

meetings with the delegation of the Russian Federation and a visiting delegation from Kyrgyzstan to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

U.S. engagement in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly sends a clear message to those who are our friends and to those who are not that we will defend U.S. interests and advance the causes of peace and prosperity around the world.

REMEMBERING NATALIA ESTEMIROVA

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, on July 15, 2009, Natalia Estemirova, head of the Memorial Human Rights Center in Grozny, Chechnya, was abducted from her home and murdered. Estemirova belonged to a tradition of Russian heroism, persevering for truth and justice in spite of great danger, but she deserves recognition from all nations.

Today, as we commemorate the 1-year anniversary of her tragic passing, it is fitting to recall the words of the Memorial's founder, Andrei Sakharov:

You always have to be aware of [your ideals], even if there is no direct path to their realization. Were there no ideals, there would be no hope whatsoever. Then everything would be hopelessness, darkness—a blind alley.

In her life and in her work, Estemirova radiated hope in the face of adversity, and was steadfast in her ideals even when pursuing them entailed great risk and personal sacrifice.

Natalia Estemirova was born in 1958 to a Russian mother and a Chechen father, embodying in her parentage what was to become her life's calling: reconciling both peoples through her keen sense of justice and singular commitment to the truth. A widow and a mother, a teacher and an advocate, Estemirova found her purest voice in Chechnya. Her reporting on the second Chechen war and its aftermath exposed countless abuses committed by both sides, and provided an invaluable source of information to the outside world.

Estemirova was no stranger to controversy. On more than one occasion, her work raised the ire of the local authorities, and twice she was forced to flee her homeland. But Estemirova was not one to surrender to fear. It is said that above all she was motivated by the love of her daughter, Lana, and the desire to help the victims of Chechnya's tragic wars.

And help other people she did. From the wrongly accused in need of legal assistance to the families in search of their loved ones, Estemirova provided solace and service to generations of Russians. She pursued hidden graves, requested investigations from the authorities, and gave voice to Chechens by bringing their cases to the European Court of Human Rights.

Estemirova knew better than anyone about the tenuous stability that reigns in Chechnya. She knew that corruption there could spread to neighboring prov-

inces and corrode the institutions of the Russian state. She knew that violence and instability are seldom contained within internationally recognized borders. And she believed that justice for victims must be at the center of any effort to rebuild societies devastated by war.

On this day, we are called to remember Estemirova's generosity of spirit and dedication of purpose in spite of the many blind alleys that confronted her in life. Her voice may be silenced, but her message of hope and reconciliation endure.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BLANQUITA CULLUM

• Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, as Blanquita Cullum's service as Governor on the Broadcasting Board of Governors comes to an end, I wish to make note of her untiring efforts to maintain United States international broadcasting during times of enormous pressures.

Throughout her tenure, Blanquita Cullum has been a champion for the mission of American international broadcasting, but also for the audiences who rely upon our international broadcasts for credible, authoritative, accurate and factual news and information.

Chief among her concerns has been for the continuation of U.S. international radio broadcasts, the form of communication which to this day remains the most readily accessible and cost-effective means of communication for billions of oppressed people living in poverty.

In our technologically driven consumer society, it escapes our attention that almost two billion people make less than \$2 a day. Blanquita Cullum has insisted, often in the face of resistance, that these populations not be abandoned and their fate left to chance.

In addition, she has argued strongly that cuts not be made to critical strategic regions of the world where regions are often one incident away from open conflict. She was among those calling for the resumption of United States international broadcasts to Russia. This call to action was given added impetus during the armed conflict between Russia and the Republic of Georgia, days after U.S. international broadcasts to Russia were ended. Even though the other members of the Board inexplicably refused to restore Russian broadcasts, Blanquita Cullum's forceful arguments helped avert their planned termination of U.S. broadcasts to the Republic of Georgia and the Ukraine.

Blanquita Cullum has global vision. International terrorism and other threats to the United States are globalized. We ignore this fact at our own risk. For example, she has argued strongly for a more robust presence of

U.S. international broadcasting to Latin America, including targeted broadcasts to Cuba, Venezuela, and other audiences whose airwaves are saturated with antidemocracy sentiments and propaganda.

