

seized. They were beaten up by the police. Their homes were bulldozed by paratroopers. Their homes in many cases were built using their life savings and by their own hands. We condemn this act of state terrorism by the government of Uttaranchal Pradesh. As you know, Sikhs are prohibited from buying land in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. Now Uttaranchal Pradesh joins that list. Yet there are no restrictions on land ownership in Punjab by non-Sikhs. People from anywhere can buy land in Punjab, including people from Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. India is trying to subvert Khalistan's independence by overrunning Punjab with non-Sikhs while keeping Sikhs from escaping the brutal repression in Punjab. It is incumbent on the Sikh diaspora to free Khalistan. We must redouble our efforts. That is the only way to keep these atrocities from continuing and to protect the Sikh Nation and the Sikh religion.

Any organization that sincerely supports Kalistan deserves the support of the Sikh Nation. However, the Sikh Nation needs leadership that is honest, sincere, consistent, and dedicated to the cause of Sikh freedom. But we should only support sincere, dedicated, honest leaders. Dal Khalsa deserves the praise of the Sikh nation and I call on every Sikh to support them and every other organization that is working to liberate Khalistan.

The Council of Khalistan has stood strongly and consistently for liberating our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. For over 18 years we have led this fight while others were trying to divert the resources and the attention of the Sikh Nation away from the issue of freedom in a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Yet Khalistan is the only way that Sikhs will be able to live in freedom, peace, prosperity, and dignity.

The Sikhs in Punjab have suffered enormous repression at the hands of the Indian regime in the last 22 years. The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984. Inderjit Singh Jaijee and Bibi Baljit Kaur of the Movement Against State Repression (MASR) told me that if the Sikhs outside India had not exposed the atrocities of the Indian regime, they could have killed ten times as many Sikhs. Another 52,268 of our brothers and sisters are being held as political prisoners, according to MASR. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Over 50,000 Sikh youth were picked up from their houses, tortured, murdered in police custody, then secretly cremated as "unidentified bodies." Their remains were never even given to their families! How can Sikhs have any freedom living under a government that would do these things? India should be ashamed of the genocide it has committed against Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and other minorities.

Sikhs can never forgive or forget the Indian government's military attack on the Golden Temple and 39 other historic Gurdwaras throughout Punjab. Over 20,000 Sikhs were murdered in those attacks, known as Operation Blue Star, including Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, General Shabeg Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, and over 100 Sikh religious students ages 8-13 who were taken out into the courtyard and shot. These attacks accelerated the Sikh independence movement and deepened the desire for independence in the hearts of Sikhs, a fire that burns brightly in the hearts of the Sikh Nation to this day.

The Akali Dal conspired with the Indian government in 1984 to invade the Golden Temple to murder Sant Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikhs during June 1984 in Punjab. Among those who conspired with the government, according to Chakravarty: Web of Indian Secularism, were Dr. Chohan, Ganga Singh Dhillon, and Didar Singh Bains.

It appears the Indian regime is even willing to arrest its own agents to suppress the movement for Khalistan! Now Badal and Chief Minister Amarinder Singh have been accusing each other of being tied in with "terrorists." These leaders view support for Khalistan as terrorism, as the Indian government does. They have shown where their loyalties lie. How will these so-called Sikh leaders account for themselves? Remember the words of former Jathedar of tile Akal Takht Professor Darshan Singh: "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh." It seems that Badal and Amarinder are not Sikhs.

Never forget that the Akal Takht Sahib and Darbar Sahib and the present Akali and Congress leadership 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. 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.

Sikhs will never get any justice from Delhi. Ever since independence, India has mistreated the Sikh Nation, starting with Patel's memo calling Sikhs "a criminal tribe." What a shame for Home Minister Patel and the Indian government to issue this memorandum when the Sikh Nation gave over 80 percent of the sacrifices to free India.

There is no place for Sikhs in supposedly secular, supposedly democratic India. Our moment of freedom is closer than ever. Let us work to make certain that we shake ourselves loose from the yoke of Indian oppression and liberate our homeland, Khalistan, so that all Sikhs may live lives of prosperity, freedom, and dignity.

Sincerely,

GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

OPPOSING PRESIDENT BUSH'S MARCH TO WAR IN IRAN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Iran Freedom Support Act. I certainly share my colleagues' concerns about Iran's apparent push to develop nuclear weapons, but I oppose H.R. 282 because I fear President Bush will use this legislation to lead America into an unnecessary war with Iran. This President used this same pattern in his last march to war in Iraq.

