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CONDEMNING IRAN'S COMMIT-
MENT TO HOLD INTERNATIONAL
HOLOCAUST DENIAL CON-
FERENCE

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Mr. GEORGE MILLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill H. Res. 1091, to condemn Iran's commitment to hold an international Holocaust-denial conference.

Recent reports that the Iranian government is sponsoring a Holocaust-denial conference are deeply disturbing and offensive.

Over the course of the last year, the tirades and actions of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Iranian government have included calling the Holocaust a myth and holding an international contest for cartoons about the Nazi genocide. President Ahmadinejad has also called for Israel to be "wiped off the map," and his anti-Semitic rhetoric and this conference are clearly part of an ongoing campaign to attack the Jewish people and Israel by any possible means.

We live in a time in world history when we desperately need increased cooperation and understanding between nations and peoples in order to help reduce, not exacerbate, hostilities and tensions that can lead to deadly conflict.

There is no place for these state-sponsored anti-Israel and anti-Semitic provocations. And there is no justification, of course, for a conference on whether or not the Holocaust ever occurred. We all know that it did. To suggest otherwise is a repugnant and inflammatory action that is deeply disturbing to the Jewish people and to all people who had to endure the atrocities of World War II and all genocides that have occurred before and since.

I join my colleagues and the world community in rejecting and denouncing this effort to fan the flames of hatred.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY
BULLDOZED IN KAZAKHSTAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I express my deep concern about the destruction of thirteen homes in a Hare Krishna commune outside of Almaty, Kazakhstan. It is a saddening development considering that Kazakhstan is a participating state in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and has been vigorously pursuing a bid to chair the OSCE in 2009. I

am greatly troubled by the actions taken against this peaceful religious community, which is reminiscent of the "bad old days."

On November 21, 13 Hare Krishna homes were destroyed in the Sri Vrindavan Dham commune in the village of Seleksia, 25 miles from Almaty. Orders to bulldoze the homes reportedly came from the Karasai District Court, giving the residents only 24-hours notice to gather all their possessions. When the bulldozers arrived, they came under the escort and supervision of riot police. The belongings of some who refused to leave were thrown out in the snow, and their furniture and larger household items taken away to be destroyed. Families were left without a home and many others left without water and electricity in the cold of winter.

More damage could still be done—53 more homes (one of which houses a temple) could be demolished and their 116-acre communal farm could be seized. Making this outrage all the more disturbing, the Karasai District Court reportedly announced that it will charge the community for the demolition expenses! I appreciate the strong statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Astana urging Karasai district authorities to "refrain from any further aggressive actions."

The conflict over the commune has steadily intensified since a regional court ruled in March to confiscate the farm without compensation. A special government commission was established in response to international criticism to negotiate with the Hare Krishnas, but this process was short-circuited when the bulldozers revved up. Authorities justify these heartless actions by citing legal problems with the purchase of the farm by Hare Krishnas in 1999, but most observers believe this is nothing more than a land grab dressed up as a legal proceeding.

Despite Kazakhstan's positive reputation for religious tolerance, I have been concerned by governmental actions against minority religious communities, such as the heavy fines (and sometimes arrests) during the past six months against Baptist ministers representing unregistered congregations. Also worrisome are increasingly harsh government policies toward Muslims who practice their faith independent of the government-controlled Muftiate. While President Nazarbayev's initiative to bring world religions together to promote tolerance is laudable, his government's harsh treatment of small and independent groups displays a sad absence of tolerance.

In short, I do not believe these actions befit a country that would be a leader of nations. I urge President Nazarbayev and the Government of Kazakhstan to end these practices, withdraw the court cases to seize the Hare Krishnas' land, and ensure that all individuals are compensated for their lost property.

TRIBUTE TO LOVELLA CRADDOCK

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lovella Craddock of McLeansboro, Illinois for her many years of service to the citizens of Hamilton County, Illinois. Lovella began working part-time in the Hamilton Coun-

ty Clerk's Office in 1960, full-time in 1961 and was elected as Hamilton County Clerk in 1974. She will retire December 1, 2006 after 46 years of service.

For the past 46 years, Lovella has greeted not only me, but also the citizens of Hamilton County, with a smile as they entered her office to conduct business. Her friendly and courteous service will be missed. It is with gratitude that I thank her for her service and congratulate her on retirement. I wish Lovella all the best in the years to come.

COMMENDING THE IRAQ STUDY
GROUP

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the members of the Iraq Study Group and to thank them for their dedication and service to our country.

I have been to Iraq three times, the first two times without military escort. I traveled all over the country. Upon my return I called for the creation of a high level, bipartisan panel to take an honest assessment of the situation in Iraq. To look forward, not back, and to report its findings to the American people.

On March 15, this bipartisan Iraq Study Group was established with co-chairmen former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, who co-chaired the 9/11 Commission, leading the 10-member panel—five Democrats and five Republicans. Because of the importance of their task in finding consensus on assessing the way forward in Iraq, at that time, I said it was important to have as members of the group people who loved their country more than their political party.

The group undertook a serious, bipartisan, forward-looking assessment of the current and prospective situation on the ground in Iraq and its impact on the surrounding region, and its consequences on U.S. interests. It focused on political, military, security and reconstruction in Iraq.

In addition to co-chairs, the study group members were former U.S. Attorney General Ed Meese, former Clinton Administration adviser Vernon Jordan, former Clinton Administration chief of staff Leon Panetta, former Defense Secretary William Perry, former Virginia Senator Chuck Robb, former Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger. The group traveled to Iraq, and met with hundreds of experts.

Yesterday the Iraq Study Group released its much anticipated report on how we as a country can come together and move forward on Iraq. The report is a tough assessment of the current situation in Iraq and a blueprint for moving forward. Not everyone will agree with every recommendation contained in the report, but it should be given full consideration by the administration, the Congress, and equally important, the American people. Rarely do we see a report that has the full consensus of such distinguished Americans, men and women of honesty and integrity. I thank them for their service and a job well done.