

to the floor without any real chance for debate, without any consideration by the committee of jurisdiction, and without any opportunity for constructive input from the many Members of this body—Democrats and Republicans—who care deeply about peace in the Middle East.

This resolution is significant not for what it says, but for what it leaves unspoken. Of course most of us believe that a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians will only be achieved through a negotiated two-state solution. And of course any unilateral action by either side—or by a third party—that undermines the peace process should be cause for concern for this Congress, and for anybody else who believes that a two-state solution is still possible.

But that is precisely the point: this resolution says absolutely nothing about the long history of unilateral actions taken by Israeli governments that have progressively undermined confidence in the ability of negotiations to deliver peace. It says nothing about the fact that formal negotiations broke down last week due in large part to Israel's refusal to extend its freeze on unilateral settlement construction for a mere three months. It says nothing about the understandable frustration felt by Israelis and Palestinians alike when they see their leaders fail yet again to make good on their promises of peace.

Moreover, we must ask ourselves whether approving this resolution at this highly sensitive moment would in fact be counterproductive to its stated goal of supporting the peace process. With negotiations on life support and the Administration working overtime to determine the best path forward for the United States, should we really be making definitive statements about what the United States might or might not do if such a unilateral declaration were actually made? Or asking the State Department to shift its focus to preventing other countries from granting diplomatic recognition, rather than continuing to focus on the peace process itself?

One would think that we should rather be urging the Obama Administration to stand firm in its efforts to bring Israeli and Palestinian leaders back to the negotiating table. The Administration was wise to abandon its offer to give Israel a generous package of security guarantees to do something that is manifestly in its own self-interest to begin with, but Secretary Clinton and Senator MITCHELL have made clear their commitment to pursuing alternative courses of action.

Instead of stirring the pot at this delicate time with pronouncements and condemnations, we should be offering hope and encouragement to their efforts.

Ultimately, I agree with the basic points made in this resolution. But I strongly urge the leadership of this House, on both sides of the aisle, to allow for a more balanced, transparent, and deliberative process next time we are asked to express the sense of Congress on a matter of such critical importance to our Nation.

IN HONOR OF JOHN BELSKI AND
HIS 23 YEARS OF EXEMPLARY
SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY AT
WAVE3 NEWS

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2010

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to mark the retirement of one of Louisville's finest meteorologists and his 23 years of service to my hometown.

Like most Louisvillians, I have trusted John Belski's dependable forecasts for the last two decades. No easy task, especially given that our community has faced ice storms, floods, and wind storms in the last two years alone. But, through it all, Louisville could count on John Belski to deliver accurate reporting with an award-winning smile.

In his tenure at WAVE 3, Belski reported on weather so unprecedented that it would make even the most seasoned professional nervous. Day in and day out, his attention to detail and calm demeanor provided reassurance and even life-saving information to thousands during the most trying of times.

His talents are not limited to just meteorology. Belski authored an internationally recognized weather folklore book, and was the 2005 World Dainty Champion—a feat achieved while broadcasting live on the air.

We in Louisville are grateful to John and will surely miss his expertise. I am proud to join all of our community in thanking him for his work and wishing him the best in the next chapter of his life.

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL MATTHEW KAMBIC

HON. STEVE AUSTRIA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2010

Mr. AUSTRIA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major General Matthew Kambic for his service to the State of Ohio and our nation on the occasion of his retirement.

It is an honor to join the people of Ohio's 7th Congressional District in congratulating General Kambic upon his retirement as the Assistant Adjutant General for the Ohio Army National Guard for the State of Ohio.

Showing exemplary leadership, he has commanded at many levels including the detachment, troop, battalion and brigade levels. As Assistant Adjutant General for Army he worked to support Ohio's Army National Guard by overseeing the readiness of over 11,000 service members and creating administrative policies and priorities.

General Kambic has a distinguished military background. Prior to joining the Ohio National Guard, he served in the U.S. Army, 66th Armor Battalion, 2nd Armored Division for four years achieving the rank of Sergeant.

He joined the Ohio National Guard while attending Youngstown State University and was commissioned as an armor officer in 1981. In his career, General Kambic also earned his Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University.

Previous to his role as Assistant Adjutant General, he served as the Chief of Staff at

Joint Force Headquarters, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans at Joint Force Headquarters, and Commander of the 37th Armored Brigade.

General Kambic holds many awards and distinctions including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters, and the Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters.

For his many years of dedication to the State of Ohio and to this nation, I again join the people of Ohio's 7th Congressional District in extending our best wishes upon his retirement and wish him success in all his future endeavors.

NANCY CHEN: A FIGHTER FOR WORKING WOMEN

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2010

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize Nancy Chen, who is retiring after 26 years of service. Nancy is a remarkable woman who has devoted much of her life to promoting and creating policies to help working women and to empowering women and immigrants.

