

presided over by Magistrate Judge Andrew Rodovich, will be held at Harrison Park in Hammond, Indiana.

America is a country founded by immigrants. From its beginning, settlers have come from countries around the globe to the United States in search of better lives for their families. The upcoming oath ceremony will be a shining example of what is so great about the United States of America—that people from all over the world can come together and unite as members of a free, democratic nation. These individuals realize the great things America has to offer. They realize that nowhere else in the world offers a better opportunity for success and a good life than here in America.

On July 4, 2006, the following people, representing many nations throughout the world, will take their oath of citizenship in Hammond, Indiana: Ledwin Jose Polanco Abreu, Ruchi Prabhakar Parikh, Fiona Bage, Lyubov Ezerska, Victor Rene De Leon Lopez, Simon Gomez Zuniga, Inese Steinbahs, Edgar Leonel Lopez Juarez, Kyung Ho Yum, Mila Plavsic, Elvira Tirado, Branko Prpa, Miyoko Kawanoue, Doaa Fayez El Malh, Fabian Navarro Patino, Ghali Abdul Waheb Alsaymari, Hiraben Bhogilal Devgan, Doris Monika Cox, Bertha Romero, Grace Haesuk Lee, Vasilj Plavska, Mary Theckenath, Ilir Aliu, Young Jean Choi, Ilce Angelkoski, Elizabeth Murphy, Ernesto Berong Chan, Ivonne Golfis, Prajwal Rajappa, Georgios Mihail Krinis, Alejandro Vega, Mohammed Riaz, Eva Lazaroski, Fady Eissa El Malh, Josue Daniel Bojorquez Nunez, Barbara Ivette Quezada, Danilo Djuric, Enero Manguerra Salunga, Jose Peregrino, Maureen Alexis Stevens, Chun Gao Fred Li, John Raymond Tanner, Martha Gutierrez De Rangel, Sayyada Mushthari Begum, Aline Cortes, Sandra Elaine Fraley, Vicente Gil Baltazar, Maria Isabel Maldonado, and Aladean Naji Shalabi.

Though each individual has sought to become a citizen of the United States for his or her own reasons, be it for education, occupation, or to offer their loved ones better lives, each is inspired by the fact that the United States of America is, as Abraham Lincoln described it, a country "...of the people, by the people, and for the people." They realize that the United States is truly a free nation. By seeking American citizenship, they have made the decision that they want to live in a place where, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, they can practice religion as they choose, speak their minds without fear of punishment, and assemble in peaceful protest should they choose to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating these individuals, who will become citizens of the United States of America on July 4, 2006, the day of our Nation's independence. They, too, will be American citizens, and they, too, will be guaranteed the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We, as a free and democratic nation, congratulate them and welcome them.

KAZAKHSTAN'S CANDIDACY FOR OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, next week, Kassymzhomart Tokaev, the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, will be visiting Washington. Given Kazakhstan's growing strategic and economic significance, his agenda with U.S. Government officials and Congress is likely to be broad-ranging. But a key focus of Minister Tokaev's discussions will certainly be Kazakhstan's bid to serve in 2009 as Chair-in-Office of the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Kazakhstan has been avidly pursuing this prestigious leadership post since 2003. The consensus decision must be made by this fall, in time for the December OSCE Ministerial Meeting.

While I support the idea of Central Asian leadership of the OSCE, my purpose today is to point out the very serious problems with Kazakhstan's candidacy. As many of my colleagues on the Helsinki Commission have concluded, awarding Kazakhstan the political leadership of OSCE in 2009 would be unwarranted and potentially dangerous for the Organization. President Nursultan Nazarbaev, in his opening statement at a recent OSCE meeting in Almaty, even admitted: "We do not . . . have established democratic principles." Therefore, allowing Kazakhstan to assume the chairmanship by default is not acceptable. Kazakhstan's chairmanship bid must be deferred until the country substantially implements its OSCE commitments, especially those on human rights and democratization.

Defenders of Kazakhstan's candidacy have pointed to the country's economic reforms and relative freedom, compared to the rest of Central Asia. I concur that Kazakhstan is far ahead of the police states of Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan. But that is no great achievement. Surpassing the worst of the worst does not confer an automatic right to hold the chairmanship of the OSCE which is dedicated to upholding human rights and promoting democracy.

It has long been the State Department's position "that any Chair of the OSCE must be in substantial compliance with all OSCE commitments." Over several years now, high-level U.S. Government officials have provided Nazarbaev and other Kazakh officials clear, concrete indicators of the progress necessary before serious consideration could be given to U.S. support for Kazakhstan's Chair-in-Office bid.

