

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED
CAREER OF NISSAN'S EMIL HAS-
SAN

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding automotive career of Emil Hassan, the senior vice president of North American manufacturing, purchasing, quality and logistics at Nissan North America, Inc. Emil is retiring from Nissan on April 1 after 35 years in the automotive industry.

Emil has been credited with much of the automaker's success and profitability. He began his career with Nissan when the company built its auto manufacturing facility in Smyrna, Tennessee, in 1981. The Smyrna plant, which is located in my home county, is the largest U.S. automotive production plant under one roof and has produced more than 5 million automobiles to date. It has ranked for 9 consecutive years as the most efficient auto assembly plant in North America, according to the highly regarded annual Harbour Report.

And Emil has been an active civic leader in the hometown, as well. He is chairman of the Business/Education Partnership of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County and is a member of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. In fact, he received the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce Chairman's Award in 1996 for outstanding volunteer work in his home county. He has also been a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

I congratulate Emil for his remarkable career in the automotive industry and for all he has done to help enhance the quality of life in Rutherford County and Middle Tennessee. And I wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was also unavoidably absent from this Chamber on March 16, 2004. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on roll call votes 58, 59, and 60.

RECOGNIZING LAREDO DAY IN
WASHINGTON

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize today, March 17, 2004, as Laredo Day in Washington. A distinguished delegation from Laredo is in our Nation's Capital this week to meet with leaders and decision-makers in Congress and executive branch. Please join me, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming them.

Settled in 1775 by Spaniards, the first Texas cattle drives transformed Laredo from a settle-

ment of three families into a principal stop on the lower Camino Real, the Spanish royal highway.

Laredo became the first official port of entry on the United States-Mexico border in 1851. Today, Laredo handles more trade traffic than ports found in Southern California, New Mexico, Arizona and West Texas combined. As the fastest growing city east of the Rocky Mountains and the second fastest growing city in Texas, Laredo has become a vibrant and booming economic hub on the United States-Mexico border.

Much like it shares goods across the border, Laredo's culture melds both American and Mexican traditions. A prime example of this cultural fusion is Laredo's famed Washington's Birthday Celebration. The event includes over 34 events, lasts 17 days and brings together Americans and Mexicans alike. One event, the International Bridge Ceremony, takes place on the Lincoln-Juarez bridge and includes the meeting of officials, dignitaries, and children from both sides of the border. The groups share an embrace signifying the friendship and cooperation shared between the two nations. I was privileged to participate in this event earlier this year.

Helping to foster this camaraderie is the mayor of Laredo, the Honorable Betty Flores. Elected in 1998, Mayor Flores is the first female mayor to serve Laredo. She has worked diligently to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Laredo by tirelessly promoting her city without compromising the dignity of those she serves. Among the projects she has initiated are the Colonias Improvement Project, the inauguration of the Laredo Entertainment Center, and the opening of the World Trade Bridge. Mayor Flores' leadership on the state, local and national levels has brought prestige to her city.

Laredo's importance as a trade zone and cultural center is unparalleled, and its future is bright. It is my honor to recognize this city and Laredo Day 2004.

HONORING ONE OF OUR FALLEN
HEROES

HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I request the honor of distinguishing Sergeant First Class Gregory Hicks. I pay tribute to this exceptional soldier, husband, and father, who tragically died near Fajullah, Iraq on board a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

Sergeant Hicks was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, based in Fort Hood, Texas. A recipient of the Purple Heart and Army Achievement Medal, among others, Sergeant Hicks had distinguished himself as a man of honor and integrity.

Campbell County and the Fourth Congressional District of Tennessee lost a great individual. It was with great personal joy when I heard the small community of Duff, Tennessee, where Sergeant Hicks was raised, rallied around the family in their time of need.

Accordingly, I would like to express my deepest sympathy to his wife, Melinda, his

children, Chris and Jennifer, his mother and father, Clayton and Flora, and his siblings, Sandra, Stephen and Minnie on their tremendous loss. We honor his memory here today so that they will know that we all share their loss. Sergeant Hicks was a man devoted to his family, his country, and his community.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply honored to pay tribute to the life and memory of First Sergeant Gregory Hicks. Never withholding their services in the face of war, Tennessee's citizens have always been celebrated for their wartime valor. Sergeant Hicks fought to keep his family and country safe and for that we are forever indebted. My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Sergeant Hicks. It is with much respect that as a member of Congress I may honor his service.

HONORING JOHN HEMPEL

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedication and years of hard work by Mr. John Hempel as he retires after more than thirty years of service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Hempel was appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as the Director of the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) in Las Vegas on January 14, 2001. As Director, Mr. Hempel directed the planning, organization, coordination, and control of patient care, administrative, and support operations. He was also responsible for maintaining and improving the healthcare system and VA relationships in the community.

In addition to years of service to the VA, Mr. Hempel also bravely served his country as a combat-wounded Vietnam veteran. He served as a platoon leader and executive officer with A Troop, 1st Armored Cavalry, Americal Division in South Vietnam from 1969-1970.

During his service in the Las Vegas area, Mr. Hempel was the driving force behind significant improvements in the VA health care system. As a long-time supporter of veterans in Nevada, it was a pleasure for me to work with Mr. Hempel serving veterans in Southern Nevada.

I am honored to join with all Nevadans in honoring John Hempel on his many accomplishments and wish him well in his retirement.

ELECTIONS COMING IN PUNJAB
OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM FREE-
DOM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, elections have been scheduled in Punjab for May 10. They are part of India's national elections. The Sikhs in Punjab must seize this opportunity. Just changing the faces accomplishes nothing. Replacing one set of oppressors with another is not an exercise in democracy; it is merely proof of the need for independence from the tyranny that is the reality of daily life in Punjab.

