

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDI-
CIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF
HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, June 26, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and under consideration the bill (H.R. 4690) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes:

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, the Jackson amendment would restore funding for international peacekeeping in the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001.

The Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act cuts funding for international peacekeeping efforts by \$241 million below the President's request. That is a 33 percent cut in an essential international program. These funds must be restored.

Peacekeeping operations play an important role in the maintenance and establishment of peace and stability in many parts of the world. In Cyprus, United Nations peacekeepers prevented two NATO allies from going to war. In El Salvador, peacekeepers helped bring a long and bloody civil war to an end. In Israel, peacekeeping operations on the Golan Heights helped preserve the peace between Israel and Syria.

I am particularly concerned about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The war that erupted in the Congo in August of 1998 has been a widespread and destructive conflict, involving forces from several different countries. The peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations are essential to bring peace and stability to the Congo and the entire Great Lakes Region of Africa. Once peace and stability have been established, the Congo may begin to develop its natural resources, invest in health and education for its people, improve its infrastructure, pursue economic development and participate in mutually-beneficial trade with the United States.

There are conflicts all over the world that threaten peace and stability. These conflicts interfere with development and result in unimaginable suffering and countless violations of internationally recognized human rights. They also interfere with international trade and eliminate markets for American goods and services. They often cause significant increases in international refugee flows and illegal immigration into the United States. They threaten the lives of American citizens traveling abroad.

Peacekeeping allows the international community to attempt to restore peace, protect civilians and promote stability and development. Support for and participation in peacekeeping missions allow the United States to promote American values. In countries experiencing internal conflicts, peacekeeping is an essential ingredient in the restoration of democracy. Peacekeeping is a critical investment in our national security.

The cost of peacekeeping is small, and the benefits are tremendous. I urge my colleagues

to support the Jackson amendment and restore funding for peacekeeping.

INVESTIGATION OF MURDERS IN
AL-KOSHEH, EGYPT

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today in a meeting of the House Appropriations Committee to consider the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2001, I added the following Report language to the paragraph about U.S. financial aid to Egypt: "Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about ongoing violence experienced by the Christian minority in Egypt. The Committee urges Egypt to expedite the investigations of the murders of 2000 and 1998 in Al-Kosheh, and of the 1998 interrogations."

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that Egypt is a valuable ally and has greatly helped U.S. efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. It is also a fact that Christians in Egypt, especially Coptic Christians, face ongoing violence and are in need of full protection of the Egyptian Judicial system. The worst of these outbreaks is the murder of 21 persons in January, 2000 in the town of Al-Kosheh, just a few weeks after I visited Egypt with three other Members of Congress.

My report language expresses the concern of the Committee about this violence and urges Egypt to expedite investigations regarding this incident but also of events in 1998 in the same small town. There were two murders in 1998 and allegations of brutal interrogations by the Police, 1014 Christians were arrested and interrogated.

President Mubarak ordered an investigation of these arrests, and in August of 1999, 129 persons were interviewed within the course of two days. The interviewing process lapsed and then resumed in October of 1999. To date, only 400 of those 1014 persons have been interviewed. That figure includes the 129. A conclusion of the investigation likely would suggest the dismissal or prosecution of several members of the Egyptian police. There is precedent for such action.

When tourists were killed in Luxor, the reaction of Cairo was swift and decisive, including the appointment of a new Minister of the Interior, who oversees the police. That sent a powerful message throughout the country, and Egypt is currently a very safe country to visit. The great majority of Muslim citizens of Egypt are law-abiding and desire peace. I am afraid that because of concerns about possibly energizing extremist Muslim groups to the point of violence, Cairo is reluctant to prosecute Muslims when there are incidents of violence against Christians.

Christians face a range of legal challenges and are in need of protection from violence. Since there is no stated government policy of discrimination, it is reasonable for Christian citizens to expect full justice from their courts, just as Muslim citizens do.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the taxpayers of the United States would be more than happy to see some of their aid to Egypt used to pay for additional personnel or equipment which

would expedite these investigations and lead to the prosecution of any found persons found guilty of torture or other violations of civil rights. I am especially concerned that Shayboub William Arsal has been falsely accused and sentenced to 15 years hard labor even though the only two witnesses recanted their testimony and stated that their original accusations were coerced.

In accordance with Egypt's strategic alliance with the United States, the Foreign Operations Subcommittee agreed to the President's request to expedite a portion of Egypt's military aid. The adoption of these two sentences by the Full Committee in the Report expresses the expectation of the Appropriations Committee that Egypt will make progress on these important human rights matters.