Yet long-promised political reforms in Kazakhstan have not materialized and the human rights climate remains poor, as documented in the State Department's annual reports. Kazakhstan's oil riches, strategic location and cooperation with the United States in antiterrorism programs cannot conceal the fact that the country remains an authoritarian state. President Nazarbaev has manipulated constitutional referendums and falsified elections to stay in power, while his relatives and friends have gained monopoly positions in the most profitable sectors of the economy. Independent and opposition media have been consistently harassed and pressured, and opposi-

tion politicians have been excluded from elections, or worse.

Such was the state of affairs before last December's presidential election, which was widely seen as a "make-or-break" moment for Kazakhstan. Unfortunately, the government failed to uphold its international commitments before, during and following the election. Despite repeated pledges from Nazarbaev to hold a free and fair contest, the OSCE observation mission stated the election "did not meet a number of OSCE commitments" due to "restrictions on campaigning, harassment of campaign staff and persistent and numerous cases of intimidation by the authorities" which "limited the possibility for a meaningful competition."

The election was a serious blow to Kazakhstan's chances to chair the OSCE. The recent establishment of the State Commission on the Development and Realization of the Programme of Political Reforms comes after the major elections, too late to have any definitive liberalizing effects. In addition, a string of events has accentuated the disturbing gap between OSCE commitments and Kazakhstan's implementation.

Last November, opposition politician and former Mayor of Almaty Zamanbek Nurkadilov was found dead in his home. According to Kazakh authorities, he shot himself three times—twice in the chest and once in the head. The official version of his death is, kindly put, implausible in the extreme.

In February, opposition politician Altynbek Sarsenbaev, along with his driver and unarmed bodyguard, was shot in an apple orchard outside Almaty. The official investigation has placed the blame for this brazen crime on Erzhan Utembaev, head of the administration of the Senate, who allegedly engaged the services of some security officers.

It is fair to say that this explanation for Sarsenbaev's death has failed to satisfy many observers. What is indisputable, however, is that anyone involved in opposition politics in Kazakhstan risks, in the worst case scenario, not merely electoral defeat but murder.

Furthermore, Kazakh officials have backed Russian plans to eviscerate the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which, among other important democracy promoting activities, undertakes the OSCE's election observation missions. This would pose a grave threat to the OSCE as an institution and as the most credible election monitoring organization in the world.

Recent statements and actions by local Kazakh authorities against a Hare Krishna community outside of Almaty and actions to penalize minority religious communities for unregistered religious practice run counter to OSCE norms and Kazakhstan's stated commitment to inter-religious tolerance.

On March 20, President Nazarbaev praised Uzbek President Islam Karimov's handling of unrest in Andijon in May 2005. Praise for the Andijon massacre that left hundreds dead in Uzbekistan—and which moved the OSCE, the U.S. Government and international organizations to call for an independent, impartial investigation—are hardly the "reforms" one expects of a country that hopes to chair the OSCE. The forced repatriation of Uzbek refugees to Uzbekistan was equally alarming.

Just today, Kazakhstan's upper house passed a highly restrictive media law that has been criticized by the OSCE's Representative

on the Media and the U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan. It is hoped that President Nazarbaev will not sign this problematic bill into law.

Mr. Speaker, in light of these circumstances, Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009 cannot be supported. I strongly believe that backing Kazakhstan's candidacy would cause more difficulties than will result from Astana's disappointment over not winning this prize.

None of this means that we should not strive to develop the best possible relations with Kazakhstan, on a mutually beneficial basis. There are many areas of current and potential cooperation between our countries, including Kazakhstan's entry into the WTO, energy, military security and anti-terrorism. Nor does my inability to support Kazakhstan's candidacy for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009 mean that I do not hope to be able to back a future bid. Nothing would please me more than to report to this Chamber that Kazakhstan has met its commitments on democratization and human rights and richly deserves to lead the OSCE. A Kazakh chairmanship would also move the Organization eastward in the symbolic sense, bridging what has become an uncomfortable gap between the former Soviet republics and Europe.

But that moment has not yet come, Mr. Speaker. I would encourage the Kazakh leaders to avail themselves of the opportunity of additional time to constructively engage the OSCE. Working to ensure that the Organization succeeds would aid Kazakhstan's bid for a future chairmanship, while expressing sour grapes over a denial can only add to the impression that Kazakhstan is not ready for a leadership role.

The OSCE Chairmanship represents acknowledgement of progress already made, not a stimulus to future, unproven progress. Urging the Kazakhs to defer their bid would leave the door open for Astana, should demonstrable reforms on human rights and democratization be forthcoming. That progress was promised by President Nazarbaev, when he signed the Helsinki Accords as his country joined the OSCE in 1992.

INTRODUCTION OF BIRTHDAY RESOLUTION FOR WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my friend and colleague from New York, Representative NITA LOWEY, I am introducing a resolution to recognize President Clinton's 60th birthday which will occur this August 19th. President Clinton has had a long and distinguished career in public service including serving as Governor of Arkansas and President of the United States. During Clinton's two terms in the White House, this country experienced unprecedented economic expansion including the creation of 22 million jobs. He worked with our NATO allies to end the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, and he played a major role in bringing peace to Northern Ireland. Since leaving office in 2001, President Clinton has continued to devote himself to helping people around the world through the

Clinton Foundation. It is because of his commitment to not only the American people, but to the people of the world that I am honored today to recognize President Clinton's birthday and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4890, LEGISLATIVE LINE ITEM VETO ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. I rise in strong opposition to this sham budget proposal offered by Republican Leadership. This legislation will not reduce the deficit or spending through earmarks and will grant unprecedented power to the Executive Branch.

The line-item veto proposed today will expand Presidential power and challenge the separation of powers critical to the function of our government. It is an extreme dilution of the authority of the legislative branch if the President can hold a member's priorities hostage in order to garner votes for other initiatives. We have already seen an increase in abuse of power by the leadership in this House in order to force members to vote with the President, particularly during the debate on Medicare Part D, CAFTA, and last year's budget reconciliation bill.

Republicans today are decrying the practice of earmarking projects. However, since 1996, under the Republican watch, the number of earmarks has grown from 3,023 to 13,012 last year. As the Majority party, Republicans have had the power for the last 12 years to reduce earmarks and to add oversight to this process. But as former Reagan official Bruce Bartlett stated, "George W. Bush has turned out to be one of the most free-spending presidents on records . . . Apparently there is no pork barrel program so egregiously unjustified that he won't sign it into law".

This Republican Majority has lost all credibility on fiscal responsibility. Since President Bush took office, the Administration and Republicans in Congress have turned a \$5.6 trillion surplus into a \$3.2 trillion deficit. Our federal debt is \$8.3 trillion—much of which is borrowed from foreign countries. In fact, this Administration has borrowed more money from foreign nations than all 42 previous U.S. Presidents combined. And under Republican rule this Congress has had to raise the debt limit four times.

A line-item veto will not solve this problem. In fact, the way this bill is written, it could actually increase spending. According to the Congressional Budget Office, giving the President this extraordinary new authority will allow the Chief Executive to pressure Members to support Administration priorities in return for promises not to cancel projects. Studies of states that have a line-item veto have documented this effect in state legislatures.

Mr. SPRATT offered a substitute measure in the Rules Committee that would have taken a real step in addressing our budget deficit. This bill would restore pay as you go rules, forcing Congress to face our spiraling deficit. It would also reduce earmarks by mandating public dis-

closure, and prevent reconciliation from increasing the deficit. Unfortunately, as is too often the case, the Rules Committee denied the House the opportunity to vote on this alternative. Mr. Chair, if Republicans were serious about restoring fiscal discipline we would be having a real discussion today about the Democratic substitute.

I believe strongly that it is our moral responsibility to reduce the deficit and to relieve our children and grandchildren of this reckless legacy. However, the bill on the floor today is another attempt to ask the American people to believe the Republicans are the party of fiscal responsibility, while actually making our budget situation worse. I urge my colleagues to reject this bill.

IN HONOR OF THE ASILOMAR CONFERENCE CENTER

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the California State Parks Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, CA. Ordinarily, one would not expect a Member to rise on the floor to acknowledge the birthday of a conference grounds, but Asilomar is no ordinary place. For starters, Asilomar is nestled in the coastal dunes of the Monterey Peninsula. The name itself is Spanish for refuge by the sea.

Asilomar also boasts an extraordinary history. It began life in 1912 as the western regional conference grounds for the YWCA on 30 acres of beach front property donated by the precursor of the Pebble Beach Company. Within a year, the YWCA hired the pioneering San Francisco architect Julia Morgan. By 1921, additional land had been donated and many buildings were completed, including the centerpiece Phoebe Hearst grand meeting hall. The center could by then accommodate up to 500 people at a time. Over the course of the 20s, Asilomar grew not only as a site for YWCA activities but also as a center for religious retreats, Scouting events, and very popular summer camps. All of that ended with the Depression. Unable to pay its bills, the YWCA decided in 1934 to cease operating Asilomar. For almost 20 years Asilomar floundered along under various concession or cooperative agreements until the YWCA finally decided to sell the property in 1951.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Asilomar is part of my own family's story. In 1955, my father Fred Farr entered the California State Senate. And while it is true that my father cared deeply about the future of Asilomar, it is also true that my mother Janet would have never let him ignore the question of its future. That year my father authored legislation along with his Assembly counterpart, Alan Patee, directing the State Parks Department to purchase Asilomar for the now unbelievably low amount of \$350,000. The bill, SB 2007, passed both houses of the legislature without opposition. Unfortunately, Governor Knight then vetoed every park bill before him that summer. Needless to say, that act did not make the Governor a very popular man on the Monterey Peninsula. The uproar over the veto forced the administration to rethink its position. In December 1955, the Governor reversed his opposition to Asilomar's purchase. In the ensuing