

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF
UNITED STATES-POLISH DIPLO-
MATIC RELATIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. LIPINSKI, for introducing this legislation commemorating the 90th anniversary of the establishment of U.S.-Polish Diplomatic Relations.

The Polish people and the people of the United States have a long history of friendship that dates back to the American war of independence when Polish patriot Casimir Pulaski volunteered to serve in the Continental Army and led his own cavalry regiment in fighting the British.

We have stood shoulder to shoulder during dark times in both our histories, and in more recent times, we rejoiced together as the iron curtain that had enshrouded Poland and Eastern Europe was cast aside.

And, in 1999, the United States and NATO welcomed Poland into our security partnership.

In 2008, America signed a cooperative security agreement with Poland to further our mutual security interests. This included the establishment of a missile defense system to protect both Europe and the United States from ballistic missile attacks from rogue states such as Iran.

This agreement was signed as a result of the strong courage of Poland's leaders who believed the United States government when it promised to help protect their homeland.

Ironically, on September 17, 2009—the 70th anniversary of the 1939 Soviet invasion of Poland—the Administration withdrew U.S. support for this mutual missile defense system in Europe. The Administration must now respond to find other ways that our cooperative partnership may be advanced.

As a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the author of the NATO First Act, I believe the United States must remain committed to working with the Polish people to sustain our mutual partnership.

I urge support of H. Res. 266.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF "MEETING
OF THE PRESIDENTS"

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark a unique date in our history, the 100th Anniversary of the "Meeting of the Presidents". On October 16, 1909, U.S. President William Howard Taft and Mexican President Porfirio Diaz met in both El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico in an historic meeting that established the personal relationship between our two countries. The event marked the first in-person meeting between the Presidents of the United States and Mexico. In fact, prior to 1909, no sitting U.S. President had left our country to visit a foreign nation.

The sister cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez went to great lengths to ensure that

this meeting was unlike any other, by adorning memorial columns and welcome arches with the colors of the two nations—red, white, and blue, and red, white, and green. Principal thoroughfares were decorated, thousands of incandescent and arc lamps were lit, and it is said that the cities competed with each other to demonstrate their best hospitality to the visiting Presidents.

The Stone and Webster Public Service Journal of 1909 has a great account of the day's historic events. President Taft arrived in El Paso, on the morning of October 16, 1909 and was met by El Paso Mayor Joseph U. Sweeney. After breakfast, President Taft was taken to the Chamber of Commerce through streets lined with thousands of school children who proudly waved colorful flags and sang patriotic songs. Mexican President Porfirio Diaz traveled across the International Bridge and was met by Secretary of War J.M. Dickinson, Texas Governor Thomas Mitchell Campbell, and Mayor Sweeney who escorted President Diaz to his meeting with President Taft at the Chamber of Commerce.

After the meeting, President Taft journeyed across the border to visit Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Arriving at the border of the Chamizal zone, which was then disputed territory between the U.S. and Mexico, President Taft drove through the International Bridge and was saluted by the Mexican artillery with twenty-one guns. Upon arriving in Mexico, he entered the state carriage of President Diaz and was driven to the Custom House, which served as the temporary capital of the Mexican Republic. After a brief meeting, President Taft returned to El Paso, where he participated in a parade and addressed the cheering crowds. He ended the day by attending a reception in Ciudad Juarez where the two Presidents toasted each other and their respective countries.

This marked the first international trip of any sitting U.S. President and remains a rich part of the storied history of the great city of El Paso, which I represent. To this day, El Paso and Ciudad Juarez have maintained close ties. Culturally, socially, and economically intertwined, these sister cities are home to the largest international border community with a population of over 2 million people. Since that time, El Paso and Ciudad Juarez have hosted four joint meetings between the presidents of Mexico and the United States, more than any other border city.

On January 12, 2009, President-elect Obama continued this spirit of cooperation by meeting with President Felipe Calderon in his first face-to-face talks with a foreign head of state. This meeting fulfilled a tradition in effect since 1980 of U.S. Presidents talking with their Mexican counterparts before being sworn in, to underscore the special relationship between the two nations.

My good friend, Mexican Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan, reflecting on this special occasion said, "there is no more important bilateral relationship in the world today than the one between Mexico and the United States. . . . October 16th marks a date that should inspire us all to continue working to ensure that both Mexicans and Americans continue strengthening a partnership that must lead both countries toward greater development, security, prosperity and well-being for our two peoples."

