

that focused on funding our government, instead we had to vote on a bill that contained numerous giveaways to private interests and that is why I voted “no.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT HURT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 12, 2014

Mr. HURT. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for Roll Call vote #564, a recorded vote on H.R. 5699. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 12, 2014

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 564 had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

HON. STEVE STOCKMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 12, 2014

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss today a very important and serious issue that is seemingly taking hold within our nation and that is an “assault on our freedom of the press”. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit a recent article in Roll Call entitled “Congress: Support Higher Level of Press Freedoms, End Propaganda”. In particular, the article opines “that administration officials have gone to great lengths to control media messages and the President’s refusal to grant free and easy access for photographers and reporters”. Mr. Speaker, clearly, restricting or controlling media messages is without a doubt—propaganda.

[From Roll Call, Dec. 10, 2014]

CONGRESS: SUPPORT HIGHER LEVEL OF PRESS FREEDOMS, END PROPAGANDA—COMMENTARY
(By Maayan Jaffe)

It seems that recently, U.S. media took a turn for the worse. In 2013, Reporters Without Borders noted a profound erosion of press freedom, which included a year of attacks on whistleblowers and digital journalists, and revelations about mass surveillance. The U.S. plunged 13 spots on the group’s rankings to No. 46.

Simultaneously, reports continue to surface that administration officials have gone to great lengths to control media messages. Associated Press editors have decried the president’s refusal to grant free and easy access for photographers and reporters and equated his actions as tantamount to propaganda.

It’s striking that with what the Obama administration is doing—and is only getting away with it because the media use the handout copy and photographs—that America’s closest allies are regularly maligned. In the last month, for instance, it was reported with sensation and disdain that a top U.S. of-

ficial referred to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as “chicken-” and that U.S. ally Azerbaijan, apparently, is trying to promote its relationship with the U.S., instead of supporting radicals around the world like some others.

All this, while arch enemies—or countries that pose a risk to national security, sponsors of the murderous ISIS to the Mullahs of Iran—are given a free ride . . . even by state-sponsored media. The Washington Free Beacon reported that Congress was calling for an investigation into Voice of America’s Persian language news service as a result of the station’s systemic pro-Iran bias and cozy ties to the anti-American ruling regime, according to a letter sent recently to Secretary of State John Kerry.

The Free Beacon wrote, “Lawmakers and Iranian dissidents have long accused VOA’s Persian News Network (PNN) of producing sympathetic coverage of the Iranian regime and blacklisting prominent Iranian opposition voices . . . The call from Congress for an investigation into these alleged practices comes just a month after the Washington Free Beacon revealed that PNN had banned a prominent Iranian opposition member and placed him on a so-called ‘black list’ after he attacked Iran’s ruling regime for sponsoring terrorism.”

Earlier this year, I penned a piece in Roll Call about the tragedy of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s bias against Azerbaijan. I asked Congress why it allows \$750 million of American taxpayers’ money to fund a media outlet that is attacking our allies. That report—which found that in a one-month period RFE/RL had managed to publish 30 articles and videos about Azerbaijan (not one celebrating Azerbaijan’s accomplishments), while it ran nothing of pressure against America’s adversary, Armenia—was met with an explosion of Twitter fury.

Americans don’t want to face up to what the media has become: a propaganda machine, pandering to the special interests, superficial stereotypes, personal agendas and money, and fear of reprisal by extremist regimes.

Azerbaijan and Israel are attacked not only because attacks sell, but because they are two of the few Middle Eastern/Muslim countries with pro-Western, anti-terrorist governments and societies and therefore journalists are less afraid to come out against them. Israel is accused of war crimes for protecting itself from a daily barrage of rocket attacks and trauma, while the world is silent to Egyptian action recently taken against Gaza, a country which clearly understands the difference between Palestinian civilians and the terrorists of Hamas.

Israel and Azerbaijan take this pressure because the alternative is siding with extremism and neither country is willing to compromise their democratic, open ideals. But Congress needs to pay attention to this growing trend because good friends can only take so much bullying.

Israel and Azerbaijan—or any U.S. ally—are not without challenges and growth opportunities. Iran is a rogue regime developing nuclear weapons that could shift the world’s balance, and we are supporting a media outlet that panders to that regime. The media, with the support of Congress, needs to be bold about what is really happening on the ground. A truthful report here and there is not enough. We need to regain a top level of freedom of the press and be confident that if we tell the full truth, then truth will prevail.

Congress has an obligation to retain American freedom of the press. I hope this new Congress will see access to information as a fundamental freedom and strength. If we lose that right, I don’t want to think about what will be next . . .

IN MEMORY OF GERALD “JERRY” HOGAN

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 12, 2014

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the memory of Gerald Hogan, who passed earlier this week at his home in McLean, Virginia. Jerry, as everyone called him, was a longtime outstanding advocate for the telecommunications industry, most recently with AT&T. Jerry is very well known throughout this Chamber and many of us regarded him as a close personal friend.

