

In the words of country singer Randy Travis in his song "America Will Always Stand," he sings the following lyrics about the American soldier: "Walking through the fires of danger, there are those who gave their lives. They're the world's greatest heroes, and we won't forget their sacrifice. So raise the banner called Old Glory. Let us join our fellow man. History will tell this story, America will always stand."

Mr. Speaker, history will tell the story of all the brave soldiers like Staff Sergeant Michael Durbin who walked through the fires of danger for freedom for Americans.

That's just the way it is.

SRI LANKA PEACE PROCESS RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to ask that my colleagues join me in supporting a resolution I introduced today that urges the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to engage positively in peace talks. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing violence caused by terrorism in Sri Lanka. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil, also known as the Tamil Tigers, is a group designated by the United States State Department as a terrorist organization. I hope this body can express its disapproval of the violence and instead voice full support for the resumption of constructive peace talks between both sides.

For over two decades, there has been armed strife between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers, costing an estimated 65,000 lives. In a breakthrough agreement brokered by Norway back in 2002, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers signed a cease-fire. Unfortunately, the Tamil Tigers have committed a number of violations, and the peace process has broken down.

On August 12, 2005, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister was brutally assassinated by a sniper, and it has been widely acknowledged that the LTTE members had targeted him for some time. Though LTTE has denied any involvement, past history demonstrates that the group never claims responsibility for their crimes. There is now clear evidence, for example, that the Tamil Tigers ordered assassinations of India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, President R. Premadasa, and others. These patterns indicate that the Tamil Tigers were likely involved in Mr. Kadirgamar's assassination.

In addition to the death of Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission has recorded over 3,000 violations of the cease-fire agreement by the Tamil Tigers. These violations include assassinations and abductions, particularly

the forcible abduction of children for armed combat and kidnapping individuals for ransom.

This past December marked the bloodiest month since the cease-fire agreement came into effect in 2002. Nearly 70 people, about 40 of them from the Sri Lanka Army and Navy, have been killed as a result of the Tamil Tigers' guerilla actions. The Tamil Tigers continue to follow their past policy of denying any responsibility for these actions.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the U.S. continue to reject the actions and violent tactics of the Tamil Tigers and apply international pressure to request that they begin conducting themselves in a responsible and credible manner. We must insist that the Tamil Tigers demonstrate a willingness to change, abstain from violence, and establish their commitment to the peace process.

The recent pledge to continue peace talks in February in Geneva, Switzerland, is encouraging, but it must include positive engagement by both parties. It is necessary that the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers renegotiate a cease-fire agreement and implement the agreement in a productive and successful manner so the hostilities do not resume. Without progress at the negotiating table, there is a real threat of another armed conflict.

Mr. Speaker, Sri Lanka is Asia's oldest democracy and remains a close friend of the United States. As the founder and current cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Sri Lanka, I encourage the Bush administration to take the steps necessary to support Sri Lanka during these trying times and continue to strengthen ties between the United States and Sri Lanka.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in cosponsoring this resolution. Congress must convey the importance of a constructive peace process and urge both parties to cooperate in good faith in order to find a fair and lasting resolution to Sri Lanka's armed conflict. It is time we ensure peace in Sri Lanka as well as greater stability throughout the South Asia region.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

URGING RELEASE OF DR. GONZALEZ-MEJIAS AND DR. DARIAS-MESA

Mr. MACK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MACK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a great humanitarian injustice facing two Cuban refugee doctors and their families.

On April 10, 2002, Dr. David Gonzalez-Mejias and Dr. Marialis Darias-Mesa were notified by the U.S. Government that they had been awarded documents that would allow them to immigrate to America and begin a new life in freedom.

Unfortunately, the Cuban Government denied these doctors permission to leave Cuba with their spouses and children. They were told because they were doctors, they would have to remain in Cuba for another 3 years. However, their families were permitted to leave and now reside in Florida.

Three years later, in April 2005, the doctors again sought permission to leave Cuba. That permission was once again denied, and they were told they would have to remain in Cuba. Fearing the Castro regime would continue to block their exodus to freedom and reunification with their families, the doctors copied their original United States parole papers and made a desperate attempt to escape tyranny.

While on a boat fleeing Cuba, they were picked up by the United States Coast Guard and turned over to the Bahamian Government along with 17 other Cuban nationals at Cay Sal in the Bahamas. Unlike the other refugees, Dr. Gonzalez-Mejias and Dr. Darias-Mesa had been awarded an authorization for parole of an alien allowing them to enter the United States, and they should not have been turned over to the Bahamian Government. But they were, and since then they have been detained in the Bahamas in deplorable conditions.

Since June, the United States Government has actively sought the release of the doctors to U.S. custody and to prevent their repatriation to Cuba. However, despite numerous official requests for their release and meetings between our governments, including a meeting I had with the Bahamian Ambassador to the United States, the Bahamian Government continues to debate, deliberate and drag its feet about releasing these doctors to our custody.

Mr. Speaker, the time is past due for the Bahamian Government to release these doctors to the United States. Our two countries have always enjoyed strong relations, and we all want that friendship to continue without question or concern. But in this matter, the Bahamian Government is not acting as friends should. They are denying liberty to two refugees who were awarded freedom by the United States.

This past weekend I spent nearly 2 hours with the families of these doctors. I was moved by their incredible strength and faith that their family would one day be reunited. I was also

saddened by their long and needless separation, and outraged by the course of events that have torn their lives apart.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Bahamian Government in the strongest possible terms to release Dr. Gonzalez-Mejias and Dr. Darias-Mesa to our custody, and I hope my colleagues will join me in this important humanitarian endeavor.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET HURTS PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this administration will go down as the most antilife in modern history. The President's budget is a moral document. It should promote life. Yet the President's new budget released Monday makes the wrong choices. It irresponsibly hurts future generations and saddles them with gigantic debt. It hurts them, it hurts people. It is irresponsible.

Let us start with health care. The President's budget will hurt people. It is a health care budget that is antilife. The Bush budget carves out over \$36 billion through 2011 from Medicare. Despite the fact that people cannot afford prescription drugs and costs are exploding, why is he forcing across-the-board cuts to future Medicare payments?

The chaos surrounding the new prescription drug benefit has already caused undue anxiety and lack of medication to thousands of our citizens too sick and too ill to fight back in lines at drugstores around our country. Seniors 80 years old with Parkinson's disease are being forced to go into drugstores confused without the help that they need. The President's budget is antilife.

At the same time, the President's new budget slashes our lead agencies to fight disease. They shortchange veterans' health care. Apparently, the Bush administration's idea of honoring service to our country is to make millions of veterans pay huge increases for health care costs that they have earned.

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The President's budget proposal includes legislation that would raise veterans' premiums to over 100 percent on prescription drugs. Additionally, the Bush administration has shortchanged the Department of Veterans Affairs, leaving it short of needed funds to take care of the expected influx of tens of thousands of injured and disabled veterans returning from Afghanistan and the Iraq war. His veterans budget is antilife.

The Bush budget offers words only and no substance to thrust our Nation into a new era of energy independence. For hard-hit consumers, he has offered

nothing. His policies, however, allow the huge oil giants to rack up even more profits. Take ExxonMobil that just racked up the largest profit of any corporation in U.S. history, \$36 billion in profits in just 1 year. Their profits in 1 year were larger than the entire budget of the U.S. Department of Energy. It is interesting to note that Exxon's windfall lifted the combined profits of the 2005 oil giants to \$63 billion, three times the size of the entire Department of Energy. His energy budget is anti-life.

There are people freezing and getting flu around this country because they have to set their thermostats down. His budget is anti-life. He refuses to see those people.

If the President was serious about helping people, he would be committed to making our Nation energy independent. He would have made new fuels a centerpiece of his State of the Union address. Instead, his budget eliminates all funding for new fuels to help expand the production of ethanol and biodiesel. His budget cuts renewable energy loans, bioenergy support value-added to help small companies get a start up. By almost \$100 million he shortchanges them.

And yet if we look at oil company profits, they have allowed CEOs in those firms to double their salaries and drive up their political contributions by a staggering \$450 million in the past 6 years. They know how to cash in. But what a great injustice to the vast majority of people. Their heating bills are going up. They are paying for gasoline. They do not have any sweetheart deals in this town to cut their taxes.

If you look at the weatherization program, the President is reducing funds there. If you look at the winter heating assistance program, the people applying have reached a 12-year high, but his budget is over \$2 billion short, \$2 billion short of what is needed just to take care of the people that we needed to take care of last year. But the oil companies have a \$63 billion profit, just the top three companies. What is wrong with this picture?

He has cut first responders. We know he has not gotten help to people affected by Katrina and Rita in the gulf.

And this says nothing about how his budget is anti-life against the youth of our country and children by causing tuition to go up at all of our schools. The Bush budget fails the moral test. It fails the ill. It fails our youth. It fails the future. It is the most anti-life budget in American history.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN HONOR OF THE BIRTHDAY OF MRS. HELEN GINGREY

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take my time this evening to address the House regarding a very important person, someone who has meant so much to me and without whom I could not be here today. Mrs. Helen Gingrey turned 88 today, February 8, 2006. I know that you, Mr. Speaker, along with all Members of this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats, will want to join me in wishing Mom a happy birthday.

It is important in this day and age for children to grow up in a strong family environment like the one my parents provided for me. And I would hope that as I continue my time in the United States House of Representatives representing the people of Georgia's 11th Congressional District, that my colleagues and I would always keep an eye on how our actions will affect the American families who are struggling to raise their children and to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, my mother has had a great life and has been a blessing to both her community of Kalmia Landing and Aiken, South Carolina and her family. Helen Gannon Gingrey is the daughter of Irish and Scottish immigrants. She was born in New York. She grew up in Astoria, Queens before marrying my father and moving to Edgefield, South Carolina.

My father, James Franklin Gingrey, Jimmy, a native South Carolinian, had moved to New York as an impoverished 16-year-old with little means of support. Several years later he had the good fortune of meeting my mom while he was working his way through New York City night school, and they married 8 months later. Shortly thereafter, Mom and Dad headed south with my 3-month-old brother in tow. While neither of my parents had the opportunity to obtain a college education, they worked hard in several small family businesses to assure that each of their three sons, myself, my brothers, Bill and James, got that college education.

Mr. Speaker, my dad and my mother were married for 44 years until his death in 1980. The ideals my parents instilled in me are ones of hard work, good education, personal responsibility, respect for others, love of family and country, and love of God. These are not only good principles for rearing a child, but they are also good guidelines for the initiatives we will continue to work on here in this 109th Congress.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to use the example and the principles of Mrs. Helen Gannon Gingrey