Let us mark this occasion by committing ourselves to push forward to strengthen the

relationship between Mexico and the United States. I applaud the work of President Obama and President Calderon to foster a closer relationship with our southern neighbor. There is no better way to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the "Meeting of the Presidents" than by continuing the legacy of strong diplomatic ties with our friends from Mexico.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION CON-
DEMNING THE ILLEGAL EXTRAC-
TION OF MADAGASCAR'S NAT-
URAL RESOURCES

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution to condemn the illegal extraction of Madagascar's unique and invaluable natural resources. I am joined in this effort by DONALD PAYNE, Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, and ENI FALOMAVAEGA, Chair of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment.

Madagascar hosts some of this planet's greatest diversity. Larger than California, this island nation hosts over 150,000 species found nowhere else. The people of Madagascar depend on these incredible and unique resources for survival. Yet, political turmoil is putting the honest livelihoods of many, as well as one of our planet's greatest treasures, in extreme peril.

Reports from Madagascar are dire and detail rampant illegal logging, mining, and resource degradation. This resolution condemns this ongoing tragedy and calls for the restoration of rule of law. It is my hope that calling attention to this issue will spur change.

REVEREND DR. FRANK JACKSON

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the wonderful life of Reverend Dr. Frank Jackson. His vibrant spirit, limitless compassion and selfless commitment to service will be missed by all who knew him. Through his ministry at Faith Presbyterian Church of Oakland, Reverend Jackson brought our community to a greater understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the life of the Church. He was an exemplary husband, father, pastor, community leader, teacher and friend. With his passing on September 11, 2009, we look to Reverend Jackson's legacy and the joy his work inspired.

After earning a bachelor's degree at San Francisco's Simpson College in 1972, Reverend Jackson pursued a Master of Divinity at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Reverend Jackson also became the first African-American clergy member to graduate from the Master of Nonprofit Administration program at University of San Francisco when he earned his third degree there in

1991. Education and personal growth were immensely important values to Reverend Jackson. He truly used a lifetime of learning to inspire and teach others.

In his early pastoral career, Reverend Jackson acted as Interim Pastor to rebuild and develop transitioning churches in the Los Angeles area. He focused his passion for providing youth leadership and family services as Associate Pastor for Menlo Park Presbyterian Church from 1979 to 1983. Later that year, he joined Faith Presbyterian Church in Oakland, thus beginning 26 years of service to our community as Pastor and spiritual guide.

Along with wife Jimmye Jackson, with whom he celebrated 41 years of marriage this month, and daughter Rachel Jackson, Reverend Jackson maintained a dynamic presence in Bay Area community organizing. He was instrumental in organizing numerous collaborations and events including Support for the Families of Homicide Victims, a Community Health Fair Event, Embrace Oakland Day and Faith Network of the East Bay.

Reverend Jackson was passionate about encouraging collaboration between diverse groups. He utilized the clarity of his vision and the strength of his faith to unite people to work for shared goals. In 1992, Reverend Jackson was a founding pastor of the African American & Korean American Fellowship of Churches, a coalition that sought to build better racial relationships between communities of color. He also established the Themus Spencer Learning Center at Faith Presbyterian Church in partnership with Emerson Elementary School to guide at-risk students to academic success.

Deeply moved by the challenges of Katrina Relief in 2006, Reverend Jackson also helped organize a team of Oakland Pastors to raise relief funds during a citywide gathering at the Oakland Coliseum. Whether working with an interfaith coalition to rebuild burned black churches in Boligee, Alabama, or simply lending an ear to a friend in need—Reverend Jackson always made time to help others.

Additionally, he was a great lover of sports, earning his Black Belt in Korean Judo and serving as Chaplain for the Golden State Warriors Basketball Team and other pro- and college teams. In his later years, Reverend Jackson stayed active as trustee, co-chair or committee member for myriad organizations, even earning a Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary just last year.

Pastor Jackson was a personal friend and source of inspiration to me. Often times he would leave a prayer on my voicemail and his words of encouragement always came, "right on time." I will always remember the joy and excitement Reverend Jackson felt at the National Prayer Breakfast this year in Washington D.C., when along with Mrs. Jackson and Pastor and Mrs. Pinkard, he witnessed our President Barack Obama and First Lady participate in their first national prayer breakfast. This week, as I looked at the photos once again after learning of Reverend Jackson's untimely death, I was reminded of his kind and gentle spirit. His life was one lived in service to God.