Jerry was always interested in you as a person and would ask about your family. He genuinely cared and would remember what you told him. If he learned it was your birthday, you could expect a phone call the next year. If you recounted a tale of your child, he would offer tips from a lifetime of parenting his children. Humble, generous, genuine, caring, funny and smart. . . . Jerry was all of these to his broad range of friends.

Jerry will be sorely missed for so many wonderful personal attributes, not least of which was his love for his children and their endeavors. The last few years Jerry and I had a fun gentleman’s bet as his youngest son played against my beloved Oregon Ducks. On a few big occasions my Ducks came out on the losing side of the contest but Jerry, always the funny and classy act, would see me with a twinkle in his eye and deliver some well-deserved ribbing. Our business meetings in the past were never quick as we’d joyfully spend the first portion of our time swapping stories about all of Jerry’s children and family and mine too before we’d get down to the official business matters. I will really miss all of my interactions with Jerry.

I am very privileged to have known Jerry and will always remember him very fondly. On behalf of many of my colleagues and my staff I want to let Jerry’s dear friends and family—especially his wife Donna, his two sons, Brian and Kevin, and his daughter, Kelly—know that all who knew Jerry always felt that he brought high respect and honor to his work. Our prayers are with you during this time of sadness, and may the luck of the Irish be with you always.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have asked me to include their following comments.

Congressman FRED UPTON said: “My condolences go out to Jerry’s wife, Donna, and their wonderful children. We will miss Jerry’s bright smile, wit, and warmth. Jerry was one who, virtually every minute of his all too short life, truly lived the words of the poem ‘I shall not pass this way again.’ ‘I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.’ Thanks for all the love and laughs, Jerry. Godspeed.”

Congressman F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr. said: “The world will be a little less full now that Jerry Hogan is no longer a part of it. Jerry was a truly wonderful person and I was blessed to call him a friend. I wish his wife Donna and his children the very best during this difficult time.”

Congressman TOM MARINO said: "I am deeply saddened by the loss of Jerry Hogan. He was a close friend and trusted advisor and we all feel the void of his passing. My condolences go out to his friends and family during this time of sadness."

Congressman PETER KING said: "Jerry put up a terrific fight against his illness over the past four years and exemplified the term Fighting Irish. I admired his dedication and loyalty and will miss my good friend."

Former Congressman Dan Lungren said: "Jerry was a great friend and a special person. Even during his time of need, fighting his own battle, he heard of a challenge that a member of my family was once again taking on and he informed me that he awoke that morning at 4 AM and said the Rosary in her honor. That is how he lived his life thinking of others and giving to others to the very end. God Bless you Jerry and God Bless your wonderful family during this sad time."

HONORING FRAN ROEHM

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 12, 2014

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Frances "Fran" Roehm, a librarian extraordinaire at the Skokie Public Library in my district who is retiring after 18 years of remarkable service to our community.

Fran graduated from the University of Illinois and received a Bachelor's degree in History. As a single mom, she was awarded a scholarship from the then Secretary of State Jim Edgar. This scholarship allowed Fran to return to school and earn her Master's Degree in Library of Sciences, also from the University of Illinois.

Fran Roehm has worked as the Skokie Net Librarian and Community Liaison with distinction and has guided consumers to resources in the community. Fran is a leader in the library community who works hard to bring the best resources to patrons at the Skokie Public Library. She shines a bright light on our community and the rich resources available at the Skokie Library. Her compassion and leadership inspire the people around her to advocate for others.

She was nominated by State Senate President John Cullerton to serve on the "Eliminate the Digital Divide Committee" and has proudly served on that committee, which distributed \$4,000,000 in grants to organizations that serve low-income populations. This important grant program seeks to provide access to computers, telecommunications technologies and related training to disadvantaged communities—a major interest of Fran.

Fran also offered a wonderful form of outreach to my office. She realized that the library would be a perfect location for neighborhood office hours and from there, we began bringing our constituent services to the Skokie Library in the evenings, once a month, for constituents who cannot meet with our staff during the day for help. This service also allows the public to become more civically engaged. In addition, Fran helped make our annual Artistic Discovery high school art event, which we hold every year at the Skokie library, an extremely successful and welcoming event.

Fran is masterful at putting resources and people together. She has been a great advocate and ally to our office.

Fran is the proud mother of son, Christopher, who lives in California and a proud grandmother to 5-year-old Twyla. Fran is a warm, kind, generous person who has touched and enriched countless lives.

I join others in the Skokie area and in Illinois in offering my deep gratitude and appreciation of Fran's decades of work and lifelong commitment to providing equal access to community resources. Although she is leaving the Skokie Library, she will remain a leader in our community advocating for the underserved. I wish her well and ask this body to do the same.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

HON. STEVE STOCKMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 12, 2014

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss today an issue that continues to haunt ethnic and religious minorities throughout our world and in particular, a rise in anti-Semitism and ethnic cleansing in Armenia. Mr. Speaker, in other words, Armenia, throughout its history continues to practice anti-Semitism and ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani minority. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit an article written by Arye Gut, a board member of the Israeli-Azerbaijani International Organization entitled "Anti-Semitism in Armenia: A Clear and Present Danger". Mr. Gut clearly articulates the issues of anti-Semitism and ethnic cleansing in Armenia.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARMENIA: A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

(By Arye Gut/JNS.org)

The conflict in Syria has forced millions to leave their homes, among them many of the country's Armenian minority. Many have fled and returned to Armenia, a safe haven for ethnic Armenians—much as Israel is for Jews around the world. So it is ironic, given this shared need for a homeland free of religious intolerance, that Armenia's own Jewish community has been pressured and intimidated since the country attained independence.

Anti-Semitism in Armenia is an unfortunate and little-acknowledged fact. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the country's Jewish minority and Jewish heritage—the products of a more tolerant time—have shrunk dramatically. The end of Soviet rule removed constraint, and anti-Semitic attacks rose dramatically. That, and Armenia's ongoing economic collapse, drive the Jews of Armenia to flee the country. In just 20 years, Armenian Jewish population has shrunk from more than 5,000 to just a few hundred.

And the cultural violence has continued. Anti-Semitic books are published and TV programs aired, and the Holocaust memorial in the capital of Yerevan has been repeatedly defaced. Of course, many countries have suffered such unfortunate incidents, the product of an ignorant populace. But in Armenia such views have been espoused even by mainstream politicians and media personalities. In 2004, a pro-government radio presenter expressed anti-Semitic views for months on end. A nationalist politician was also allowed to freely make lurid slurs against Jews before public pressure forced the government to arrest him.

The dwindling Jewish community in Armenia has complained about these attacks—the head of the Jewish community expressed her concern that "this [anti-Semitism] has the backing of people in power." But appeals have fallen on deaf ears, which is hardly a surprise when such attitudes are shared by much of Armenian society. The Anti-Defamation League's latest survey in June 2014 showed that the rate of anti-Semitism in Armenia (at 58 percent) was the third-highest in all of Europe, and the highest in all of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Thus, around 1.3 million out of 2.2 million adults in Armenia expressed anti-Semitic attitudes. Armenia's closest comparisons were with virulently hostile countries in the Middle East.

Sixty-three percent of Armenians surveyed believe that Jews are hated "because of the way Jews behave;" 60 percent claimed that "Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind;" 45 percent think that "Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust;" and 38 percent consider that "Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars."

Also disturbing, and of concern to Jews around the world, is that in 1988 some 49,928 families (250,000 Azerbaijanis) were forced to flee their places of origin in 172 Azerbaijani inhabited villages, 89 villages with mixed ethnic population, and six cities from Armenia. During the deportation, 226 Azerbaijanis were killed by Armenians and scores horrifically injured. Their houses and properties were burned as well.

The Khojaly massacre, committed by current Armenian leadership with incredible brutality, was one of the worst tragedies of the 20th century. It is a historical fact that the Armenian armed forces and gunmen spared none of the Khojaly residents, who had not managed to leave the city and its surroundings. As a result of the atrocities of the Armenian armed forces, 613 people were killed, 487 people were crippled, and 1,275 people—the elderly, children, and women who were captured—were subjected to unprecedented torture, abuse, and humiliation.

In addition, Armenia, the aggressor, illegally occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts. This caused a refugee crisis numbering nearly 1 million innocent Azerbaijanis, as they attempted to ethnically cleanse the region. Today, this remains a threat to peace and security in the South Caucasus region. Encouraged by intense Armenian lobbying efforts in the U.S. and other key nations, as well as by strong and ongoing Russian military, economic, and political aid, Armenia has ignored four United Nations Security Council resolutions associated with the occupation of Azerbaijani lands and treatment of civilians.

Perhaps this is not so surprising considering that one of Armenia's closest allies is theocratic Iran, which has always opposed Israel's right to existence. This strange relationship has been very beneficial for Iran, which has used Armenia as a conduit for smuggling and other illicit activities, often with serious consequences for U.S. national security.

The last point also has unnerving overtones for Armenia's Jewish community, which has never forgotten the participation of the brutal 20,000-strong Armenian Legion as part of Wehrmacht in the Second World War. The Legion, led by the nationalist warlord known as General Dro, was tasked with rounding up Jews and other "undesirables" behind the German army as it swept across Russia, and organized their death marches to the concentration camps.

In such an environment, it is hardly surprising that most of Armenia's Jewish population has either fled or intermarried to