HONORING THE CERKVENIK
FAMILY

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to honor a remarkable family in my congressional district: the Cerkenik family, who will celebrate their heritage on July 6th, 2000, with a gathering on the Mesabi Iron Range in Northeastern Minnesota. The Cerkenik family had its beginnings in the Republic of Slovenia in northwestern Yugoslavia. As the people of Slovenia celebrate their ninth year of independence from Yugoslavia this week, it is an appropriate time to recognize the people of Slovenia and those of Slovene ancestry in the United States. I am delighted that the Cerkenik family is preparing to honor their Slovene ancestral roots next week.

Anton Cerkenik was born in the small village of Vreme Britof on March 4, 1876, in a large pink stucco house, which his grandfather Joseph built in 1790. The family called it the House of Jelovsek. Joseph's daughter, Maria, married Matije Cerkenik, son of Jacob, and from this union six children were born—a girl, Mary, and five boys, Matije, Franc, Joze, Pavel, and Anton. When Maria married Matija, the name of the house changed to the House of Cerkenik. It held this distinction for over 100 years until Stanka Cerkenik married and the name changed to that of her husband and the house then became known as the House of Milavec.

Anton had a great love of adventure, which led him astray from his homeland to the coffee fields of Brazil. He later returned to the army in Yugoslavia and immigrated to the United States. From Ellis Island, he traveled to Mountain Iron, Minnesota, where he worked in the iron ore mines. He lived in a boarding house owned by John and Agnes Simonich who became his best friends and godparents to his children. He met and married Johanna Intihar at the Simonich boarding house. She came to the United States from Strajces, near Cerknica, Slovenia, in 1906. She was the daughter of Franc and Ursula Sevc Intihar who had five other children—John, Ursula, Niza, Mary, and Frank. Anton and Johanna had nine children, Anton, Mary, Ann, Florence, Frances, Frank, Amelia, Rose, and Edward.

Anton built a house in the Costin location of Mountain Iron, where the family had a large

garden, farm, and animals. All helped pick blueberries, can garden vegetables, and put up wood for heat and cooking. Every child received a good education and graduated from Mountain Iron High School. Most went on to college to become professionals in their work, which ranged from teachers to nurses, and to become outstanding members of their communities. Ed and Frank served in World War II, as did Rose, a civilian radio instructor.

The Cerkvenik family has a strong tradition of public service in northern Minnesota; sons Anton and Frank served the City of Mountain Iron as Clerk and Mayor; the next generation of Cerkveniks has also continued to serve the state of Minnesota and the country. Second generation members Paul worked in Congress at the Democratic Study Group; Peter served on the Mountain Iron City Council; Steve was elected to the School Board; and Gary and his wife Kim both worked in my congressional office. Gary was also elected to the St. Louis County Board and Kim ran for Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota.

In addition to Kim, other spouses who have joined the Cerkvenik family have participated actively in politics and government, including Ann Mulholland who worked for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and on Paul Simon's presidential campaign, and Kathleen Murray who has worked on Mayor Richard Daley's campaigns. On the Iron Range in Mountain Iron, Tony and his wife Mitzi opened a grocery store and meat market which has continued under Frank and his family. For nearly 40 years, Cerkvenik's Super Market has been known for great meats, good service, and a fair trade. Most importantly, it became a center of political and social life in Mountain Iron.

Other descendants continue to make their unique marks on our country. One Cerkvenik family member, Barrett, graduated from West Point and helped negotiate the START treaty. Others are business owners, computer specialists, bus drivers, teachers, lawyers, designers, advertisers, civil servants, biologists, and mothers and fathers. Together, they are a proud Slovene family who have not forgotten their roots and heritage.

Now there are four generations of Cerkvenik descendants in the United States of America. They are truly part of the unique fabric of lives and histories that make America the richest and most vibrant nation in the world. As they gather on Minnesota's Iron Range this July, I salute the Cerkvenik family for their invaluable contributions to this great land of ours.

TRIBUTE TO RABBI MORRIS
RUBINSTEIN

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today my colleague, Mr. WAXMAN, and I pay tribute to an extraordinary individual and good friend, Rabbi Morris Rubinstein, who was honored this Sunday by the Valley Beth Israel Synagogue for his twenty eight years of dedication, leadership and service. The occasion will mark his retirement and will be celebrated with a "gala farewell dinner" attended by family, friends and congregants.