Today, California's 9th Congressional District salutes and honors Reverend Frank Jackson. The contributions Reverend Jackson made to his community throughout his life are countless and precious. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones. Reverend Jackson will be deeply missed. May his soul rest in peace.

COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE

SPEECH OF

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Hellenic Caucus, I rise today to congratulate the Daughters of Penelope on their 80th anniversary. I want to thank Representative MALONEY, my Hellenic Caucus co-chair for introducing this meaningful measure of which I am a proud original cosponsor. The Daughters of Penelope is a premier international women's organization and affiliate organization of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, the Nation's leading association of American citizens of Greek heritage and countless Philhellenes.

Founded November 16, 1929, in San Francisco, California, the Daughters of Penelope was established to improve the well-being of women and provide them with the opportunity to make significant contributions to American society. Today its mission is to promote the ideals of ancient Greece, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, family, and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism.

Over its history, the Daughters of Penelope have achieved remarkable accomplishments. It has strengthened the status of women in society, sheltered the elderly and the abused, educated our youth, promoted Hellenic heritage, and raised funds for medical research.

One project adopted by the Daughters of Penelope over the years that is near and dear to my heart is St. Basil Academy, a Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need. Beginning in 1954, the Daughters of Penelope have been providing charitable aid to St. Basil Academy when it embarked on a Christmas Seal Campaign to raise funds to build the new water works for the academy. Since then, the Daughters of Penelope contributed to the furnishing of new buildings that have been built on campus, built a heated outdoor swimming pool for the children, and has provided funds for ongoing maintenance and renovations to the academy for such items as replacing outdated appliances and worn-out roofs.

Finally, Daughters of Penelope members exemplify the American dream. With their strong work ethic, Greek-American women have risen to become leaders in their respective professions, from government to business to the arts. I am honored to have a longtime member of the Daughters working in my district office. My dear friend, Sonja Stefanadis, has been a member of the Daughters of Penelope for 48 years and served as its national president in the early 80's. So, I know first hand the extraordinary work this wonderful organization does. It has been a vehicle through which this advancement has occurred in our society.

Congratulations to the Daughters of Penelope. I look forward to many, many years of working together with them.

THANKING COLONEL GENE BLADE FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. SCHOCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor COL Gene Blade, a great American who is retiring today after 55 years of service to his country and community.

Colonel Blade started his 40-year military career in 1954, when he joined the Illinois National Guard in Monmouth, Illinois. His first job in the Army was as a radio operator and Jeep driver for the Battery Commander. As his military career advanced, Colonel Blade served in numerous other positions, including Fire Support Officer and eventually Battery Commander. In fact, Colonel Blade held every key staff position in the infantry and artillery battalions, including Infantry Battalion Commander of the 1st Regiment, 123rd Infantry Battalion.

Colonel Blade continued to perform his duties even when no one expected him to do so. In one specific instance, Gene was hospitalized with pneumonia, but a group of top military personnel were scheduled to visit his post to view a demonstration of a nuclear spotter round. The weapons used for this exercise required very specific calculations, and Gene's expertise was needed for the test. Even with pneumonia, Colonel Blade decided to take part in the test and was transported via ambulance to the testing area so he could commence the demonstration. The event occurred without any problems, in fact, it was performed quicker than any previous test. After the demonstration, Gene was transported via ambulance back to the hospital. Gene's commitment to the Army was so evident, that the Army Chief of Staff personally thanked him for going above and beyond the call of duty.

After serving 40 years in the Army, Colonel Blade retired as a United States Property and Fiscal Officer for the Illinois National Guard and joined Hanson Professional Services Inc. as a special consultant, working with Department of Defense clients. Even in the private sector, Gene continued to serve his country. Using his skills and knowledge, he provided consulting services for 15 years and worked on several notable projects for the Illinois, Indiana, Florida, and Missouri National Guards.

Additionally, Colonel Blade has served on the U.S. Department of Defense's Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) for military bases in Illinois, and he continues to serve on the Governor's post-BRAC commission for future economic development efforts. He is also an active member and an employer outreach representative for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program.

Throughout his life and career, Gene's dedication and achievements have made a positive impact on the U.S. military, the State of Illinois, and our great Nation. Today, at 75 years of age, Colonel Blade will celebrate his retirement from Hanson. I'm told he looks forward to spending time golfing, traveling, wood-working, and also writing a book of his memoirs. I thank him for his service, and wish him the very best.