Battalion, 103rd Field Artillery, Sergeant Potts was serving his first tour of duty in Iraq. A resident of Tiverton, Sergeant Potts led a life of service both to his country and to his community. When not on active duty, he worked as a marine mechanic at New England Boatworks in Portsmouth.

I extend my deepest condolences to his parents Jerry Potts and Betty Hackett, his sister Kim Evans, his wife Terri, and his sons Christopher Jr. and Jackson. The people of Tiverton and Rhode Island have demonstrated their appreciation for Sergeant Potts's sacrifice and have spoken highly of his contributions to their lives. Those who knew him well describe him as a true outdoorsman and a wonderful father. Our thoughts and prayers go out especially to his two sons, the greatest joy in Sergeant Potts's life.

His loss causes us to reflect on the bravery demonstrated by our men and women in uniform as they carry out their obligations in the face of danger. When their nation called them to duty to preserve freedom, liberty and the security of their neighbors, they answered without hesitation. We remember those who have fallen not only as soldiers, but also as patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. May we keep their loved ones in our thoughts and prayers as they struggle to endure this difficult period.

We will continue to hope for the safe and speedy return of all of our troops serving throughout the world.

THANK YOU, CHAIRMAN TOM DAVIS OF VIRGINIA AND STAFF

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2004

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, for the past two years I have been privileged to serve as Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy,