

Ray Walton was the initial spark to get the program started in Iowa. Ray recruited the organization's first executive director and served as one of the first volunteers in the program. He also served as vice president and later as president of the board of directors. His leadership and dedication guided Everybody Wins! Iowa in those important early days.

Wilma Gajdel served on the board of directors for 3 years. She is also the principal at Monroe Elementary, one of the three original Everybody Wins! schools. The input of educators is critical to the success of Everybody Wins!, and Wilma's guidance has been invaluable. The Everybody Wins! Iowa model was developed at Monroe under her careful eye and has been adapted successfully by other schools in central Iowa.

Drew Gentsch served as the organization's first treasurer. In addition, he is a volunteer reader at Monroe Elementary, the father of two young children, and a busy attorney. Drew has also served as the chair of the board's finance committee, and he contributed many hours as he led the hiring committee for the board's first executive director. His professionalism and attention to detail have helped the organization flourish and grow.

B. MacPaul Stanfield is another busy attorney and father of two. He has served as secretary of Everybody Wins! Iowa and is a volunteer reader at Monroe. He previously served as chair of the organization's personnel committee. Mac held one of the most important positions on the board as the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meetings and attending to the myriad of other details that go into the successful operation of a small nonprofit organization.

Service on a volunteer board of directors is not easy and requires hours of dedicated service. These four individuals gave generously of their time and talents to Everybody Wins! Iowa during its infancy. That service provided a strong foundation for the organization. As they leave the board, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for their dedicated and selfless service.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES MONROE

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize James Monroe, a Virginia patriot on the 248th anniversary of his birth and to honor his service to our Nation as a soldier, legislator and as the fifth President of the United States of America. I rise today to honor his undeniable legacy.

James Monroe, born April 28, 1758, Monroe attended the College of William and Mary, fought with distinction in the Continental Army, and practiced law in Fredericksburg, VA. As a youthful politician, he joined the anti-Federalists in the Virginia Convention which ratified the Constitution, and became an advocate of Jefferson principles.

A student of Thomas Jefferson's after serving in the Revolutionary War, James Monroe was an adherent of Mr. Jefferson's principles of individual freedom and restrained representative government, which would guide him through 50 years of public service. Elected to the Virginia General Assembly in 1782, Monroe served in the Continental Congress and in the first United States Senate before his first two terms as Minister to France. He returned to his Virginia, and as many students of Mr. Jefferson have done since, served 4 years as a native Governor.

Elected President of the United States in 1816, Monroe's Presidency has long been referred to as the Era of Good Feeling. James Monroe helped resolve longstanding grievances with the British and acquired Florida from the Spanish in 1819. James Monroe signed the Missouri Compromise that called for the prohibition of slavery in western territories of the Louisiana Purchase, which James Monroe was instrumental in obtaining. He renounced European intervention or dominion in the Western Hemisphere with one of our Nation's greatest foreign policy documents, the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1820, Monroe achieved an impressive reelection, losing only one electoral vote, preserving the honor of a unanimous election for George Washington.

My own family has strong ties to the legacy of James Monroe. My wife Susan and I enjoyed our wedding on the grounds of his home: Ashlawn-Highland in Charlottesville. In fact, part of Monroe's property in Albemarle County is now on the grounds of his teacher's great institution of learning, the University of Virginia and is respectfully referred to as Monroe's Hill.

The life of James Monroe is one that embodied virtue, honor and commitment during his accomplished life of public service. It is fitting that he would pass from this Earth on Fourth of July, 1831. It is with sincere admiration that I respectfully ask my colleagues to recognize James Monroe's 248th birthday as a reminder of his remarkable and magnificent leadership for the people of Virginia and the United States.

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN AZERBAIJAN

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, as President Bush prepares for his meeting with President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, I rise to address important human rights concerns in that country.

Although hundreds of political prisoners have been freed due in part to pressure brought by the United States, it is believed that as many as 50 political prisoners remain in Azeri jails. Prior to the November elections in Azerbaijan, a group of businessmen and government officials were arrested on charges of planning a coup. Among this group, there were former Minister of Economic Development Farhad Aliyev,

and his brother, Rafiq Aliyev. Because of his well-known opposition to Russia's increased influence in Azerbaijan and his pro-Western stance, in addition to the antimonopoly initiatives he led prior to his arrest, many fear that Mr. Aliyev's and his colleague's arrests were politically motivated. They are being held in the pretrial detention center at the National Security Ministry, which is notorious for its poor conditions and harsh treatment of prisoners. Human rights organizations in this country and in Europe have expressed concern about the violations of the due process rights of the detainees in connection with this case. Farhad Aliyev is a cardiac patient suffering from hypertension and hypertrophy. In a recent fact-finding mission, the International League for Human Rights has verified that Mr. Aliyev has been denied proper medical care and medicine for his heart condition. As recently as this week, the International League for Human Rights has indicated that Mr. Aliyev may have undergone another health crisis and his lawyers believe he may have suffered a heart attack.

