

APPEAL: TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MICHIGAN DELEGATION TO THE U.S. CONGRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMN 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUCLEAR DISASTER AT CHERNOBYL, UKRAINE

The Ukrainian American community, gathered at St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Warren, Michigan, on Friday, April 28, 2006 in solemn commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Nuclear Disaster at Chernobyl, Ukraine, recommends to the Michigan Delegation to the United States Congress the Testimony of H.E. Oleh Shamshur, Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States, before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and urges the members of the Delegation to assist in addressing the urgent problems noted in Ambassador Shamshur's testimony, excerpted below:

"Chernobyl was not only a 'maximum credible accident' and the greatest man-made technological disaster. There is much more about Chernobyl catastrophe: this has become a frightening reminder of the awesome human cost—measured in lives and life-threatening health problems—of the lack of freedom, democratic procedures, civic control and transparency.

The plain and awful fact is that the biggest nuclear catastrophe in human history was kept secret from ordinary citizens, who were massively exposed to radiation exceeding the maximum acceptable level by hundred times.

During the critical period after explosion, while evacuating the local population from direct neighborhood of the nuclear power station, the Soviet government let millions of people in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia conduct their daily life as usual—unaware, unwarned, unprotected. On May 1st, four days after the disaster, people in Kyiv and dozens of other cities were urged to go outdoors to celebrate May Day, an official holiday in the Soviet Union. In those moments when radioactive cloud was reaching Sweden, when West Europeans were called to restrain from buying fruit and letting children play outside, in Ukraine parents carried their kids to the festivities. It was only days later, that people of Ukraine came to know the full extent of what had happened to them, their families, their land. By early May millions of people, including children, received unthinkable amounts of radiation as the volume of radioactive materials released into atmosphere exceeded Hiroshima by 400 times.

Experts and humankind are yet to comprehend and assess the full scope of the hazardous consequences of the nuclear devastation, including continuous exposure to radiation of such magnitude. About 5 million people were directly affected by explosion. As of January 2006, 2.6 million Ukrainians have had the status of those affected by consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Over 570 thousand children officially registered as affected by the disaster continue to live in Ukraine. 6,769 children died of horrible diseases caused by the calamity including thyroid and other cancers. Tens thousand square kilometers of once fertile and flourishing land remain radiation-polluted, as well as 2,218 Ukrainian townships and settlements.

The international community should be aware that the period of so-called half-life of radioactive strontium released into atmosphere in 1986 is 90 years. Therefore however scaring it might sound, the full story has not been told yet. The gravest implications of the catastrophe might be still ahead for Ukraine and other nations. We should be well prepared to face this eventuality.

The price Ukraine has paid for the lies, hypocrisy and greed of the Soviet regime epitomized by Chornobyl and its aftermath has

been enormous. What we need now is assistance in addressing two very concrete and urgent problems.

Building a new reliable Shelter. Taking this opportunity I am asking the distinguished members of the Commission to weigh in their political authority to call upon all G8 members and other countries concerned to follow the example of the U.S. Government and to make adequate financial contributions making possible the erection of the Shelter-2. The construction costs are estimated at slightly over 1 billion USD representing rather modest amount of money compared to the damages which 200 tons of highly radioactive waste still glowing underneath the corroded Shelter-1 might incur. We also urge all the signatories of the Ottawa Memorandum to honor their obligations concerning compensation of the losses suffered by Ukraine due to the decommissioning of the Chernobyl NPS.

Meeting the health needs of the innocent children, suffering from hazardous effects of Chornobyl. We deeply appreciate the work done in this respect by the members of the U.S. Congress, such as Co-Chairman Chris Smith and Representative Lincoln Diaz-Ballard. It was largely due to Mr. Diaz-Ballard's efforts that on April 20th one of the biggest humanitarian airlifts organized by the Children of Chornobyl Fund arrived in Ukraine for the benefit of Chornobyl-affected children. I know that more projects are in preparation and I'm deeply thankful for them to our American partners."

Ambassador Shamshur concludes with the following words, words which the Ukrainian American community in Michigan and, we trust, our elected officials, fully share and support.

"I strongly believe that our two countries—Ukraine and the United States—will stand united in facing the challenges and preventing any new human tragedies that might be caused by the consequences of the disaster that happened twenty years ago, but remains so present in our lives."

THE PASSING OF BILL WALSH

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, it is often said one of the best things we can do in this world is to take a tragedy and use it as a catalyst to do something positive. The April 5th death of a 64-year-old homeless man, Bill Walsh, in the woods of southeastern Connecticut has become a rallying cry for the homeless. I hope that the death of Bill Walsh will be turned into something positive.

As a Vietnam veteran I have long been involved in addressing the dilemma of homelessness. Vietnam divided our nation and many soldiers returned from Southeast Asia with a variety of troubles. On far too many occasions their troubles led them to the streets and to the ranks of the homeless. We know that many of the homeless suffer from addictions and mental problems. We will never be able to help them secure a home and until their lifestyle issues are addressed.

In Connecticut we are taking action. A coalition of business leaders, social service agencies and government officials have produced the Southeastern Connecticut Ten Year Plan To End Homelessness. The three pronged attack seeks to establish a safety net by identi-

fying social services available to the homeless and finding more effective ways to deliver them. Supportive housing is an essential component—supportive housing helps address issues of heart and head while providing a place to live. In supportive housing complexes individuals find companionship, security and a staff that will help them address issues such as substance abuse, education and other barriers that prevent people from participating as productive members of society. The third part of the program is to help the homeless find employment.

I attended Bill Walsh's funeral and those who knew him described him as "a gentle soul", "just like us", and a "sweet man who never bothered anybody." No doubt we also would all agree that a 64-year-old "gentle soul" should not be living in the woods.

Many families are one paycheck away from being homeless. They are our neighbors and our friends. Those who are already experiencing life on the street or in the shelter are in need of support. A society that is dedicated to helping others help themselves will take the tragedy of Bill Walsh and use it as motivation to address homelessness. I believe ours is such a society.

In attendance at Mr. Walsh's funeral was the Rev. Emmett Jarrett, of St. Francis House, in New London. He made some insightful and compassionate remarks about Bill Walsh. I ask by unanimous consent that his meditation be included with my statement for the RECORD.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE: A MEDITATION ON
LUKE 16:19-25

(By Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF)

The story you have just heard—the story of Lazarus, the poor beggar, and the rich man—is one of the stories Jesus told to call people to live not in selfish isolation but as sisters and brothers. It's also a story that Martin Luther King, Jr., the great American patriot, preached on many occasions, including the last Sunday sermon he ever preached, a few days before he was assassinated in April, 1968. King said of this story that it was not about Jesus condemning wealth, or the rich. "There is nothing in that parable," King said, "that said [the rich man] went to hell because he was rich. . . . [He] didn't go to hell because he was rich; [he] didn't realize that his wealth was his opportunity . . . to bridge the gulf that separated him from his brother, Lazarus. [He] went to hell because he passed Lazarus by every day and he never really saw him. He went to hell because he allowed his brother to become invisible."

Our country remembers Dr. King because of his dream that America would some day fulfill its promise and become a land of freedom and equality for all. But King was not just a great patriot, he was not just a great civil rights leader. He was also a leader in the movement to end the war in Vietnam. He was a leader in the struggle to end poverty in our country. When he preached his last sermon at the Washington National Cathedral in 1968 he was on his way to Memphis, Tenn., to support sanitation workers in a strike for decent wages. He was preparing to lead a national march on Washington from the rural South, from Appalachia, from the ghettos of Northern cities, a march of white people as well as black people, a "poor people's march." He was working to make the invisible people in our country visible. He was working for brotherhood and sisterhood, for what he called "the beloved community."

We are gathered here today to remember an invisible brother, Bill Walsh, who died in

the woods a few days after the New London winter emergency shelter closed. Bill died in the woods—technically in Waterford—but he was a New London resident. His last residence had been the shelter at St. James Church around the corner, but his last proper home was an apartment in the Mohican just down State Street from here. But Bill was invisible, and so he died, without the minimal attention any human being requires and is entitled to. Like Lazarus, the poor beggar in Jesus' parable, Bill was our brother, and most of us didn't see him.

So we gather here today in the First Congregational Church of New London, the church where Bill worshipped, and where he ate breakfast many mornings. Because the beloved community includes not only like-minded people who worship together, but people who break bread together, people who eat together. As the prophet Isaiah says, the life God asks of his people, of us, is a practical life of friendship and service. God requires of us that we "share our bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into our house" (Isa. 58:7). It is appropriate, then, that we gather this morning and remember Bill, and pray for him and for ourselves.

But we will not be the beloved community if we do not accept our responsibility for Bill's neglect, and for his death. The great rabbi Abraham Heschel said that "in a democracy, some are guilty, but all are responsible." All of us, as a community, as the people of the City of New London, are responsible when some of our brothers and sisters, some of our neighbors made in the image of God, have no place to lay their head. Thomas Jefferson said about slavery in America, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." Well, friends, I tremble for our country today. There are more than three million homeless people in the richest nation in the world. We are that rich man, who went to hell not because he was rich but because he allowed his brother Lazarus to become invisible. We have an opportunity to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless. It's no use blaming other towns and cities. God will judge them. It is myself and my city that I tremble for. It is for New London that I will be judged.

So I ask you this morning, as we remember Bill Walsh, to join the struggle in our city to make him and others like him visible. I invite you this morning to see the homeless poor, many of whom are present in this house of worship today. Look around you. See your neighbors. Some of your neighbors have homes to go to tonight. Some don't. But all of us are neighbors. All of us are brothers and sisters to Bill Walsh and to one another. Let us resolve today, in his memory, to make our city a "city on a hill," to which everyone can look for inspiration, to make our country "a light to the nations," that cares for its neediest citizens. We have to see each other to do that. As the great labor organizer Mother Jones said, "we've got to mourn the dead, but fight like hell for the living." We can't bring Bill Walsh back from the dead. He is with Lazarus, the poor beggar that Jesus talked about, "in Abraham's bosom." But we can see the invisible poor, and shelter the homeless and needy, and not find ourselves under judgment for our failure to see.

Now let us remember Bill. But let us get up tomorrow morning and start to work together to create a homeless hospitality center in New London that will be a model for the rest of our region and our nation. Let us see the invisible poor, and live together with all our sisters and brothers in the beloved community the God of justice invites us to become. Then Bill will be like one who has risen from the dead and brought us to the promised land.

TRIBUTE TO THE COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the history and invaluable contributions of an exceptional organization in the 1st Congressional District of Colorado. It is both fitting and proper that we recognize this organization for its educational leadership and record of extraordinary service benefiting underrepresented young people in Colorado and the Denver area. It is to commend this exemplary organization that I rise to honor the Colorado Association of Black Professional Engineers and Scientists on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

The growing importance of innovation in science and engineering to our economic well-being and to a better quality of life for our citizens is well documented. Currently, there is much discussion and concern in this Congress about the ability of the United States to sustain its scientific and technological superiority. Sustaining our leadership hinges upon expanding our human capital to meet the technical challenges of a new economy and its increasingly global and complex systems. In this regard, cultivating students with the requisite skills to enter the pipeline of future engineers and scientists has become a priority.

Over 25 years ago, a group of committed African-American engineers anticipated the future. They recognized the need to expand the pool of talent entering our colleges and universities. In 1980, they founded the Colorado Association of Black Professional Engineers and Scientists (CABPES) with the express purpose of increasing the representation of minorities in the fields of engineering and applied sciences. CABPES has been in the vanguard of cultivating talented youth and it has become a learning gateway for students from all walks of life desiring to expand their horizons. Its commitment to the future is longstanding and our communities are well-advised by its example and the foresight of its founders.

Professional mentoring sets CABPES apart and a cadre of dedicated parents and committed volunteers are responsible for its outreach and educational programs including: the Junior Engineers, Tomorrow's Scientists Program which concentrates on developing student interest in engineering and applied sciences; the Math Enrichment Program which tutors students with their mathematics assignments; the SAT Preparation Program which prepares students for the college entrance examination; and the Widening Our World Program which gives CABPES' students the opportunity to use their computer skills and develop leadership abilities through community service. These programs have served to enrich the learning experience by providing an environment that offers real-world perspective, dialogue and exchange. Students have gained a richer and deeper understanding from practitioners who not only impart a passion and enthusiasm for their disciplines, but convey the sense of wonder that accompanies discovery and scientific endeavor.

We are indeed fortunate to have CABPES in our community. It is an invaluable resource

and I am deeply appreciative of the good work CABPES does in making science and engineering careers more attractive to all our students, particularly the under-represented. CABPES' programs help improve performance in the classroom and its mentors provide solid role models that encourage achievement. We owe a debt of gratitude not only to CABPES' founders, its board, volunteers and management professionals, but to its private sector partners as well. Their engagement and support of this organization make a real difference in the lives of our young people and thereby, in the communities CABPES serves.

Please join me in commending the Colorado Association of Black Professional Engineers and Scientists. It is the strong leadership and meaningful service this organization provides on a daily basis that continually enhances our lives and builds a better future for all Americans.

STATEMENT ON DISCHARGE PETITION ON H.J. RES. 55, THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM IRAQ RESOLUTION OF 2005

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the discharge petition for H.J. Res. 55 not because I support the substance of the underlying resolution, but because I believe a full and open debate of our Iraq policy on the floor of this House is long overdue.

I believe the invasion of Iraq was a mistake. It has diverted resources from the fight against Osama bin Laden and those who attacked our country on September 11, 2001. It has fueled al Qaeda with fresh recruits and inflamed anti-American sentiment around the world. It has resulted in the loss of the lives of thousands of American soldiers and tens of thousands of Iraqis. It has cost the American taxpayer hundreds of billions of dollars. It has made us less, not more, secure.

From the outset I have been an outspoken opponent of the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq. I argued strongly that the United States should support the request of the United Nations' weapons inspectors for additional time to complete their mission. The Bush administration spurned that request. We know the result—the primary justification given for going to war in Iraq, namely the alleged existence of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and the alleged collaboration between the government of Iraq and al Qaeda, proved to be false.

Many of us warned repeatedly that invading Iraq would open Pandora's box and unleash forces and historic rivalries that we would not be able to control. The rising sectarian conflict, the insurgency and the brutal executions carried out by militias were foreseeable. The total failure of the administration to plan for the aftermath of the invasion made what was certain to be a bad situation even worse.

We went to war in Iraq in an irresponsible manner; we should leave Iraq in a responsible way. Having invaded Iraq, we have both a moral and national security obligation to do everything possible to prevent the situation and sectarian conflict from spiraling even farther out of control. We must devise a plan to