EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMEMORATING YOM HASHOAH

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 1996

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, we will all gather in the majestic setting of the Capitol rotunda to carry out our solemn annual obligation to commemorate Yom HaShoah—Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The length of time to pass since the Holocaust is now more than half a century, and it is even more incumbent upon us to ensure that the lessons and legacies of this dark period in history are never forgotten. As the Holocaust survivors themselves grow older and pass away, we must ensure that the phrase ''zachor''—remember—does not become a mere slogan. Preventing such a catastrophe from ever occurring again is only possible if we continue to pass on the memories of the Nazi era to our children.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was privileged to attend the Annual Holocaust Commemoration in New York City. This ceremony, which took place at the beautiful Temple Emanu-El in my district, included a stirring speech by Benjamin Meed, the president of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization. As he does each year, my friend Ben Meed delivered a moving tribute to those who perished and those who survived. I commend Ben's remarks to my colleagues.

AN ADDRESS BY BENJAMIN MEED, PRESIDENT, WARSAW GHETTO RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION, 53D ANNUAL COMMEMORATION OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

We are together again—the entire Jewish people, men, women, and children, to commemorate the murder of the Jewish people by the Germans and their collaborators. They made no distinctions among Jewish people at the gates of hell. Together we were all pushed to the gas chambers. For one reason only—we were born as Jews.

This commemoration, which I have the honor to chair for the 35th year, is deeply emotional for me as it is for many of you. For many years, the survivors alone remembered. We kept reliving our nightmares in the hope that the world would pay attention to our past, and now, the world has heard our story.

People have started to understand that what happened was real. When we testified collectively, the world began to take our tragic experience seriously—and to heed our warning.

Or perhaps it is because all humanity is frightened that the tragic, unique lesson that we Jews experienced, can happen again—this time on a cosmic scale—to all people. And it is all because survivors kept faith with the final command imparted to us by the Kedoshiml Zachor—Gedenk—Remember.

We accepted that obligation and took it with us to our adopted homes throughout the world. In Israel or Argentina—in Sweden or France—throughout the United States and Canada—survivors remember. How can we forget? How can we allow others to forget? How betrayed and isolated we were by the high and the mighty—and the ordinary people. The so called ordinary people were not so ordinary. Many highly educated were nevertheless motivated to murder us.

Immediately after the Holocaust they said they did not know. How could they not have known? On the cattle cars to Auschwitz and Treblinka—throughout Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary on the way to death—we criss-crossed all of Europe—day after day after day—screaming for help in Yiddish and Polish, Greek and German, Dutch and Flemish, Russian, and French. But the world would not listen as we were herded together from the four corners of Nazi Europe to be murdered—only because we were Jews.

We Jews now speak other languages. And on Yam Hashoah we gather from every part of the world—to remember together. And Jews are united—not by death—but by memory and by a love of Israel. To us survivors, the State of Israel is not only a political entity. It is a homeland—a realized dream—a bright beacon of light in a world desperate for hope.

And yet we are still afraid—but it is a different fear. Those who were fortunate enough not to have experienced the Holocaust do not and cannot understand how we survivors feel when we see how our tragic past is remembered by others. We are deeply hurt when we see the way the Holocaust is portrayed as only dead bodies—piles and piles of corpses and mass graves. We survivors shudder, for in a way we fear that Hitler succeeded because the world is not aware of the vibrant Jewish life that was before the Holocaust—or of the cultural heritage of 1,000 years of Jewish history in Europe. It does not hear the songs of the shtetl, the theme of Warsaw, the Yeshivot of Vilna, the Hasidim of Belz, or the poets of Lodz and Krakow.

All it recognizes is death. Yet we remember the life that was destroyed—the world that is no longer. The world of Yiddishkeit and Menchlichkeit.

We are still asking the questions—how did it happen? Who failed? What failed? But these questions should not distract our attention from the real murderers—the Germans and their collaborators—or from the profound failure of world leaders and church leaders. Their silence has yet to be judged by history.

And we think not only of the past but also of the future. To you—our children assembled here, we would like to entrust our memories—as part of our last will and testament. You are the last generation to be blessed with the memories of the survivors—the living witnesses to the kingdom of night. This is your heritage, which we are transmitting to you. You must know your roots. You must remember that your very birth was testimony of the triumph of hope over despair—of dreams over pain. You are our response to those who tried to destroy us.

We also want to protect the truth from innocent and well-meaning people who speak only of the good—of the rays of hope and goodness—the righteous Gentiles whose memories we cherish with gratitude. But where was the reality? For every righteous person, there were thousands who collaborated or who shared the enemy's desire to murder the Jews or who, at best, stood idly by and did nothing.

Let us remember the Holocaust as it was. It was painful. It was bitter. It was ugly. It was inhuman. But it was real. Let us not permit it to be diluted or vulgarized. Let us not diminish its meaning by treating every event in human history—every instance of human suffering or discrimination as a Holocaust.

We survivors know that time is growing short, we are getting older and we need each other more than ever before, and we need you—our children and our fellow Jews to continue our legacy.

RECOGNITION OF DR. JOHN ''BOB'' MAZERO

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 1996

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, it is a rare thing these days to find someone like Dr. Bob Mazero. He reminds us of the kind of doctor our parents used to call at his home and ask to come over on a Saturday night if one of the kids had a fever. In a small community like Latrobe, PA, being on call is not something that you schedule. It is getting called away from your family's Fourth of July picnic because a boy on the other side of town got too close to a bottle rocket, or pulled away from Thanksgiving dinner because one of your patients had a bad fall and you're the only one she trusts to examine her. For over 30 years, Dr. Mazero has been that type of doctor, one that everyone in town has seen at some time or other in their lives, and he always remembers their names, and usually remembers to ask how their father is doing or how their daughter is getting along in college. He's one of the most depended on, faithful, trusted members of the community. In times of crisis, he often is the one a whole family looks to for reassurance, and he has to provide that the best way he can. He is a true community leader, and we could use many more like him.

Dr. Mazero did not have to return to his little hometown to practice medicine. He could have stayed in Washington, or Cleveland, or Pittsburgh, where he studied, or gone to some other big city with opportunities for a bright young doctor.

But he came back to the town where he grew up and devoted his life, not only to making sure Latrobe had one of the best community hospitals in the country, but to advance the role of a community hospital in creating an educational environment for other physicians as well. He was not content to be just one of the doctors who made his rounds and went home. He cared about teaching other young doctors, and about connecting the community to its medical centers and to its source of health care. That is why, as director of Latrobe Area Hospital, he has worked to create partnerships between the hospital and several regional colleges, medical schools, as well as other area medical centers. For his outstanding achievements in these areas, he has earned numerous civic and academic honors throughout his career.