The Council of Khalistan recently put out an open letter to the Sikhs in Punjab, Khalistan. They called for Sikhs to use these elections to elect officeholders who are committed to freeing the Sikh homeland, Khalistan.

Mr. Speaker, this is the only way to end the repression that has killed over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, with more than 52,000 being held as political prisoners. Some of the prisoners are army officers who refused to participate in the brutal military attack on the seat of the Sikh religion, the Golden Temple, in 1984. Others are simply those who participated peacefully in the movement to liberate Khalistan.

India claims to be a democratic country. It also claims that there is no support for Khalistan. Why not simply hold a vote on the issue, the democratic way? Instead, this country that loudly proclaims that it is secular and democratic imposes the most brutal repression on the Sikhs and other minorities such as Christians in Nagaland and elsewhere, Muslims in Kas-hmir and throughout the country, Tamils, Dalit "Untouchables," Bodos, Assamese, Manipuris, and others.

I join with the Council of Khalistan in urging the Sikhs and all the minorities suffering under Indian oppression to vote for honest candidates committed to freedom for their people. This is the best thing that they can do to free themselves from this brutal tyranny.

We can help by stopping American aid to India until all people's basic human rights are respected and by declaring our support for a free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence. These measures will press India to begin living up to the democratic values that they so loudly proclaim.

I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's message to the Sikh Nation regarding the elections into the RECORD at this time.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2004.

Open Letter to the Sikh Nation

PUNJAB ELECTIONS SET FOR MAY 10 OPPORTUNITY FOR SIKH NATION TO CLAIM FREEDOM
CHOOSE HONEST LEADERSHIP COMMITTED TO SIKH FREEDOM—DON'T MISS THIS PEACEFUL, DEMOCRATIC OPPORTUNITY TO LIBERATE KHALISTAN

DEAR KHALSA JI: WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA, WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH!

Elections in Punjab have been set for May 10. This is an opportunity for Sikhs to install honest, dedicated leadership. Choose only leaders who are committed to Khalsa Raj. Only when Khalistan is free can Sikhs live in prosperity, security, and dignity. Only when Khalistan is free of Indian occupation can Punjab's farmers get a fair price for their crops. Only when Khalistan is free will our water stop being diverted to nonriparian states. We must do everything that we can to free our homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. These elections provide an opportunity to reclaim our freedom democratically and peacefully.

The Guru granted sovereignty to the Sikh Nation, saying "In Grieb Silkhin 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.

Parkash Singh Badal disgraced the Sikh Nation by running the most corrupt govern-

ment in Punjab's history. His government was so corrupt, they even came up with a new term for bribery: "fee for service." If you didn't pay the fee, you didn't get the service. The Badal family was so adept at receiving bribes that Mrs. Badal could tell how much money was in a bag just by picking it up! We are pleased that Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is prosecuting the Badal family for its corruption. Clearly, the Akalis do not merit the Sikh Nation's support.

Badal also broke his campaign promises of 1997. He promised to release all the political prisoners. Yet 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? He promised to punish police officials who have committed atrocities against Sikhs since 1984. No such action was ever taken. Where is the punishment of Swaran Singh Ghotna, who murdered Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke? Where is the punishment of the police officers who kidnapped and murdered Sardar Jaswant Singh Khalsa? He promised to appoint a commission to study the human-rights violations against the Sikhs. Yet when such a commission was formed by concerned Sikhs, he used the power of government to shut it down and deny it a meeting place.

The Congress Party is no better. It is the party that invaded and desecrated the Golden Temple and 125 other Sikh Gurdwaras throughout Punjab in June 1984 to murder Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikhs, including General Shabeg Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, and over 100 Sikh religious students ages 8-13 who were taken out into the courtyard and shot. If Sikhs will not even protect the sanctity of the Golden Temple, how can the Sikh Nation survive as a nation? No conscientious Sikh can support the Congress Party. It is the enemy of the Sikh Nation.

Sikhs must speak for, work for, and vote for candidates committed to freeing our homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. Let us take this opportunity to put people in office who will work for Sikh freedom and will work to give the Sikh Nation a free and fair plebiscite on freedom for Khalistan.

Sarbjit Singh, the son of Sikh martyr Beant Singh, has been given a ticket in a reserved constituency in Bhatinda by the Akali Dal (Amritsar). He deserves the support of Sikh voters, but Sikhs should not support Simranjit Singh Mann, who changes his colors on Khalistan almost daily. Mann is under the control of the Indian government, as shown by his letter to the Chief Justice of India, which is reprinted in the book Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism, by Professor Gurtej Singh. Mann has been in Parliament for the past few years. What has he done to advance the cause of Sikh freedom? Has he even made a single speech on behalf of freeing our homeland?

We call on distinguished Sikh leaders such as Justice Ajit Singh Bains, General Narinder Singh, Professor Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, Professor Gurtej Singh, former MP Atinder Pal Singh, and others to run themselves or find candidates who reflect their views. And we call on them to give a ticket to deserving, educated political prisoners. This will help to get the political prisoners freed and will help to put people in Parliament who are committed to Sikh freedom and sovereignty.

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 poly-

glot 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 such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, according to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy and human rights groups and published in Inderjit Singh Jaijee's excellent book, *The Politics of Genocide*. 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.

India 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." On December 5, President Bush told me "I am aware of the Sikh and Kashmiri problem."

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. Sikhs must use the upcoming elections to elect representatives who will make certain that India does that. 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 sovereign, independent 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. Let us take this opportunity to free Khalistan.

Panth Da Sewadar,

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

DISTURBING STATEMENTS OUT OF EL SALVADOR

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the United States grants Temporary Protective