Further, she has strongly argued for increased oversight and accountability with regard to U.S. international broadcasting, recognizing the importance of our broadcasts being above reproach. In the course of my own investigations, I discovered VOA broadcasts to Iran that undermined U.S. policy and gave a platform for the propaganda of our enemies. U.S. broadcasts in Arabic have also given uninterrupted and unchallenged platforms to terrorists and other enemies of the U.S. and our allies. Blanquita Cullum was the only Governor to support my and my colleagues' calls for greater transparency and accountability in our broadcasts—an ongoing need that has yet to be adequately rectified.

In the Asian sphere, she resisted efforts by the BBG bureaucracy to reduce the agency's Tibetan broadcasts and made certain that broadcasts to Burma during its violent crackdown of pro-democracy advocates were not interrupted.

Long before it became a topic of urgency, Blanquita Cullum recognized the importance of cybersecurity and argued for increased vigilance on the part of the agency's technical component to take measures necessary to ensure that BBG broadcasts and Internet assets were protected against such threats.

Finally, it is a secret to no one that Blanquita Cullum has been a strong believer in the human component of the agency's operations. She has enjoyed an engaged relationship with the agency's employees and bristled over the agency's poor showing in the annual Human Capital Survey. An organization that cannot command the confidence of its staff is not likely to be fully engaged with the audiences it portends to serve.

One needs to look no further than Governor Blanquita Cullum as the model of unselfish public service in the National and Public Interest. She will be sorely missed by those at the BBG and in Congress who still believe in the original purpose of U.S. international broadcasting. The new Board of Governors will have a challenge ahead of them as they attempt to fill her shoes and continue her efforts to reform U.S. International Broadcasting.●

TRIBUTE TO LEANNE MEDEMA

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I join my colleague, Mr. RISCH, to honor an outstanding woman as she retires from everyday working life. Leanne Medema has spent close to 20 years working on behalf of Idaho's nuclear research industry, and she has been a terrific asset to local contractors as well as to the Idaho congressional delegation over the years.

Leanne came to Idaho from Illinois in the early 1990s and helped manage a complex and very public transition with one of the Idaho National Laboratory's facilities, INL, the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant. She has spent 30 years working to improve the working environment of the companies who have employed her. And she has succeeded admirably. She has a personable manner that makes everyone feel comfortable, and she has an unerring sense of how best to resolve conflicts and address other challenges.

Most recently, Leanne worked as the protocol officer at the INL, which was a terrific fit. She always handled herself well and dealt with tough situations without ever losing her poise.

INL's reputation has increased nationally and internationally, and Leanne's efforts have been essential to the process. She always goes above and beyond to make sure each visitor to INL feels like they are a special guest.

We have particularly appreciated Leanne's relationship with our own Senate offices. Her professionalism was always top notch, her knowledge of the INL is superb and her ability to communicate and work easily with others is among the finest we have seen. When schedules are tight and people were stressed, Leanne had the ability to rise above it all and navigate the pitfalls with style, grace and ease.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention Leanne and her family and their involvement in the local community. She was an active volunteer with the Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce serving as co-chair on the Legislative Committee and always did an outstanding job in each of her assignments.

As she nears retirement, we join many others in thanking her for her service to her community and the state of Idaho. She has done an outstanding job at the INL, one that will be hard for others to fill. We wish her the best in her retirement, knowing that she isn't one to stay still for long. Thank you, Leanne, and enjoy your future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR WILLIAM L. ROBINSON

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate William L. Robinson as he celebrates 28 years as pastor of First Baptist Church in North Little Rock. First Baptist is the oldest Black church in North Little Rock, and under Pastor Robinson's leadership, the congregation has thrived for nearly 30 years.

From a young age, Pastor Robinson knew his calling. At the age of 12, he was licensed by Dr. T. M. Chambers, then Pastor of Gaines Street Baptist Church in Little Rock. In 1977, at the age of 17, Pastor Robinson became an ordained minister.