Nancy led the Midwest regional office of Women's Bureau for 13 years. This is the only federal agency designated by Congress to address issues and concerns of working women. Part of the U.S. Department of Labor, its mission is to develop policies and standards to safeguard the interests of working women by advocating for their economic security and that of their families; and promoting quality work environments. Nancy directed and developed the regional program through collaboration and partnership with women's organizations, employers, unions, and other government agencies in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Under Nancy's leadership, the regional office has effectively promoted non-traditional occupations for women, including green jobs and careers in science, technology and engineering. She has helped achieve concrete advances in workplace flexibility and pay equity.

Nancy's career highlights include public and community service in Illinois and Washington, DC. Prior to joining the Women's Bureau, Nancy served as Director of Asian Pacific American Outreach at the Office of Presidential Personnel in the Clinton White House. Before that, she was Director of U.S. Senator Paul Simon's Chicago office, overseeing the Senator's legislative and constituent program relating to Chicago and northern Illinois for 6 years. As a key advisor, she played an important role in Senator Simon's achievements relating to family immigration legislation and economic development in Chicago's immigrant communities.

Nancy serves on the Board of Counselors at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. She is also a member on the Gender Equity Advisory Committee for the Illinois State Board of Education. Nancy's community service includes being the founder and past president of the National Women's Political Caucus of Greater Chicago from 1992 to 1994; member of the Illinois Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights for over 10 years;

and co-chair of the Obama's Asian American and Pacific Islander, AAPI, National Leadership Council in 2007 and 2008.

Nancy received the 2009 Milestone Award from the Asian American Institute and the first Sandra Otaka Legacy Award from the Asian American Action Fund, Chicago Chapter. She was the recipient of the 2004 Risk Taker and Enabler Award from the Organization of Chinese Americans and the 2009 Distinguished Career Service Award from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Nancy is a skilled organizer, an expert networker, true public servant, and a good friend. Her advocacy and the policies that she helped create will continue to empower and strengthen working women even after her retirement. Her accomplishments are many, and I want to congratulate her on her decades of service to women and families.

BRIEFING ON "SAUDI ARABIA: FUELING RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AND EXTREMISM"

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2010

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I would like to submit the following for the RECORD:

REMARKS OF MARIA MCFARLAND, DEPUTY WASHINGTON DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

In the last couple of years, Saudi King Abdullah has received praise in some circles for having taken a few cautious steps in support of religious tolerance through his Interfaith Dialogue Initiative. But that initiative has been limited to international settings.

Within Saudi Arabia, repression of religious freedom continues unabated, particularly with respect to Shia Muslims. Saudi textbooks, including those used abroad, include material that promotes hostility toward the Shia creed and other religions and may in some cases justify violence. The right of non-Muslims to worship in private is subject to the whims of the local religious police. Public worship of faiths other than Islam remains prohibited as a matter of policy.

Shia Saudis, who make up an estimated 10-15 percent of the population, are the group most affected by repression of religious freedom. Shia face systematic exclusion in employment, as well as discrimination in religious education and worship.

In some cases, this discrimination amounts to persecution. Professing Shia beliefs in private or in public may lead to arrest and detention. Saudi Shia visiting the holy shrines in Mecca and Medina regularly face harassment by the Wahhabi religious police. A government promise to update the vague law outlining religious police jurisdiction and powers has remained unfulfilled for three years.

In al-Ahsa' province, the governor, Prince Badr bin Jilawi, has repeatedly had Shia citizens arrested and detained on his authority and in violation of Saudi criminal procedure law simply for praying together in private or publicly displaying banners or slogans or wearing clothing associated with certain Shia rituals. In late January or mid-February, six young Shia of al-Ahsa', between 19 and 24 years old, were detained on Prince Badr's orders because of their peaceful exercise of their religious beliefs. As of

mid-September, they remained in detention without charge or trial despite a limit of six months for pre-trial detention under the Saudi criminal procedure code. The Saudi government has yet to take meaningful steps to stop these abuses or bring to justice those responsible.

Shia face officially sanctioned discrimination in the judicial system too. There has been no progress in affording Shia outside of the Eastern Province with courts for personal status matters to conclude marriages and adjudicate divorces, inheritances, child custody disputes, and such matters. This affects the so-called Nakhawila, Twelver Shia in Medina, and the Ismailis in Najran province as well as a small group of Zaidi Muslims in Jizan and Najran provinces. There is no separation of secular from religious law in Saudi courts, and all Shia, including in the Eastern Province where they have their own personal status courts, must follow Sunni law as interpreted in Saudi Arabia. Shia are sometimes not allowed to testify in court.

Saudi officials who engage in anti-Shia speech rarely face any reprimand for doing so. For example, on December 31, 2009, Shaikh Muhammad al-Arifi, the government-paid imam of the Buradi mosque in Riyadh, as well as Salih bin Humaid, Saudi chief judge, visited frontline troops in southern Saudi Arabia fighting Yemeni Huthi rebels, who belong to a branch of Shiism, albeit different from that of most Saudi Shia. Al-Arifi can be seen in photos wearing camouflage, firing weapons, and preaching to soldiers. Press reports said al-Arifi stressed the necessity of jihad (holy war) and commended the soldiers for performing their national and religious duty. Upon returning to Riyadh, al-Arifi, in a sermon on Friday, January 1, 2010 condemned the Huthi rebels and called Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani—an Iranian living in Iraq, who is the highest religious authority for many Saudi Shia—an "obscene, irreligious atheist."

Meanwhile, Saudi authorities have taken steps to silence Shia critics. Saudi domestic intelligence agents have been holding Munir al-Jassas, a Shia who criticized state repression against the Shia online, in detention without charge for over a year. On June 22, 2008, authorities arrested Shia cleric Shaikh Tawfiq al-Amir, after he spoke out in a sermon against a May 30 statement signed by 22 prominent Saudi Wahhabi clerics, in which they called the "Shia sect an evil among the sects of the Islamic nation, and the greatest enemy and deceivers of the Sunni people." Of the 22 signatories, 11 were current government officials and 6 were former government officials.

In its annual reports on religious freedom on Saudi Arabia, the United States Department of State has consistently and accurately documented severe repression of religious freedom and systematic violations against certain groups, including especially the Shia. Yet, while the United States has for years designated Saudi Arabia as a Country of Particular Concern, it has failed to take meaningful steps to promote reform in Saudi Arabia. The United States has continually waived sanctions provided under the law, and aside from issuing the annual report, has remained mostly silent in public on the subject.

The United States has also applauded King Abdullah's Interfaith Dialogue Initiative (IDI) as evidence of greater promotion of religious tolerance. Cynical observers would see the IDI as a promotional tour of Western countries designed to soften Saudi Arabia's image of an exporter of religious hatred. Uncritical supporters of the initiative claim it as evidence that the kingdom is opening up.

Whatever its motivation, the fact remains that this initiative abroad has had no policy

repercussions at home. Saudis recognize domestic state-controlled media reporting on the IDI as an official campaign, and it only serves to highlight the stark contrasts between ideals upheld abroad and the harsh reality of repression at home. If the United States is serious about promoting religious tolerance in Saudi Arabia, it cannot remain content to publish a report once a year about religious repression or to praise Saudi Arabia for symbolic commitments to religious tolerance. Instead, it must take a clear, public stance on Saudi Arabia's systematic repression of religion and press the Saudi government to undertake effective institutional reforms to end discrimination and repression on the basis of religion in that country.

REMARKS OF MANSOUR AL-HADJ, EDITOR, AAFaq

At the outset, I would like to say that my paper is based on my personal experience as someone who was born and grew up in Saudi Arabia, and has always been concerned about Saudi Arabia—since it's my homeland and also since I have been monitoring the Saudi media closely for the last four years as co-founder of the liberal Arabic-language website Aafaq, of which I am currently editor-in-chief.

There is great conflict and tension between liberals and conservatives in Saudi Arabia—but it is unfortunately a fake war, because both sides are working for the government—that is, the House of Saud. Both the liberals—who are actively writing articles for government-owned newspapers or appearing on government-owned TV channels—and the conservatives—who are active in mosques and on websites and who are also appearing on government-owned TV channels—are well aware of their limits and of the red lines that they must not cross.

The one red line that neither conservatives nor liberals dare to cross is talking or writing anything about political reform or the rights of religious minorities. Those who refuse to follow these limits are banned from writing in Saudi newspapers, and many of them are imprisoned and/or prohibited from leaving the country.

Saudi liberals are very hesitant to question the illegal arrest and persecution of reformers. One such case, that went completely unreported in Saudi Arabia, is that of Hadi Al-Mutif, an Ismaili Shi'ite who has been imprisoned since 1993, serving what is by now the longest prison sentence ever in Saudi Arabia for insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Also, not a single Saudi newspaper reported on the arrest of Mokhlif Al-Shammari, a Saudi human rights activist accused of annoying others for posting online articles criticizing radical sheikhs who call for the eradication of the Shi'ites.

Saudi liberals have never advocated for the reformers who openly demand political and constitutional reform—such as Ali Aldumaini, Matrook Al-Faleh, and Abdallah Al-Hamid, who are officially banned from writing in Saudi newspapers and from traveling outside the country. The liberals do not dare to question the brutal punishments of beheading, amputation and flogging carried out by the Saudi authorities. They avoid writing about the plight of the Shi'a minorities whose mosques are repeatedly shut down and whose imams are arrested for conducting prayers in their homes. They never dare to call for a new and modern interpretation of the Koran, never dare to advocate for gays' and lesbians' right to not be punished or even killed for something they could not choose. All of these issues are on the other side of the red line that they cannot cross.

Last month, Saudi women's rights activist Wajeha al-Huwaider was interviewed by the LBC (Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation)