

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL HAROLD FRITZ

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Lieutenant Colonel Harold Fritz of Peoria, Illinois, who is one of only three living Medal of Honor recipients in Illinois today. The Medal of Honor is our Nation's highest military honor and is awarded for personal acts of valor that go well above and beyond the call of duty.

Lieutenant Colonel Fritz, who went by "Hal," was born in Chicago and currently lives in Peoria. He was awarded the Medal of Honor due to his brave service in Vietnam.

During a jungle firefight, then First Lieutenant Fritz displayed exemplary leadership despite suffering serious wounds. Lieutenant Colonel Fritz was leading his 7-vehicle armored column to meet and escort a truck convoy when they suddenly came under intense fire from enemy combatants. Lieutenant Colonel Fritz' vehicle was hit, and he was seriously wounded. Realizing that his men were completely surrounded and outnumbered, Lieutenant Colonel Fritz leaped to the top of his burning vehicle and directed the positioning of his remaining vehicles and men.

Without thinking of his own safety, he ran from vehicle to vehicle in complete view of the enemy gunners in order to help his men. Armed only with a pistol and bayonet, he led a small group of his men in a charge which inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. Despite being wounded, Lieutenant Colonel Fritz assisted his men and refused medical attention until all of his wounded soldiers had been treated.

Lieutenant Colonel Fritz is currently the President of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and resides in Peoria. I wish him all the best and want to thank him again for his brave and dedicated service to our Nation.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC AND CRITICAL MINERALS PRODUCTION ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 761) to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to more efficiently develop domestic sources of the minerals and mineral materials of strategic and critical importance to United States economic and national security and manufacturing competitiveness:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the so-called "National Strategic and Critical Minerals Protection Act," a bill that has very little to do with development of rare earth elements or minerals that are vulnerable to supply disruption.

The bill before us today is so broadly drafted that it would reduce or eliminate environmental review for almost all type of mines on public land, including common materials like sand, clay, and gravel. It needlessly limits judicial review of mining activities. And it arbitrarily prioritizes mining over every other use of public lands, including hunting, fishing, grazing, and conservation.

If the majority would like to encourage production of truly strategic and critical minerals on public lands, we should work together on a targeted solution that develops our natural resources while protecting our environment. Today's bill is not that solution. I urge a no vote.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF KAISER PERMANENTE'S SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PHYSICIANS MEDICAL GROUP

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kaiser Permanente's Southern California Physicians Medical Group (SCPMG) on their 60th Anniversary. As a leading provider of health care services for more than 500,000 San Diegans this is truly an historic occasion for their organization. Since its modest beginnings in 1953, SCPMG has grown to become the nation's second largest private multi-specialty group practice. In 1967, Kaiser Permanente introduced the "integrated" model of healthcare to San Diego with the opening of its first hospital and medical center.

With over 1,100 SCPMG physicians in the San Diego service area, they provide care at two medical centers and 24 outpatient offices and annually see more than 2.9 million patients. They have established San Diego Medical Center as a premier destination for the treatment of strokes as well as having been certified a "baby-friendly" hospital. SCPMG sites also serve as academic institutions where SCPMG physicians help mentor Kaiser Foundation graduate medical residents and fellows.

SCPMG is helping to shape the future of health care in our nation through the use of advanced technology and the creation of innovative solutions that will have a lasting impact. I would like to commend SCPMG on their 60th Anniversary and thank them for their contributions to the community.

PROCLAIMING NATIONAL GEAR UP WEEK IN EL PASO, TX

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the week of September 23, 2013 as National GEAR UP Week at Socorro Independent School District and Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso, TX.

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federally funded, competitive grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP serves low-income, minority and disadvantaged students and their families from underserved communities who might be the first person in their family to go to college. The program provides multi-year grants to states to deliver resources to students and their families, starting in middle school and onward, to help them achieve their dreams of attaining a postsecondary education.

GEAR UP includes interventions such as tutoring, mentoring, rigorous academic preparation, financial education and college scholarships to improve access to higher education for low income, minority and disadvantaged first-generation students and their families. The program is built around public-private partnerships, enlisting resources from government, business and community groups to support low-income students as they prepare to enter and succeed in college.