I urge President Bush and this administration to remind President Aliyev of Azerbaijan's obligations before the international community and the importance of human rights in Azerbaijan and to request Mr. Aliyev's immediate release on bail in light of his need for adequate medical care. The case of Mr. Aliyev may be the litmus test of the Azeri government's good will and commitment to human rights. I ask unanimous consent that recent newspaper articles be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Financial Times, Apr. 21, 2006]

AFTER HU, WHO?

Busy times at the White House. This week Hu Jintao has been George W. Bush's honoured guest. Next in line is Ilham Aliyev. After Hu, you might say, who? During the Chinese president's stay every word, smile and suppressed grimace has been scrutinised, examined and analysed. I am not sure how much we have learnt about the world's most important geostrategic relationship. For his part, the president of Azerbaijan will struggle just to be recognised in the U.S. capital. Yet, strange though it seems, his visit says more than does that of Mr. Hu about the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

Mr. Aliyev has been leader of the Caspian state for nearly three years. Notionally elected, in reality he inherited the post from his father, once a member of the Moscow politburo and still revered for rescuing the former Soviet republic from post-communist collapse. Even now, heroic images of the late Haydar Aliyev adorn the streets, offices and cafes of the capital Baku.

Ilham, though, presents himself as a thoroughly modern leader. He is fluent in English, takes holidays in the south of France and waxes lyrical about his country's Euro-Atlantic destiny. I met him last autumn in the presidential palace in Baku. Gracious and persuasive, he consciously defied the stereotypes of the Soviet-style tyrants who continue to rule in much of this part of the world.

Beneath the well-cut suits, charming manner and rhetorical commitment to western values, though, lies the same determination to hang on to power. His election after the death of his father in 2003 was rigged. So too, albeit marginally less blatantly, were polls for the country's national assembly last autumn. Politics and money are inextricably intertwined. Azerbaijan, a clan-based society, stands near the top of every international corruption index.

This is where Mr. Bush comes in. Small as it is, Mr. Aliyev's fiefdom has strategic significance. Its geography—the country borders Iran, Russia and Georgia as well as the Caspian—puts it in the cockpit of the unspoken struggle between Washington and Moscow for influence in the former Soviet republics of the Caucasus and central Asia.

Its more immediate military utility has not escaped the Pentagon. Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. defence secretary, is a regular visitor to Baku. The air corridor over Azerbaijan is used for U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Western diplomats say that the U.S. has also established listening posts in the south to eavesdrop on Iran. The Pentagon has been refurbishing at least one former Soviet air base. For his part, Mr. Aliyev, a secular Muslim, supported the toppling of Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

Then, of course, there is the oil. The deep waters of the Caspian hold large reserves of oil and gas. Azerbaijan has begun pumping its share through a new pipeline connecting the fields to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. The political message is clear—Mr. Aliyev is ready to snub Russia to serve the west's voracious appetite for hydrocarbons.

So why wouldn't Mr. Bush welcome such a stalwart ally at the White House? The answer is that Mr. Aliyev has consistently brushed aside calls from Washington to edge his country closer to freedom and democracy—and the U.S. president has put the spread of political pluralism front and centre of his foreign policy.

For Azerbaijan, last autumn's elections were set by Washington as something of a test. A few months earlier, Condoleezza Rice, the U.S. secretary of state, had added substance to Mr. Bush's democratic impulses. The days of appeasing autocratic leaders in oil-rich Muslim states, Ms. Rice declared in a much-trumpeted speech in Cairo, were over. The stability this had brought was a cruel illusion. America's security lay in the promotion of freedom and democracy.

There would be incentives as well as penalties. In Mr. Aliyev's case, I was told by a senior U.S. official, this would include the prestige bestowed by the invitation to the White House he had sought from the outset of his presidency. The bargain seemed straightforward: the assembly elections would be relatively free and Mr. Aliyev would get his photo opportunity on the White House lawn. As it turned out the poll was anything but fair but Mr. Aliyev, described this week by the White House as a "valued partner", still gets his trip to Washington.

Wait, I hear those weary foreign policy practitioners sigh, the road to democracy in this part of the world was never going to travel in a straight line. The geometry was always going variable, as was the pace. There are far worse than Mr. Aliyev and, in any event, Mr. Bush intends to tell him straight that he expects more of him in future. Consistency, the argument continues, can rarely be more than an aspiration in foreign policy. It would be a mistake to make the pursuit of the perfect the enemy of the possible.

Half-true. The most ardent American neo-conservatives or European liberal inter-

nationalists do not expect Saudi Arabia, for example, to abandon autocracy for democracy by the day after tomorrow. Egypt's Hosni Mubarak might be prodded harder and the democratic forces in Lebanon given greater support, but transformation will take time.

The argument, though, does not work in the same way for Azerbaijan. If Mr. Bush's words are to mean anything at all, they must be shown to have substance precisely in places like this. Of course, the country has strategic significance. It goes without saying that the west wants its oil. But America's failures in the Middle East during the second half of the last century were based on just such so-called realism.

Now, if it wants to preserve any credibility, Washington must be seen to act where it can. And, in truth, Azerbaijan is one of the easiest cases. Its relationship with the west is grounded in mutual dependency. For all that Mr. Aliyev might threaten to turn towards Moscow, he has no desire to embrace Russia. He wants the west's approval and investment in Caspian oil. He is susceptible, in other words, to pressure.

Instead he can expect the White House red carpet and a few gentle admonitions about trying to make the country's next elections a little bit fairer than the last. So who, to borrow a phrase, cares? The answer is all those people and groups in Azerbaijan and well beyond who had hoped that the U.S. president was serious in his commitment to the advance of freedom and democracy. The winners are autocrats everywhere. Oh, and, I suppose, the Teflon-like Mr. Rumsfeld.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 23, 2006]

AZERBAIJAN LEADER, UNDER FIRE, HOPES U.S. VISIT IMPROVES IMAGE (By C.J. Chivers)

Next week, after years of waiting for an unequivocal nod of Western approval, President Ilham H. Aliyev of Azerbaijan will fly to Washington to be received at the White House, a visit his administration hopes will lift his stature.

Being a guest of President Bush has been billed in Mr. Aliyev's circle as a chance for the 44-year-old president—dogged by allegations of corruption, election rigging and repression of opposition figures—to gain more international legitimacy.

"We have long waited for this visit," said Ali Gasanov, a senior presidential adviser. "Now it has been scheduled, and we hope that we will be able to discuss global issues."

For President Bush, who has made democracy promotion a prominent theme of his foreign policy, Mr. Aliyev's visit could prove tricky.

Mr. Aliyev's invitation arrived during a period of increasing diplomatic difficulties between the United States and both Russia and Iran, countries that border Azerbaijan.

But while Azerbaijan's strategic location could hardly be better and its relations with the United States have mostly been warm, no leader in the region more fully embodies the conflicting American objectives in the former Soviet Union than its president.

Mr. Aliyev is a secular Muslim politician who is steering oil and gas to Western markets and who has given political and military support to the Iraq war. But his administration has never held a clean election and has used riot police to crush antigovernment demonstrations.

The invitation, made last week, has raised eyebrows in the former Soviet world, where Mr. Bush's calls for democratization have increased tensions between opposition movements and the entrenched autocrats.

Opposition leaders have long said the United States' desires to diversify Western

energy sources and to encourage democratic growth have collided in Azerbaijan. By inviting Mr. Aliyev to the White House, they say, Mr. Bush has made a choice: oil and location now trump other concerns.

Ali Kerimli, leader of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan, noted that when Mr. Aliyev was elected in 2003 in a vote deemed neither free nor fair, the White House withheld an invitation, awaiting improvement by Azerbaijan in promoting civil society and recognizing human rights.

"It is difficult for Azerbaijan's democratic forces to understand what changed," said Mr. Kerimli, who was beaten by the police as were several thousand demonstrators during a crackdown on a protest over fraudulent parliamentary elections last fall. The demonstration had been peaceful until the police rushed in with clubs.

"I think the White House must explain what has happened when three years ago Aliyev was not wanted for a reception in the White House, and now he falsifies another election and is received," Mr. Kerimli said.

American officials insist nothing has changed, and say Mr. Aliyev has been invited for what they call a "working visit," during which he will be urged to liberalize his government and its economy, which is tightly controlled by state officials and clans.

"If we are going to elevate our relationship with Azerbaijan to something that is qualitatively different, then there has to be progress on democratic and market reforms," a senior State Department official said. "I am sure we will talk in these clear and blunt terms."

