

plebiscite for the freedom of the Sikh Nation," he said. "India should also allow self-determination in Christian Nagaland, Kashmir, Assam, and the other nations fighting for freedom to bring peace to South Asia."

"As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh noted. "We must continue to press for our God-given birthright of freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish."

HONORING ESTHER MEDINA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY, INC

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the great contributions of Esther Medina, the executive director of the Mexican American Community Services Agency, Inc. (MACSA). Founded in 1964, MACSA has established itself as the leader in the Latino community in the area of advocacy, social justice, youth/family/senior services, implementation and operation of two charter schools and the development of affordable housing.

Esther Medina was hired as the executive director of MACSA in 1982. At that time, MACSA was on the verge of losing funding from the United Way and was put on a 3-month corrective action plan to prove fiscal solvency, stable management and leadership. At that time, the finances were in such disarray, MACSA had no money in its budget to operate. Esther was able to convince the United Way to allocate \$27,000 to keep its doors open for 3 more months. Through Esther's efforts, she transformed MACSA from an organization with 1 full-time and 1 part-time employee, on the verge of having its doors closed forever, to an organization with 120 employees and an annual operating budget of over seven million dollars as well as developing and owning its current headquarter building, 2 acclaimed affordable housing projects for seniors, a full service 25,000 square foot multi-service youth center, a youth/teen intervention center, and 2 public charter high schools.

Esther Medina exemplifies the characteristics of a competent leader by being true to her values as a human being. The astounding success of MACSA is clearly attributable to her outstanding leadership.

IN LASTING MEMORY OF THOMAS MCRAE

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise in honor of the life and legacy of Thomas McRae III. He was a loving father and husband, a statesman, a leader, a public servant, and a tireless advocate of helping the less fortunate. He recently passed away at the age of 65 at his family's home in Arkadelphia.

Tom McRae, who was deeply rooted in an affluent Arkansas political family, graduated from El Dorado High School in 1956, and went on to earn a History degree from the University of Arkansas and a law degree from the University of Arkansas Law School. Upon graduation, he volunteered to go to Nepal with the Peace Corps in 1964, a 2-year experience that would give him a new perspective on society and allow him to perform extensive social work on behalf of Nepalese villagers and farmers.

Tom became a household name in 1990 when he ran in the Democratic primaries against Governor Bill Clinton in the face of overwhelming odds. He finished a strong second in a field of six, proving that odds are no detriment to a steadfast spirit and determination to fight for the causes and ideals in which you believe. It was a fight he would continue years later by directing nonprofit programs in Mississippi and Kentucky, helping the rural poor get loans and find jobs.

Throughout his life, Tom distinguished himself through a sustained commitment to his ideals and his community. He devoted himself to uplifting society by helping those less fortunate. His character is an example of the values we, as parents, teachers, community members, and legislators, hope to instill in our next generation. Bill Clinton spoke for many of us when he said, "I respected, admired and liked Tom McRae, and I will be forever grateful for the lifetime of service he gave to Arkansas."

I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Christine, his children, Catherine and Thomas, as well as all of those who knew and loved him. Although he may no longer be with us, his spirit and his legacy live on in the examples he set and the many lives he touched.

TRIBUTE TO MARJORIE CLEMENT

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise before you to recognize Marjorie Clement of Jefferson County, Colorado, who recently passed away at the age of 81. She was a stellar public servant who will be missed by many, and I think it appropriate that we remember her life before this body of Congress and this Nation today.

Marjorie was appointed Jefferson County Commissioner in 1981, and was elected to serve for two additional terms. An ardent supporter of preserving Colorado's open spaces, Marjorie worked tirelessly to preserve some of Colorado's most beautiful landscapes and vistas. Marjorie became the second woman elected to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners, and will be remembered as a great defender of the citizens in her community. In addition to her elected office, Marjorie also contributed to her community as a member of the Jefferson County Historical Commission and the Jefferson County Historical Society. Marjorie was an avid outdoorswoman, enjoying horseback riding, tennis, and skiing. She is survived by a daughter, Elizabeth Graham, a son, Lawrence Clement, five grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this Nation to pay tribute to the life of Marjorie Clement. Marjorie was a beloved woman who made a tremendous impact on her community through her many selfless years in public service. The Jefferson County community and the State of Colorado will truly miss her, and my thoughts go out to Marjorie's loved ones during this difficult time of bereavement.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN URGES SIKH ORGANIZATIONS TO TAKE STRONG STAND FOR FREEDOM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, the French National Assembly enacted a law banning religious symbols such as "conspicuous crosses," yarmulkes, Muslim headscarves, and Sikh turbans from schools. Many religious organizations spoke out against it, including many Sikh organizations. Belgium is thinking about such a law also.