The GEAR UP-SOAR (Solutions for Optimal Academic Readiness) and GEAR UP-Proyecto MAS is a partnership of the Socorro Independent School District, Ysleta Independent School District and the University of Texas at El Paso. Over 8,000 El Paso students have benefited from their participation in these GEAR UP Projects focused on college readiness.

The program helps the University of Texas at El Paso, Socorro Independent School District and Ysleta Independent School District fulfill their missions to provide a quality education for all students, helping them achieve their highest potential. I thank GEAR UP for increasing the number of low-income and minority El Paso students who are college ready, and helping these students enter and succeed in higher education.

CELEBRATING THE 70TH BIRTHDAY OF CLAUDIA TERENCIA NESBITT WALKER

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the birthday of Pastor Claudia Terencia Nesbitt Walker who turned 70

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

years old on September 2, 2013. Pastor Walker was born and raised on St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands to the late Mary Matilda Henry and Austin Nesbitt. In honor of Pastor Walker's 70th birthday, I acknowledge her many contributions to the island of St. Croix. Pastor Walker is a lifelong business woman, culture bearer and community religious leader.

As a young female entrepreneur, she opened and managed several businesses in Frederiksted, St. Croix including the Palm Gardens and West Haven restaurants and the Frederiksted Bookkeeping and Secretarial Services. Prior to opening her own business, she worked as an Office Manager for the largest woman-owned business on St. Croix—Abramson Enterprises.

Pastor Walker is one of the Virgin Islands foremost culture bearers having co-founded the St. Croix Heritage Dancers, Inc. in 1981 where she served as the quadrille dance group's first Treasurer. Pastor Walker was also Treasurer for the St. Croix Festival Committee for many years. A gifted alto, Pastor Walker was a leading member of the Frederiksted Moravian Church Choir.

Pastor Walker is a prominent member of the religious community on St. Croix. An ordained minister and Christian education teacher, she was a congregation member of the Holy Ghost Deliverance Ministries where she was ordained in 1990. She was also ordained into the Ministerial Fellowship of the World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio. Pastor Walker is the Founder and Pastor of the Gospel Tent Ministries and an associate member of the International Third World Leaders Association. She has served as the Territorial Representative for Morris Cerullo World Evangelism and their Global Satellite Network. Pastor Walker was Treasurer for the St. Croix Ministerial Association and also served as President for the Frederiksted Moravian Church Women's Fellowship. She is the author of the acclaimed study manual entitled *Forgiven and Forgiving: Your Doorway to Freedom*.

Claudia Walker was a prominent Virgin Islands public servant. She was office manager for several Virgin Islands Senators including Senator Cleone Creque Maynard, Senator Douglas Canton, Senator Edgar Isles, Senator Luz James and Senator Alicia Hansen. Pastor Walker also served the Virgin Islands government for many years as Business Manager at the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs.

She lovingly raised a family of three children, and has four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Pastor Walker on this milestone. I thank her for her many contributions to the island of St. Croix and the U.S. Virgin Islands and I join her friends and family in celebration as we pay tribute to her on her 70th birthday. Pastor Claudia Walker is the very best St. Croix and the U.S. Virgin Islands has to offer, and I wish her good health and continued happiness.

SEEKING A VIABLE U.N. PATH
FORWARD ON SYRIA

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer for the record and the benefit of my col-

leagues a recent op-ed in the Huffington Post by international affairs expert Jeffrey Laurenti. It outlines a sound broader approach to bringing the tragic civil war in Syria to an end. Although some of the circumstances have changed since he wrote this piece, the wisdom of his analysis and recommendation still shows.

[From the Huffington Post, Sept. 12, 2013]
SEEKING A VIABLE U.N. PATH FORWARD ON
SYRIA

(By Jeffrey Laurenti)

Public consternation in the United States and abroad about President Obama's planned "targeted, limited, and effective" punitive strike against Syria confirms the wisdom of his overall approach to the Syrian crisis the past two years.

In facing down the caws from Washington hawks for arming rebels, bombing missile sites, and trying to impose no-fly zone, Obama has gauged perfectly what Americans—and the world—expected of him: restraint. As he acknowledged last week, "I was elected to end wars, not start them."

The apparent large-scale use of chemical weapons by the forces of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad certainly adds a new factor to the calculus, both for Obama's personal credibility and international concerns about weapons of mass destruction. It may be enough to sway a critical margin in the Congress to let the president proceed with his planned strike, which we would have to hope might accomplish its objective without widening the war.

But there is a good chance the public and Congress will remain immovable and reject any kind of military involvement in Syria. With the prudent counsel that St. Luke (14:32) recorded for political leaders facing possible defeat, the president's team should already be working now on Plan B: an ambitious effort to shut down the Syrian civil war altogether.

Perhaps the administration conceives air strikes as the lever to push the Syrian resistance to the long-promised negotiating table with Assad's government. That might be a plausible strategy for wresting peace from the jaws of wider war. But even if this is the game plan, the administration should be laying the groundwork now for the diplomatic dénouement to come—which might even help it on Capitol Hill—in the U.N. Security Council.

Ah, the United Nations. The institution whose resolutions—and, by extension, whose Charter restrictions on the use of force—Obama seemed to dismiss last week as "hocus pocus," delighting his right-wing enemies and shocking the political support base at home that won him his party's nomination and the many publics abroad that had cheered his election.

(Those most shocked presumably include the Nobel Committee that awarded him its Peace Prize in 2009 for having "created a new climate in international politics . . . with emphasis on the role that the United Nations and other international institutions can play," with "dialogue and negotiations . . . preferred as instruments for resolving even the most difficult international conflicts.")

Ambassador Samantha Power, a committed multilateralist now representing America at the United Nations, last week declared, "there is no viable path forward in this Security Council." If the path we want the Security Council to travel is authorizing a U.S. military strike against Syrian government forces for the grotesque use of chemical weapons, she is likely right that Russia and China would vote no.

But even so, simply securing a nine-vote council majority would itself indicate to the

Congress and American people that the red line that U.S. action would be upholding is the world's, not just Obama's. And it would justify a General Assembly call for limited military action, giving the gold-standard international legitimacy when discord paralyzes the Security Council.

Perhaps those votes are just not there. President Bush abandoned the effort to win a Security Council majority for his planned invasion of Iraq when he couldn't get more than four votes. But that was surely the canary in the mineshaft in 2003, warning against what proved to be a disastrous war.

There is another viable path that the United States could usefully pursue right now, taking advantage of both the shock of the Ghouta gas attack and the fears of a U.S. strike's unintended consequences. It could take a page from the Security Council's first successful initiative as the Cold War wound down: its Resolution 598 that forced an end to the Iran-Iraq war (in which, coincidentally, Iraqi gas attacks against Iranians also figured).

These might be core elements of such an initiative:

A demand for an immediate ceasefire by all forces in Syria—the government and the various insurgent factions—with a short deadline for compliance;

Imposition of full-spectrum sanctions, especially on arms, on any party that refuses to comply with the cease-fire;

A summons to the Damascus authorities, the Syrian National Council, and other relevant parties to attend the much-postponed Kerry-Lavrov-Brahimi peace conference, to be convened within 30 days, and to negotiate in good faith;

Dispatch of a capably sized United Nations ceasefire monitoring force to oversee the ceasefire, investigate and report violations, and protect U.N. weapons inspectors;

Establishment of a U.N. commission of inquiry to determine responsibility for the Ghouta attack and any other reported chemical weapons use, with a demand that the government and, in rebel-dominated territory, insurgent groups permit full, unfettered access for U.N. weapons inspectors to undertake their investigation of sites of alleged attacks—much as Resolution 598 created a commission to certify officially who had started the Iran-Iraq war (surprise conclusion: Saddam);

Referral of the commission's findings of responsibility for chemical weapons use to the International Criminal Court, or less ideally an internationally vetted Syrian tribunal, for criminal prosecution;

A demand that Syria declare to U.N. inspectors its chemical weapons stocks for their provisional surveillance;

A reaffirmation of the need to kick-start the delayed conference on elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East that was promised at the 2010 nuclear nonproliferation treaty review conference.

It does not help President Obama's global credibility for Washington to appear to disdain the U.N. inspectors' pending report—especially when his one Western partner, France, now insists on waiting for it. And it is certainly awkward for the president to hold the moral high ground when the pope is leading prayer vigils and writing to world leaders decrying the planned attack.

It may be that the world community places a thicker red line on unilateral use of force than on punishing poison gas. All the more reason for having Plan B in place to pick up the pieces.