The United States' relationship with Azerbaijan rests on three principal issues: access to energy resources, international security cooperation, and democratic and economic change.

On the first two issues, the United States has made clear it is satisfied. Mr. Aliyev has supported new pipelines to pump Caspian hydrocarbons away from Russia and Iran to Western customers, and provided troops to United States-led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Azerbaijan also grants overflight rights to the American military and is cooperating with a Pentagon-sponsored modernization of a former Soviet airfield that could be used by American military planes.

Mr. Aliyev often welcomes foreign delegations to Baku, the capital, describing in smooth English his efforts to push his nation toward Western models of democracy and free markets.

But Azerbaijan has remained undemocratic. No election under Mr. Aliyev or his late father, Heydar Aliyev, has been judged free or fair by the main international observers. Instead, fraud and abuse of state resources for chosen candidates have been widespread.

Ilham Aliyev's government maintains a distinctly Soviet-era state television network and has elevated Heydar Aliyev to the status of a minor personality cult figure.

Moreover, Azerbaijan's government is often described as one of the world's most corrupt. A criminal case now in federal court in New York against three international speculators describes enormous shakedowns and bribes in the late 1990's at Socar, Azerbaijan's state oil company. Mr. Aliyev was a Socar vice president at the time.

Last year the Azerbaijani government showed signs of paranoia, arresting several people shortly before the parliamentary election and accusing them of plotting an armed coup.

Public evidence for the charges has been scarce, and a lawyer for two of the men held in solitary confinement for months since—Farhad Aliyev, the former minister of economics, and his brother Rafiq—has urged

Congress to raise issues of their treatment when Mr. Aliyev comes to Washington. (The president is not related to the accused men.)

American officials say that Azerbaijan has been liberalizing slowly, and evolving into a more responsible state. But given Mr. Aliyev's uneven record and the allegations against him, his visit has raised fresh questions about the degree to which American standards are malleable.

"Russian public opinion, when it looks at the United States policy in Azerbaijan, cannot ignore the fact that the United States has a desire not in favor of democracy but in favor of profits and geopolitical domination," said Sergei Markov, director of the Institute for Political Studies here and a Kremlin adviser.

Mr. Markov and others have noted that the West has penalized Belarus for police crackdowns after tainted elections last month.

"This is one of the reasons that Russian public opinion is very suspicious of United States policies in the former Soviet political sphere, and its propaganda about democracy," Mr. Markov said.

"Ilham Aliyev will be in the White House not because he promotes democracy," Mr. Markov said. "He will be in the White House because he controls oil."

In Armenia, Mr. Aliyev's invitation has also generated interest.

Armenia fought Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a wedge of territory within Azerbaijan's boundaries that each country claims. The conflict has been frozen for several years, but Mr. Aliyev's recent statements have often been bellicose.

"The visit at this time should not be viewed as appreciation of their democratic or other policies," Vartan Oskanian, Armenia's foreign minister, said via e-mail.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 24, 2006]

RETREAT FROM THE FREEDOM AGENDA

(By Jackson Diehl)

President Bush's retreat from the ambitious goals of his second term will proceed one small but fateful step further this Friday. That's when, after more than two years of stalling, the president will deliver a warm White House welcome to Ilham Aliyev, the autocratic and corrupt but friendly ruler of one of the world's emerging energy powers, Azerbaijan.

Here's why this is a tipping point: At the heart of Bush's democracy doctrine was the principle that the United States would abandon its Cold War-era practice of propping up dictators—especially in the Muslim world—in exchange for easy access to their energy resources and military cooperation. That bargain, we now know, played a major role in the emergence of al-Qaeda and other extremist anti-Western movements.

To his credit, the reelected Bush made a genuine stab at a different strategy last year in Azerbaijan and another Muslim country, Kazakhstan. Both resemble Iran or Iraq half a century ago. They are rapidly modernizing, politically unsettled, and about to become very, very rich from oil and gas.

With both Aliyev and Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev planning elections last fall, Bush dispatched letters and senior envoys with a message: Hold an honest vote and you can "elevate our countries" relations to a new strategic level. The implicit converse was that, should they fail to deliver, there would be no special partnership—no military deals, no aid, no presidential visits to Washington.

Both Aliyev and Nazarbayev made token efforts to please Bush. But both dismally failed to demonstrate that they were willing to liberalize their countries rather than using oil wealth to consolidate dictatorship.

The State Department said of Aliyev's parliamentary elections, "there were major irregularities and fraud." Nazarbayev's election was worse. Since then, two of Nazarbayev's opponents have died or been murdered in suspicious circumstances. Three of Aliyev's foes are being tried this month on treason charges, and his biggest rival has been jailed.

