

never forget the tragedy that took place at Khojaly.

At the time, the Khojaly tragedy was widely documented by the international media, including the Boston Globe, Washington Post, New York Times, Financial Times, and many other European and Russian news agencies.

Khojaly, a town in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, now under the control of Armenian forces, was the site of the largest killing of ethnic Azerbaijani civilians. With a population of approximately 7,000, Khojaly was one of the largest urban settlements of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

According to Human Rights Watch and other international observers the massacre was committed by the ethnic Armenian armed forces, reportedly with the help of the Russian 366th Motor Rifle Regiment. Human Rights Watch described the Khojaly Massacre as “the largest massacre to date in the conflict” over Nagorno-Karabakh. In a 1993 report, the watchdog group stated “there are no exact figures for the number of Azeri civilians killed because Karabakh Armenian forces gained control of the area after the massacre” and “while it is widely accepted that 200 Azeris were murdered, as many as 500–1,000 may have died.”

Azerbaijan has been a strong strategic partner and friend of the United States. The tragedy of Khojaly was a crime against humanity and I urge my colleagues to join me in standing with Azerbaijanis as they commemorate this tragedy.

RECOGNIZING PAUL TAIT

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Paul Tait on the occasion of his retirement from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) after 42 years of dedicated service.

Paul attained his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Michigan. He came to SEMCOG in 1972, and was named Executive Director of that organization in 1998. Under Paul's leadership, SEMCOG has used data and information to help make decisions resulting in literally billions of dollars in road, transit, and water infrastructure investment.

As important as data and information are to regional planning, local government actions are also critical. Paul recognized this and worked to give all communities—large and small—a voice in the process.

In a speech at the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference in 1957, President Eisenhower, who of course had served as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, made this remarkable assertion: “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” He went on to say that while there are indeed some immutable truths, most of what we confront in our daily lives changes over time. President Eisenhower's basic point was that we shouldn't put too much faith in static plans, but rather invest in planning that assumes that conditions will change.

Eisenhower's admonition is relevant because, for more than four decades, SEMCOG

has been the regional planning partnership in Southeast Michigan. Over that time, our area has seen an astonishing amount of change. SEMCOG's task has been to recognize the changing circumstances and needs in our area—whether it's land use, transportation, air quality, water infrastructure, or economic development—and help our communities shape a regional public policy that is responsive and dynamic. Paul has played a key role in SEMCOG's work and effectiveness.

Among his many other accomplishments, Paul is the devoted husband of Chris. They have four children and six grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Paul Tait for his leadership at SEMCOG and his commitment to the citizens of Southeast Michigan.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$17,444,385,246,890.50. We've added \$6,817,508,197,977.42 to our debt in 5 years. This is over \$6.8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, I chaired a subcommittee hearing on U.S. policy toward Sudan and South Sudan. The hearing was very important, and not only because the United States Government has been involved in Sudan and its various crises for the past three decades. Many of us first became interested in Sudan in the 1980s because of the persistent reports of modern-day slavery, in which northern Arabs enslaved African southerners. My office helped to bring one of these unfortunate people to America for medical treatment after he was freed, and his story affected me deeply.

Ker Deng had been kidnapped into slavery while still a child, and while he was an adolescent, the man who held him in bondage rubbed peppers in his eyes, blinded him and later abandoned him. Ker is studying here in the United States thanks to his benefactor, Ellen Ratner, and is awaiting a second operation to help him recover at least some of his eyesight. How many other Sudanese will never have that opportunity or even achieve their freedom? For example, Ker's mother has never been freed from bondage.

We began supporting southern Sudanese efforts to end the oppression from the North in the mid-1990s. In 2005, we helped both North and South achieve the Comprehensive Peace

Agreement, CPA, to end the long civil war and provide the steps for a mutually beneficial peace and productive coexistence. Unfortunately, the rebellion in the Darfur region distracted from efforts to fulfill that agreement.