The resolution calls upon the United States to request that the United Nations Security Council impose sanctions against Iran. President Bush used Iraq's violation of similar sanctions to justify his initiation of the ill-fated Iraq War.

The legislation also authorizes President Bush to fund the Iranian opposition to radical Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad despite the fact that American support for pro-Western leaders has often backfired. In fact it's backfired in Iran before! America's historic support for the Shah propelled former radical leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power. Is it any wonder then that the Washington Post recently reported that pro-democracy forces in Iran do not want U.S. funding since their association

with America taints their credibility within their country?

The United States spent millions of dollars in Iraq to fund the opposition to Saddam Hussein. In return, the Bush Administration received bogus information from informants that claimed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The Administration then used this information to scare America into war against Iraq.

Finally, H.R. 282 advocates regime change and I find it difficult to believe Iran will cooperate with our diplomatic proposals if they understand our ultimate goal to be the overthrow of their government.

America can prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons through peaceful and thoughtful diplomacy. But this legislation sets us on the road to war rather than diplomacy. I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in voting against it.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO COLBY RUPERT

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colby Rupert for his heroic actions following an accident on Interstate 15 on March 18, 2006.

Colby and an ambulance crew had initially responded to a pickup truck that had run off the road. While responding to the emergency, a bus heading southbound on I-15 struck their rescue unit, virtually destroying the vehicle. Colby and his partner were still in their vehicle at the time of the collision and received painful injuries as a result. Nonetheless, Paramedic Rupert administered aid to a number of passengers on the bus. He carried a generator and the Jaws of Life from the crashed rescue truck to the Greyhound bus while dragging his injured leg. Despite his serious injuries, he ignored his wounds and aided injured persons in a desperate and critical accident scene. Only after assistance arrived sometime later did Colby receive medical treatment. He had to be literally forced to stop assisting others so he could receive medical attention.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Colby Rupert for his heroic actions. Colby's unwavering courage speaks volumes about his character. His dismissal of his own injuries serves as an example of the dedication our First Responders show in their service to their fellow citizens.

CONGRATULATING JULIE STEVENSON

HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Julie Stevenson of Worthington, Minnesota, on receiving the 2006 Athena Award from the Worthington Travelodge.

The Athena Award is presented each year to a woman who has demonstrated excellence, initiative and creativity in her profession.

This award recognizes one woman's time and energy put in to improving the lives of her peers. This woman also acts as a mentor for other women in the community.

Mrs. Julie Stevenson received this award for her many contributions to the community of Worthington. She has served as the executive director of the Southwest Minnesota Chapter of the American Red Cross and she has volunteered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, United Way, YMCA, Youth Area Baseball Association, Junior Achievement, Nobles County Integration Collaborative and the Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce. Currently, at the Minnesota West Campus, Mrs. Stevenson has helped bring the college and the community together through a variety of programs. These include the Winter Wonderland and Golf the Links at Minnesota West and Kids College. She has been a co-host for a United Way telethon as well as a trainer in a teen asset building workshop at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Mrs. Stevenson for receiving this commendable award. Her commitment to service has helped to grow many individuals and to strengthen the community.

**HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF
WILLIAM A. KOCH TO PRESERVE
THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BOY-
HOOD HOME IN LINCOLN CITY,
INDIANA**

HON. MICHAEL E. SODREL

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. SODREL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an upcoming meeting of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC) at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in my district and to honor the achievements of the deceased William A. Koch and Congressman Winfield K. Denton, for their contributions to preserving the memory of Abraham Lincoln's early life in Indiana by establishing this national park.

On May 1, 2006, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission will meet in Lincoln City, Indiana, at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, established through legislation signed into law by President John F. Kennedy on February 19, 1962. This national park is the site of the farm on which Abraham Lincoln spent 14 years of his early life, a time when Lincoln grew physically and intellectually into a man. This was a place where he laughed with his father, cried over the death of his mother, read books, and faced the adversities of life at that time. It is only fitting that the ALBC meet at this site while planning events for the celebration in 2009 of Lincoln's birth and, while there, to honor the family of the man who contributed so much to preserve the legacy of President Lincoln's early life, William A. Koch.

A local, influential businessman, Mr. Koch conceived the idea of a national park to preserve Lincoln's legacy in the late 1950s. With the cooperation and leadership of Congressman Winfield K. Denton, he worked tirelessly and patiently through studies, hearings, and debates. And, in 1962, the idea that Bill Koch

developed and nurtured was accomplished. The transfer of the Nancy Hanks part of the Lincoln Memorial to the Department of the Interior was completed.

To William Koch, whose widow and children carry on his mission, we owe a debt of gratitude, for without his vision and perseverance, the memory of Lincoln's Indiana years would be greatly diminished and lost on future generations. Today, visitors from around the world can visit his boyhood home to learn what life was like for Lincoln and other early pioneers in the Midwest.

**INTRODUCTION OF U.S.-CHINA
ENGAGEMENT ACT**

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the U.S. China Engagement Act of 2006 with Congressman RICK LARSEN. The goal of our bill is to ensure American students and businesses are equipped to compete with China throughout the 21st century.

The U.S. China Engagement Act of 2006 provides grants for Chinese language instruction programs for American students, expands the U.S. diplomatic presence in China, and establishes new trade offices which support our U.S. exports to China, ensuring our small and medium size businesses are able to compete in Asia.

This legislation will help give our American students the tools to compete in a global marketplace. By one measure, China is now the world's second largest economy. According to the Asian Conference, 50,000 American students are studying Chinese versus 110 million Chinese students studying English. The U.S. China Engagement Act of 2006 will provide resources to primary, secondary and post-secondary schools so that all levels of our educational system can provide the proper exposure to the Chinese language and economy.

The U.S. China Engagement Act of 2006 triples funding to the State Department for public diplomacy in China and authorizes the creation of a new consulate and ten "diplomatic presence posts" in larger Chinese cities. It also increases the U.S. contribution to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, a 21 Member Organization whose goal is to promote free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. America must embrace a strong diplomatic partnership to increase the chance our children will enjoy a stable, economically prosperous and peaceful future with China.

Today, China produces more steel than the U.S.; it has more cell phone users and is building its own space station. Hundreds of U.S. companies from McDonald's to Motorola are heavily invested in the Chinese market. China has bought several airplanes from Boeing and Chinese purchases of other U.S. exports are climbing at a rate of 15 percent a year. At her present rate of growth, China's economy has the potential to become larger than America's. The U.S. China Engagement Act takes steps to help small and medium size American businesses enter the China market

by increasing resources to the Foreign Commercial Service Office of the Commerce Department and creating new export promotion programs.

The U.S. China Engagement Act is an important step in addressing the most critical relationship of the 21st century. It is vital that Americans be prepared for this relationship. We must be prepared diplomatically, educationally, and economically. Our students must have the ability to both culturally understand our competition while also having the ability to communicate with them in their language. This bill will give American students and American businesses the tools to compete in the new and expanding market of China.

I want to thank my co-chair of the U.S.-China Working Group, Congressman RICK LARSEN, for being the lead co-sponsor on this legislation. And I want to thank Senators LIEBERMAN and ALEXANDER who have a companion bill. I look forward to working with them on these important issues surrounding China.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO ROBERT
SEARS**

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bob "Chief" Sears for his 40 years of service in the Fire Service.

Bob Sears has vigilantly served in a number of different capacities in the fire service in several different cities. Sears, a graduate of the National Fire Academy in Maryland, began his career in 1951 and was promoted to Fire Chief of the Richfield Township Fire Department in Ohio in 1960, at that time he was the youngest Fire Chief in the State of Ohio. He subsequently served for 5 years as the Fire Chief for Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation in California. Bob has also served over 21 years as Boulder Cities Fire Chief, while in this role he designed innovative programs which increase the efficiency of the Department in terms of firefighting capabilities, community awareness, and staff management.

Chief Sears is very active in the community, donating his time to many organizations; Bob is currently on the Board of Directors, Past President, Life Member and has served as interim Executive Director of the Boulder City Chamber of Commerce. He has also served as President of the Nevada Fire Chiefs Association and Charter President of the Southern Nevada Fire Chiefs Association. He has served as chairman for the American Heart Association's Nevada Affiliate, the local Salvation Army, and is a charter member of the Boulder Sumise Rotary Club. Chief Sears also serves on the Military Selection Committee for the United States Service Academies representing Nevada's Congressional Delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Bob Sears for his long career in the Fire Service and for his dedication to many different community organizations. His record of professional service and devotion to the many organizations he was involved with serves as an inspiration to us all. I wish him the best in his retirement.