Aliyev is nevertheless getting everything he might have hoped for from Bush. Aid is being boosted, the Pentagon is drawing up plans for extensive military cooperation—and there is the White House visit, which the 44-year-old Azeri president has craved ever since he took over from his dad three years ago. If Nazarbayev chooses, he will be next. He has been offered not just a Washington tour but a reciprocal visit by Bush to Kazakhstan.

Why the retreat on the democracy principle? Azeri observers speculate that Bush may want Aliyev's help with Iran, which is its neighbor and contains a large Azeri ethnic minority. But administration officials tell me a more pressing reason is a rapidly intensifying campaign by Russia to restore its dominion over former Soviet republics such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan—and to drive the United States out of the region.

Though nominally Bush's ally in the war on terrorism, Russian President Vladimir Putin has cynically exploited Bush's effort to promote democracy in Eurasia. His diplomats and media aggressively portray Washington's support for free media, civil society groups and elections as a cover for CIA-sponsored coups. Autocrats who stage crackdowns, such as Uzbekistan's Islam Karimov, are quickly embraced by Moscow, which counsels them to break off ties with the U.S. military. State-controlled Russian energy companies are meanwhile seeking to corner oil and gas supplies and gain control over pipelines, electricity grids and refineries throughout Eurasia. If they succeed, Russia can throttle the region's weak governments and ensure its long-term control over energy supplies to Central and Western Europe.

In late February Putin arrived in Azerbaijan at the head of a large delegation and proceeded to buy everything Aliyev would sell, including a commitment to export more oil through Russia. Earlier this month he welcomed Nazarbayev to Moscow, and scored an even bigger success. Not only did the Kazakh leader endorse Putin's plan for a Moscow-dominated "common economic space," but he also signed a deal that will double Kazakhstan's oil exports through Russia. Despite heavy U.S. lobbying, Nazarbayev has yet to firmly commit to sending oil through a rival Western pipeline, which begins in Azerbaijan and ends in the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

Putin's aggressive tactics forced the hand of the administration, which had been holding back its White House invitations in the hope of leveraging more steps toward liberalization. "We don't want to see Azerbaijan closed off by the Russians, because that will close off the energy alternative to Russia for Europe," one official said. He added: "If Azerbaijan falls under Russian influence there will be no democracy agenda there at all."

In short, the race for energy and an increasingly bare-knuckled contest with Moscow for influence over its producers have caused the downgrading of the democracy strategy. It might be argued that the sacrifice is necessary, given the large economic and security stakes. But, then, that was the logic that prevailed once before. According to Bush, history proved it wrong.

NORTH KOREA FREEDOM WEEK

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, as we are in the midst of North Korea Freedom Week, I would like to speak to the human rights situation in North Korea. As we continually strive to protect the freedoms that this country holds dear, such as the freedoms of religion, press, speech and assembly that are recognized in our Constitution, we must also concentrate on spreading these freedoms to those who do not enjoy them. As these rights should be enjoyed by all people, not just Americans, freedom must extend beyond our borders to reach those who live in a world unknown to many of us, one that includes starvation and deprivation of all freedoms. North Korea Freedom Week gives us the opportunity to shed light on the situation inside this oppressive regime.

Several years ago in order to help promote freedom throughout the world, I began the Congressional Working Group on Religious Freedom. The purpose of this group is to focus attention on issues of domestic and international religious freedom. As a group, we seek to uphold and help enforce the meaning of article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

As has been noted by human rights groups and others, the human rights situation in North Korea is severe. Hundreds of thousands of North Koreans have fled their country in hopes of survival and in search of a free life. However, even if they manage to escape, they still live in constant fear of repatriation and imprisonment. President Bush has called North Korea's autocratic leader, Kim Jong Il, a "tyrant" who runs "concentration camps." Despite the country being embedded in secrecy, unfortunate stories of persecution, starvation, and public executions for crossing the border manage to be released to the rest of the world. Such actions under this regime are a terrible travesty.

While the North Korean constitution provides for "freedom of religion," such freedom does not exist. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom said in their 2005 annual report: "By all accounts, there are virtually no personal freedoms in North Korea and no protection for universal human rights. In pursuit of absolute control of all facets of politics and society, the government under dictator Kim Jong Il has created an environment of fear in which dissent of any kind is not tolerated. Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief remains essentially non-existent, as the government severely represses public and private religious activities and has a policy of actively discriminating against religious believers."