

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.

On February 20, 1988, Nagorno Karabakh began its national liberation movement with a resolution to secede from Azerbaijan, and on December 10, 1991, Nagorno Karabakh officially declared independence, becoming a democratic state committed to freedom and respect for human rights. But today, the people of Nagorno Karabakh are still forced to live under the constant threat of violence from Azerbaijan.

As we commemorate the somber anniversary of the beginnings of their struggle, we wish for the peaceful resolution of this conflict and the right of the Nagorno Karabakh people to determine their own future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, on February 25, 2014, I missed two recorded votes on the House floor. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall 63 and "yea" on rollcall 64.

TRIBUTE TO L. TOM BULLA

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career and contributions of Mr. L. Tom Bulla, upon the occasion of his receipt of the Shepherd Center of Greenbrier Valley's Community Service Award. Mr. Bulla's work ethic and volunteer spirit are truly deserving of this award, as he has proudly served communities, both in his professional and private life.

Tom began his career in 1962 and worked diligently to build a solid reputation as a credible leader in the North Carolina and Virginia banking communities. In 1981, he was hired as president, CEO, and director of Huntington Trust and Savings Bank in West Virginia. In 1985, Tom oversaw the successful merger of Huntington Trust with the First Huntington National Bank. Shortly thereafter, his services were requested at Charleston National Bank, where he would serve as president and CEO, and again direct the merger of two West Virginia banks; Charleston National with Bank One, in 1993. A year later, Tom accepted a position as president, CEO, and director of First National Bankshares Corporation and The First National Bank in Ronceverte, West Virginia. Tom was very active in the West Virginia Bankers' Association, serving both on its Board of Directors and as its Chairman from 1996 through 1997. Additionally, Tom was selected by his colleagues to serve on the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh's Board of Directors from 1997 until 2000.

Tom's career shepherded him into public service with an appointment from Governor JOE MANCHIN as the state's first Secretary of Commerce, where he successfully managed the consolidation of seven government agencies.

As impressive as Tom's achievements in banking and the public sector have been, his

contributions to our communities are equally impactful. Tom dedicated his time and energy to numerous nonprofit agencies including the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, Tamarack Foundation, United Way of West Virginia, Hospice, Charleston Area Medical Center, and the American Cancer Society. He served on the Lewisburg Building Commission, West Virginia Education Fund, YMCA Spirit of the Valley, and the West Virginia Economic Development Authority, along with a host of other valuable community and state organizations. And lastly, the Shepherd Center of the Greenbrier Valley, who is honoring him with its Community Service Award for Tom's fulfillment of its three tenets: lifelong learning, service to others, and spiritual growth.

Tom Bulla resides in Lewisburg, West Virginia with his wife, Nancy. Known affectionately as "Papa" or "Papa T" by his grandchildren, Tom enjoys spending time with his extended family and his lifelong love: automobiles.

Mr. Speaker, the State of West Virginia, our communities, and indeed, the United States of America owe Tom Bulla a debt of gratitude for his many years of distinguished service in his professional and personal life. I am honored to call him a friend and fellow West Virginian.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA

HON. ALBIO SIRE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. SIRE. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the 3 year anniversary of the conflict in Syria. This conflict is destabilizing the region and has created the largest humanitarian crises we have ever seen. Over 100,000 people have already been killed and 9 million people are currently in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. 3 million people are in hard to reach areas and over 250,000 people have been cut off from assistance for over a year. The UN has characterized the situation as "dramatic beyond description." There have already been multiple failed attempts at peace-talks and cease-fires. The international community and Syrian forces must come together to find a long over-due peaceful agreement and end these inhumane and debilitating acts of violence.

As we celebrate International Women's Day on March 8th, 2014, there is no better time to recognize the role of women in these protracted conflicts. They are not just the victims of violence; they are the resilient leaders working tirelessly to keep their families safe. Women leaders, who are pushing for peace can help further peace negotiations, understand a country's needs for an inclusive transition process and put Syrians on a path to reconciliation.

While we continue to search for solutions, the United States joined by the rest of the world must do all it can to have an inclusive peace process that alleviates the tremendous amount of suffering being inflicted on Syria's civilian population.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Tuesday, March 4, 2014.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 91 in support of passage of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 92 in support of H. Res. 488 supporting the people of Venezuela. The Venezuelan people have the right to protest peacefully without fear of violence or intimidation.

THE 25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS VETERANS BRAINTRUST

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate March 5, Boston's Crispus Attucks Day, and to celebrate the 25th Silver Anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust which took place this past September within a truly unique historical and contemporary context of Black, or African American military service and sacrifice. First, a series of national commemorations: the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, the 150th anniversary of the Civil War to Save the Union and End Slavery, the 100th anniversary of the death of Harriet Tubman, known as "The General," the 90th anniversary of the burial of Col. Charles Young, the third black graduate from West Point, the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion, the 60th anniversary of the Korean War, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers, World War II veteran and Civil Rights Hero, 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, and the 12th anniversary of 9/11; and second, amid the drum beat of war, with the U.S. threatened bombing of Syria, the senseless violence of Aaron Alexis and the Washington, DC, Navy Yard shooting rampage, and the battle of the budget, or yet another governmental shutdown on October 1st, affecting more than 800,000 employees at a cost of \$25 billion. According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, a disproportionate number of the furloughed federal workers were Black, or African American, who made up 17.7 percent of the workforce.

Chaplain Michael McCoy, Sr., provided the Veterans Braintrust forum's invocation and benediction because we know from experience that Washington forums that start with an invocation and end with a benediction are blessed occasions. Welcoming remarks were given by Representatives CHARLES RANGEL (NY-13), SANFORD BISHOP, Jr. (GA-02), EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON (TX-30) and myself. With Representative SANFORD BISHOP, Jr. speaking in his role as the Ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and as