Khartoum's alliance with the Janjaweed Arabs resulted in mass killings and displacement in Darfur. An estimated 1.9 million people were displaced, more than 240,000 people were forced into neighboring Chad, and an estimated 450,000 people were killed. At the time, Congress insisted that this was genocide. Eventually, the Bush administration concurred, but the United Nations declined to go so far in their terminology, calling what happened in Darfur “crimes against humanity.”

A peace agreement between the main rebel force in Darfur and the Government of Sudan was signed in May 2006, but it did not last. In fact, no sustained agreement has been reached between the government and Darfur rebel groups—partly because these groups have continued to split and form offshoots, but also because the Khartoum government has not appeared willing to resolve the Darfur situation constructively. In June 2005, the International Criminal Court initiated an investigation that resulted in arrest warrants for Sudan President Omar al-Bashir and three other government officials and militia leaders. None of these warrants has been served, none of the four have been taken into custody and the Government of Sudan has refused to cooperate with the ICC.

Meanwhile, the CPA remained unimplemented. In January 2011, South Sudan, which had been a semiautonomous region of the country since the signing of the CPA, voted in a referendum on whether to remain part of Sudan or become independent. Having been marginalized and mistreated for decades, it was not surprising that southern Sudanese voted overwhelmingly—at the level of 98.8 percent—to become an independent nation. On July 9, 2011, South Sudan became the world's newest nation. However, these unimplemented elements of the CPA would bedevil the new country from its birth.

A referendum in the disputed Abyei region and consultations on the status of Sudan's Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states were never completed. In May 2011, Sudanese armed forces assumed control of towns in Abyei, quickly forcing at least 40,000 residents to flee. Within weeks, fighting spread to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, as Khartoum sought to crush the Sudan People's Liberation Army—North, which had fought with southerners in the North-South civil war. Northern attacks on residents in those three areas continue unabated.

Last year, Sudan and South Sudan engaged in a conflict over oil supplies from the South, involving allegations that Khartoum was undercounting the level of oil flow to cheat South Sudan, as well as the southern seizure of the oil town of Heglig. Again, this dispute was largely the result of unresolved issues from the CPA.

South Sudan continues to be engaged in a conflict that began last December, despite a cessation of hostilities agreement. Thousands have been killed and tens of thousands have been displaced. Exact figures are constantly shifting because this conflict continues. I will soon introduce a resolution offering a sequenced approach to reaching a lasting resolution to this newest crisis. This conflict also

is the result of too little attention paid to the warning signs because of preoccupation with one of the many crises in the two Sudans.

Over the last three decades, I and other committee and subcommittee chairs have held numerous hearings on Sudan—from the North-South civil war to the Darfur conflict to the fighting in Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile to the current conflict in South Sudan. All this attention is more than justified, but our approach to addressing them has been intermittent. Too often, each crisis is seen as a problem unto itself, unrelated to other issues in these two countries.

In fact, successive administrations and Congresses, advocacy groups and humanitarian organizations have focused so much on individual crises and issues that no one has created a panoramic view which shows how all these individual crises interrelate with each other. This “stovepiping” of government policy and public attention has meant that long-term solutions have been neglected while short-term eruptions have had to be dealt with. In reality, the two Sudans are inexorably linked and no crisis in either can be resolved successfully without taking into account the entire Sudan-South Sudan panorama.

We must end this cycle of myopic policy formulation based on the crisis of the moment and adopt a long-term, holistic vision of what the best interest of the people of Sudan and South Sudan demands—indeed, what would be in the best interest of the entire region.

As we learned in our subcommittee hearing on the Sahel crisis last May, Islamic extremists have their sights set on making inroads wherever there is conflict, across the belt of Central Africa stretching from Senegal to Sudan and beyond. Continuing unrest in the two Sudans only serves to provide training grounds or bases of operation for terrorists. Hardened ethnic conflict can spread to long-term enmity that no peace agreement alone can resolve. Hopefully, this will not be the case in South Sudan, but that conflict is headed in that ominous direction.

Two years ago, I held a meeting in my office with representatives from Sudan’s Nubian, Darfuri, Beja and Nuba communities, who all believe that Khartoum is engaged in a long-term effort to exterminate non-Arab Sudanese. Have we missed such a pernicious campaign while hopping from one crisis to another as each appeared?

The purpose of last week’s hearing was to examine current U.S. policy toward Sudan and South Sudan to see how we can unify our policy in order to more effectively end long-running tragedies that appear get worse despite all the busy attention to which we pay them. This involves more than what the Department of State and other executive agencies do, or even what support Congress can provide. Advocacy and humanitarian organizations also must join government in seeing the forest and not just the trees, so to speak.

We must develop, support and implement policies toward Sudan and South Sudan that make sense in the long term and not just produce temporarily satisfying peace accords that have no sustainability. Peace and prosperity for both countries are linked, and we must act accordingly. The hearing, we hope, will serve to highlight what must be done.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge all of my colleagues to pass H.R. 3370, the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act.

If this bill passes we will keep middle class families in their homes, bring relief to our local economy and provide needed reliability to middle class friends and neighbors.

Since November 2013, I have urged action on flood insurance on every bill that moved through the Rules Committee to the floor of the U.S. House.

Families who were facing massive flood insurance premium increases will now be able to breathe easier. The reforms will help ensure that flood insurance will be there in times of disaster.

This legislation allows individuals purchasing covered homes to also assume the predetermined rates and restores grandfathered properties under prior law so that owners would pay rates applicable to the original flood risk.

We have learned that we must keep a close eye on FEMA and flood maps and this legislation gives us more tools to do so. I credit the outcry many of our neighbors, realtors, chambers of commerce and others who helped focus the pressure on the Republican leaders in Congress to act.

This has been an anxious time for homeowners, but the immense pressure by families and the business community on the House GOP was an effort that paid off. This Congress has an unfortunate reputation for not addressing the challenges that middle class families face. Today, we can come together to do just that.

I thank my Florida colleagues who worked in a bipartisan manner to bring relief to more than two million National Flood Insurance Program policyholders in our state and I urge a “yes” vote on the bill.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

HON. JASON T. SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th Anniversary of the National Cooperative Extension Service. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created this educational partnership which began between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the nation’s land-grant universities. The Cooperative Extension Service grants state universities funds to produce significant research which is available for the use of the public across the nation. In addition, research based education programs have improved the lives of many through the advancements made in farming, business, health services, and emergency management.

In the Show-Me State, the Missouri Extension Services have been fundamental to com-

munity development. Nearly seventy percent of Missouri’s taxpayer funded research is produced by the land grant universities. This information is used to enhance vital industries like agriculture, business, and healthcare. The state of Missouri has benefitted immensely through the active role of the Extension programs which equip our communities with vital information and educational programs.

For the advances made possible in Missouri and across the nation by the Cooperative Extension Service, it is my pleasure to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the National Cooperative Extensions in the House of Representatives.

UNITED STATES-ISRAEL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, anyone who turns on the news for even a few minutes will see our good friend Israel in a region of chaos and unrest.

War in Syria—with refugees pouring into Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Violence in Iraq. Upheaval in Egypt. And of course, the threat of nuclear advancement in Iran.

And yet, Israel remains a strong, stable, and reliable ally.

More than ever, we must do all we can to strengthen our critical relationship.

H.R. 938, the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2013, will do just that.

It designates Israel as a “major strategic partner” and increases our mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas of energy, science, water, agriculture, alternative fuel technologies, and homeland security.

At a time of deep political division in Congress, this bill has across the board support, with 351 cosponsors, a reflection that our alliance with Israel is rooted in shared national interests, common values of democracy and freedom, and a recognition that the same forces threatening Israel also threaten the United States.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 938.

NAGORNO KARABAKH ANTONOMOUS REGION OF AZERBAIJAN

HON. JUDY CHU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, twenty-six years ago, the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan petitioned to become part of Armenia. Their desire to determine their own future was met with brutal force and violence that was tragically reminiscent to events preceding the Armenian Genocide.

For the next two years, the Armenian population was the target of racially motivated pogroms. Hundreds were murdered, many more were wounded, and the Armenian community still grapples with the scars from the horrific attacks in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku.