

RECOGNIZING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize October 11 as the International Day of the Girl, which falls this upcoming Thursday. The International Day of the Girl is a day to draw attention to, and seek solutions for, the challenges that confront girls throughout the world.

This year's theme for the International Day of the Girl centers on educating girls for today's and tomorrow's economy. That is why I wish to highlight the Protecting Girls' Access to Education Act, legislation that I introduced last year with Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, which seeks to better ensure that the educational needs of displaced girls are considered in the design, implementation, and evaluation of our foreign assistance. This legislation is vitally important since, according to the UN High Commission on Refugees, there are approximately 65 million forcibly displaced people worldwide and half are under the age of 18. Prolonged periods away from home result in low school enrollment rates for displaced children, which leaves girls vulnerable to early marriage, human trafficking, and child labor. With these urgent needs in mind, I urge the Senate to swiftly pass the Protecting Girls' Access to Education Act.

The International Day of the Girl is a day to work towards ensuring that girls around the globe have access to safe, quality education. As this year's theme reminds us, girls have better opportunities when they have access to quality education and a safe environment in which to learn.

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD RETURN HOME EMPTY-HANDED

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Pakistan's Foreign Minister was here this week to urge the White House to renew assistance to his country and plead for our help in talks with India. While I do not oppose open engagement with Pakistan, our position must be clear: Pakistan will not receive a dime of U.S. support if terrorists continue to live safely on their soil. For too long the opposite has been the case. Fortunately, President Trump has disrupted the status quo and suspended most of the funding we give to Pakistan, specifically calling them out for their support to terrorism. But more should be done.

The continued violence in Afghanistan is directly the result of Pakistan's protection of the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other murderous terrorists in the region. After 9/11, U.S. and allied forces had defeated the extremists in Afghanistan. But Pakistan opened its doors to Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar, and the entire leadership of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. We know this because these terrorist thugs were found and killed in Pakistan. With Pakistani help,

their terrorist networks were able to rebuild and launch an insurgency in Afghanistan that has killed thousands of Americans.

It is insulting that Pakistan's Foreign Minister comes to Washington and dares to lecture us for holding them to account. Just yesterday, another American was killed fighting extremists in Afghanistan. Our nation continues to sacrifice to bring peace to Afghanistan, while leaders of the Taliban enjoy the shelter of Pakistan. If the Foreign Minister was truly interested in restoring the relationship between our two countries, he would accept responsibility and acknowledge that countless terrorists still live inside Pakistan. His country has been the epicenter for extremism for decades, where extremists are still able to hold massive public rallies to incite young men to violence. This isn't conjecture, the evidence is well documented.

For example, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, the founder of the U.S. and U.N.-designated terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, operates freely in Pakistan. Despite his role in the 2008 Mumbai attack, he leads public rallies and can raise money for extremists causes. Yet, Pakistan, including its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, consistently defends Saeed and condemns U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Pakistan's Foreign Minister even claimed terrorist groups that target Pakistan have safe haven in Afghanistan under the U.S.'s watch. Yet it is Pakistani officials who somehow claim there is a "good" Taliban, while the U.S. makes no distinction. If the Foreign Minister wanted to earn our trust, his government could demonstrate good faith by taking action. This includes handing over Mr. Saeed, the leaders of the Taliban and Haqqani Network, and banning all extremist groups on its soil. But this is a fantasy. The hope that Pakistan would do the responsible thing ended a long time ago.

Now is the day of reckoning. All assistance to Pakistan must end, its Major Non-NATO Ally status must be terminated, and the State Department should immediately designate it as a state sponsor of terrorism. The glad-handing with Pakistani politicians cannot cover for the obvious misdeeds of their country. The Foreign Minister came to Washington empty-handed and should return to Pakistan empty-handed. Seventeen years of appeasing Pakistan has gotten us nowhere and a new course must be taken.

Turn out the lights—the party is over for Pakistan.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

This celebration of service began in 1945, when the military men and women returned from World War II with life-altering injuries and disabilities they received during their service in the war. When they returned, they were held back from reentering the workforce because of these limiting disabilities. This sparked public

interest and soon after the end of the war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the first week of October as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.

As awareness grew across the country of the diversity of disabilities individuals have, the week was renamed in 1962 to National Employ the Handicapped Week.

In 1988, Congress passed the Handicapped Programs Technical Amendments Act of 1988, establishing October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Throughout this month, we celebrate and continue to increase awareness of the many contributions of workers with disabilities and emphasize the value of a workforce inclusive of their talents, skills, and unique perspectives.

Employees with disabilities of all types bring the valuable qualities of reliability, dedication, loyalty, a positive attitude, and strong work ethic to their places of employment. This motivates their fellow colleagues and has a profound impact on their workplace. That is why in Congress, we continue to work towards creating inclusive workplace cultures around the country and establishing training opportunities for job seekers and employees with disabilities.

This month, I join all workers with disabilities, their families, and the constituents of Washington's Eighth District in recognizing this special occasion and celebrating the contributions they have made to our communities, state, and nation.

CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ABDUL SHAKOOR

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for the immediate release of Abdul Shakoor, a prisoner of conscience currently incarcerated in Pakistan, and a man who has been persecuted for his belief in the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith. Mr. Shakoor is an 82-year old who manages an optician's store and bookshop in the main bazaar of Rabwah in Punjab province. Rabwah is the de facto headquarters of Pakistan's Ahmadiyya Muslim community, known as Ahmadis.

Mr. Shakoor is a beloved figure in Rabwah where he is known as a pillar of the community, a leader, a conciliator, and peacemaker. He is referred to by all as "Brother" Shakoor.

In 1997, Pakistan passed the Anti-Terrorism Act, which provided for a broad definition of terrorism and created special Anti-Terrorism Courts to try individuals accused of violating the law. In the 20 years since it became law, the Anti-Terrorism Act has been increasingly used as a cudgel to persecute religious minorities within Pakistan, with a specific malicious focus trained on Ahmadi Muslims. This is because Pakistan's Constitution declares members of the Ahmadiyya faith as non-Muslims, and Pakistan's Penal Code criminalizes their existence for "posing as Muslim," subjecting them to three years imprisonment and potential capital punishment. Thus, Ahmadis are legally rendered heretical and thus illegal in Pakistan because Ahmadi Muslims believe that the founder of their faith, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was divinely appointed as the promised Mahdi and Messiah.