Throughout Rabbi Rubinstein's forty-one year rabbinical career he has demonstrated—through both his words and his deeds—an unwavering commitment to Torah and Mitzvos. For the past twenty-eight years, we in the San Fernando Valley have been blessed by his leadership, guidance, knowledge and understanding. He and his wife Miriam created a family-like atmosphere for all of the Valley Beth Israel congregants. Together they not only helped insure that Valley Beth Israel achieved a stellar reputation, but they made certain that the synagogue remained a unique and special place to worship, learn and congregate.

In addition to his character, intelligence and hard work, Rabbi Rubinstein successfully accomplished so much at Valley Beth Israel because he was able to apply lessons learned from an impressive and diverse background. He graduated as a rabbi and teacher with a Master's Degree in Hebrew Literature in 1959. He entered the Air Force Chaplaincy as a First Lieutenant in the same year and his first assignment was in Ankara, Turkey. His next assignment was Kessler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi where he became involved in the civil rights movement. There, at a clergy conference, he joined with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in singing "We Shall Overcome" in Hebrew and English.

After Biloxi, he left the military chaplaincy to take a civilian pulpit. Between 1964 and 1972, when he joined Valley Beth Israel, he served as the spiritual leader at synagogues in Mattawan, New Jersey and Scottsdale, Arizona. He and Miriam, his loving wife and partner of forty-three years, have raised five wonderful and accomplished children.

We are honored today to ask our colleagues to join with us in saluting Rabbi Rubinstein for his dedicated service and tireless leadership. We wish him good health and every joy in his retirement.

PASSING THE CONSERVATION AND
REINVESTMENT ACT

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today one of my hometown newspapers, the Detroit Free Press, published the following editorial urging the other body to pass H.R. 701, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). As my colleagues know, the House approved CARA last month by an overwhelming bipartisan margin.

The House bill may not be perfect, but clearly it is a strong foundation for a landmark conservation bill. The other body should proceed expeditiously so as not to let this once-in-a-generation opportunity pass us by.

[FROM THE DETROIT FREE PRESS, JUNE 27, 2000]

LAND PLAN

WORTHWHILE CONSERVATION ACT STUCK IN
COMMITTEE

The country's best chance in a century to commit to conservation is staring it in the face, and yet the means to make it happen may not survive the U.S. Senate.

The Conservation and Reinvestment Act, which provides hundreds of millions of dollars for land acquisition and recreation projects nationwide, sits in committee, where it landed after the House passed it by

a 3-1 margin. The full Senate seems likely to approve CARA, if it gets sprung from the committee.

The act does not require any new money to fund it. Rather it is the revival of a decades-old promise that royalties from oil and gas drilling on federal property would go toward land preservation. In the meantime, the money has been used to help mask the country's deficit-spending habit, a maneuver that's no longer needed and ripe for Congress to fix.

Some Western-state senators in key positions see CARA as a federal land grab, although only a sixth of the money would go toward federal purchases, and acquisitions would require the consent of both the owner and Congress. Far more would get funneled to the states, to set their own balance between buying land and improving existing public spaces.

One of CARA's most exciting aspects, in fact, is the ability to focus on smaller projects than the federal government normally would, including urban green spaces, walkways and small slices of important habitat. For those with visions of a walkable riverfront in Detroit, or selective preservation of natural spots in the path of development, CARA is a dream come true—if the senators controlling its fate will set it free.

HONORING HARRIS COUNTY COMMISSIONER JIM FONTENO AND THE EAST HARRIS COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I honor Harris County Commissioner Jim Fonteno and the East Harris County Senior Citizens, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this month. The East Harris County Senior Citizens program, which Commissioner Fonteno built from the grassroots up, is a truly unique organization that has touched the lives of thousands of seniors in the eastern portion of Harris County, Texas for a quarter of a century. I commend Commissioner Fonteno for starting this vital program, and as we celebrate its anniversary, we also celebrate the career of Fonteno himself, the "Dean" of the Commissioners' Court, who, after 25 years, recently announced that he will retire in 2002.

The East Harris County Senior Citizens began in 1975, when the then newly-elected Precinct Two Harris County Commissioner Jim Fonteno offered his vision to create a program to give back to area seniors. His vision, inspired by his desire to give the people "what they asked for and what they needed," was to create a vehicle to deliver programs and services to thousands of senior citizens and veterans in the community. Despite the naysayers who claimed it couldn't be done, Fonteno's inspiration grew into a self-sustaining, nonprofit organization that now boasts more than 350 senior citizens groups within its boundaries. With the help of private organizations and many community partners and volunteers, the East Harris County Senior Citizens program is a model for the nation, and is still growing strong.

Throughout its history, the East Harris County Senior Citizens program has been