An Arkansas native, Pastor Robinson graduated from historic Little Rock

Central High School and earned a bachelor of arts degree in social sciences from Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock. He is a graduate of Jackson Theological Seminary of Shorter College in North Little Rock.

Recognized as a pillar of the North Little Rock community, Pastor Robinson has been asked to serve in a variety of statewide commissions and leadership roles, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, the Board of Trustees of the William F. Laman Library Commission, and the Executive Board of the Union Rescue Mission and Salvation Army. Pastor Robinson is an Honorary Deputy Sheriff of Pulaski County and a Chaplain of the North Little Rock Police and Sheriff's Office.

Pastor Robinson has also been invited to take part in numerous inaugurations and official events in Arkansas and Washington, DC. He is the visionary of the recently reestablished "4" Church Fellowship and serves currently as president. This fellowship consists of local churches coming together to uplift our Savior and the community through quarterly worship services. Most recently, Pastor Robinson served as cochairman of the First Interfaith Christian Conference, "The Arkansas Gathering," featuring nationally known pastors and more than 100 local pastors and their churches for a 4-day retreat.

Pastor Robinson is also a local radio personality in his own right. For more than 26 years, he has promoted First Baptist's "Sunday Morning at The First," a 1 hour broadcast that airs Sunday evening at 5 p.m., reaching all four corners of Arkansas.

I salute Pastor Robinson and the work he does for North Little Rock and the entire state of Arkansas. Along with all Arkansans, I congratulate him for his years of service, and wish him all the best for the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. FRED BOURLAND

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate Arkansas Dr. Fred Bourland, who was recently named the International Cotton Researcher of the Year by the International Cotton Advisory Committee. Dr. Bourland is a cotton breeder and director of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Northeast Research and Extension Center in Keiser. Dr. Bourland won the award for his innovative cotton breeding achievements.

The Cotton Researcher of the Year award was started in 2009 to help raise awareness of the importance of research to the improvement of the cotton industry and to provide international recognition of exceptional achievements. Dr. Bourland will receive a trophy and \$1,000 prize.

I commend Dr. Bourland for his research, which benefits Arkansas's entire cotton farming community. Through his efforts, he represents the best of our Arkansas values: hard work, dedication, and perseverance. He also

inspires the next generation of Arkansas leaders as a member of the UA team.

As an Arkansas farmer's daughter, and as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I understand firsthand and appreciate the hard work and contributions of our Arkansas agriculture community. Agriculture is the backbone of Arkansas's economy, creating more than 270,000 jobs in the state and providing \$9.1 billion in wages and salaries. In total, agriculture contributes roughly \$15.9 billion to the Arkansas economy each year.

I salute Dr. Bourland and the entire Arkansas agriculture community for their hard work and dedication.●

ROGERS-LOWELL AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce for receiving a five star re-accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the highest accreditation a chamber can receive.

Of the 6,936 chambers in the United States, only 249 of are accredited. Of these, only 66 are accredited with five stars, roughly equal to 1 percent of chambers nationwide. Rogers-Lowell is the only five-star chamber in the State of Arkansas.

The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1922 and is one of the largest chambers in Arkansas. Under the leadership of President and CEO Raymond Burns, members are committed to growing business and building community. I commend Chairman Tom Spillyards, Accreditation Chair Greg Spragg, the Board of Directors, and the entire Chamber membership for their outstanding efforts to better their community.

Located in the center of the booming Northwest Arkansas region and the beautiful Arkansas Ozarks, the Rogers-Lowell area offers quality, growth and opportunity to residents and visitors alike. As one of the most dynamic communities in the region, Rogers and Lowell offer upscale, urban amenities, along with a slower pace, beautiful scenery, and endless outdoor recreational opportunities.

I salute the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce and the entire Rogers community for their efforts to build and grow their community. As my fellow Arkansans know, our state is a beautiful one, and I am proud to see the Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce receive this prestigious accreditation.●

RECOGNIZING THE ROGERS COMMUNITY

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate the residents of Rogers for being named in the "Top 10" list of U.S. small cities, as ranked by Money Magazine.

The community received this recognition for being one of the Nation's