The Council of Khalistan wrote a letter on February 11 noting that none of the other Sikh organizations mentioned the persecution of Sikhs in India or their struggle for freedom in their communications about this law. Yet a free and sovereign Sikh homeland, Khalistan, would have put the Sikhs in a much stronger position to protest these discriminatory and unfair rules.

The letter, brought to me by Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, the tireless fighter for freedom in South Asia, calls on Sikh organizations to stand up to the repression by working for freedom for the Sikh people.

In my years of public service, I have had the privilege of knowing many Sikhs. They are hardworking people and they are very supportive of the cause of freedom. Yet the Indian government's response is to step up the repression in the name of Hindutva—total Hindu domination of every facet of life in the subcontinent. An Indian Cabinet minister even said that everyone who lives in India must either be a Hindu or be subservient to Hindus.

Over a quarter of a million Sikhs have been killed by the Indian government in the last 20 years, Mr. Speaker. More than 52,000 are political prisoners. Even one political prisoner is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Even one government murder is unacceptable, especially when no one is punished for it and especially when the country where it happens proudly proclaims its commitment to democratic values.

Over 200 years ago, Americans fought to achieve our independence from an overbearing British monarchy. Today, the Sikhs fight for their freedom by peaceful means, which the Indian government falsely describes as terrorist. We are the beacon of hope for the freedom-loving people of the world, Mr. Speaker. We owe it to them and to ourselves to help them if we can.

One way to help is to stop aid to India as long as these egregious human rights violations continue. Everyone is entitled to live in peace and freedom, to go to work and enjoy life with the family and friends. Yet minorities in India are unable to do that because militant Hindus aligned with the RSS, the parent organization of the ruling party, and the government itself in many cases commit terrible acts

of violence against Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Dalits, Assamese, Bodos, Tamils, Manipuris, and other minorities. This is unacceptable and the hardworking taxpayers of our country should not be called upon to support it.

Another measure that we can take is to declare our strong support for freedom through a free and fair plebiscite on independence where it is sought. India is a multinational state and history shows that such states do not survive. By helping to ensure that democracy is allowed to work for the cause of freedom and self-determination, we can make sure that whatever changes occur in the subcontinent happen peacefully.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mean to be long-winded, so I will stop here and place the Council of Khalistan's excellent open letter into the RECORD.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2004.

Open Letter to Sikh Organizations and Institutions:

AN APPEAL TO THE KHALSA PANTH
ONLY IN A FREE KHALISTAN CAN SIKHS PROSPER—EVERY SIKH MUST WORK TO LIBERATE KHALISTAN

DEAR KHALSA PANTH: Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Recently, France passed a law banning the wearing of turbans and other religious symbols such as yarmulkes, Muslim head scarves, and "conspicuous crosses" in schools. This is a major violation of religious rights. Belgium is considering a similar law. Sikhs must do whatever we can to protest this unfair, discriminatory action.

Because Sikhs are slaves in India, there is nobody to defend the Sikh interests internationally. Recently, an issue came up of the French banning the wearing of turbans in school. If Khalistan were free, the Sikh Nation could call the French Ambassador and tell him to stop this harassment of Sikhs. Our Ambassador to France would tell the French government the same thing: the turban is part of the Sikh religion and Sikhs should not be harassed.

When Khalistan is free, we will be in a much stronger position to fight such offenses against our religion. We will be able to exert influence that we cannot bring to bear now. This is just one more reason that the liberation of Khalistan is essential. Yet prominent Sikh organizations like the Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE), SMART, the Sikh Coalition, and other organizations refuse to mention the oppression of the Sikhs by the Indian regime and the struggle to liberate Khalistan. They are more concerned about their positions than about the Sikh people. These organizations are heavily infiltrated and often controlled by operatives of the Indian government. We appreciate the British Sikh Federation, which continually promotes the cause of Sikh rights and freedom for Khalistan. These other organizations must promote the cause of Sikh freedom as well. Whenever they have the opportunity to communicate with the outside world, they should promote freedom and independence for Khalistan.

The Guru granted sovereignty to the Sikh Nation, saying "In Grieb Sikkhin Ko Deon Patshahi." The Sikh Nation must achieve its independence to fulfill the mandate of the Guru. We always remember it by reciting every morning and evening, "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa." Now is the time to act on it. Do we mean what we say every morning and evening? I urge Sikhs to unite and take action to liberate our homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. It is time to start a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation.

Never forget that the Akal Takht Sahib and Darbar Sahib are under the control of the Indian government, the same Indian government that has murdered over a quarter of a million Sikhs in the past twenty years. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht and the head granthi of Darbar Sahib toe the line that the Indian government tells them. They are not appointed by the Khalsa Panth. The SGPC also is controlled by the Indian government that has brutally murdered our people. These institutions will remain under the control of the Indian regime until we free the Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation and oppression and sever our relations with the New Delhi government.

The Indian government invaded and desecrated the Golden Temple and 125 other Sikh Gurdwaras throughout Punjab to murder Sant Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikhs during June 1984 in Punjab. If Sikhs will not even protect the sanctity of the Golden Temple, how can the Sikh Nation survive as a nation?

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, according to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy and human rights groups. These figures were published in Inderjit Singh Jaijee's excellent book, *The Politics of Genocide*. According to the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), the Indian regime admitted to holding 52,268 Sikhs as political prisoners. They are being held without charge or trial, some of them since 1984!

How can a democratic state hold political prisoners? The regime has made over 50,000 Sikhs "disappear" by picking them up, torturing and murdering them, and then secretly cremating them, declaring them "unidentified." Their bodies are not given to their families. The bodies of Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke and Sardar Jaswant Singh Khaira, who were murdered by the police, were never given to their families.

Other minorities also feel the lash of Indian repression. India has killed over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947 and murdered priests, raped nuns, burned churches, and destroyed Christian schools and prayer halls. They expelled missionary Joseph Cooper from the country after militant Hindu nationalists beat him up so badly that he had to be in the hospital for a week. Missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons were burned to death while sleeping in their jeep by a mob of militant Hindus chanting "Victory to Hanuman," a Hindu god. Since they were allied with the pro-Fascist RSS, the parent organization of the ruling BJP, they were able to commit this atrocity with impunity. Muslims were massacred in Gujarat while the police were under orders to stand aside and let the massacre occur, a frightening parallel to the 1984 Delhi massacres of Sikhs. A policeman told an Indian newspaper that the Gujarat massacre was planned in advance by the government.

This kind of treatment of its minorities only confirms the kind of country that India is. It is a fundamentalist Hindu theocracy, not secular or democratic at all. Remember what Narinder Singh, a spokesman for the Golden Temple, told America's National Public Radio in 1997: "The Indian government, they are always boasting that they are democratic, that they are secular. They have nothing to do with a secularism, nothing to do with a democracy. They just kill Sikhs just to please the majority."

Remember the words of Professor Darshan Singh, former Jathedar of the Akal Takht: "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh." The time to achieve our independence is now. India is not one country. It is a polyglot empire thrown together under one roof

for the administrative convenience of the British colonialists. It has 18 official languages. History shows that such countries are doomed to fall apart. India will collapse just like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Soviet Union, and other multinational states.

Soon Kashmir will be free from Indian occupation. Now America is involved in it. As L.K. Advani predicted, "When Kashmir goes, India goes." We agree with him and we urge the Indian government to hold a free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence and to sit down with representatives of the Sikh Nation to negotiate the boundaries of a sovereign, independent Khalistan. We want to make sure that India's collapse happens peacefully like that of Czechoslovakia, not violently like the breakup of Yugoslavia. The essence of democracy is self-determination. It is time for India to act like the democracy it claims to be.

When I met President Bush on December 5, he personally told me, "I am aware of the Sikh and Kashmiri problem and we stopped India and Pakistan from going to nuclear war." The Sikh diaspora has a moral responsibility to help the Sikh Nation to achieve its sovereignty by freeing Khalistan from Indian occupation.

The time has come to liberate our homeland. Sikhs must claim their birthright by liberating Khalistan. Only by freeing Khalistan will we put an end to this corruption and restore control of Punjab and its assets to the people, to whom it rightfully belongs. A free Khalistan is a must for the survival of the Sikh nation and will provide an optimal environment for the Sikh Nation to progress to its optimum potential politically, religiously, and economically.

Panth Da Sewadar,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES RICHARD BUTLER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise before you to pay tribute to the life of a remarkable man from my district. Charles Richard Butler of Durango, Colorado passed away recently at the age of 80. Charles will always be remembered as a devoted family man and patriot, and I would like to ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing his amazing life before this body of Congress and this Nation today.

Charles began his career serving his country in the Navy, and played an integral role in unloading landing craft tanks on Utah beach during the D-Day invasion. After his honorable discharge, he went on to graduate from the University of Colorado in Boulder with both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in geology. Throughout his 35-year career, Charles worked in a variety of geological capacities and was highly respected as an expert in his field. Charles will also be remembered for leading an adventurous life, having both mined the wilds of Alaska, and searched for gold in Mexico. He is survived by his daughter, Ann, his niece Sarah Sumner and her daughters Laura, Julia and Meredith; his brothers William, Howard, and David along with numerous nieces, nephews, grand nieces and grand nephews.