EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SOPHIE HEIMBACH'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a wonderful woman, Sophie Heimbach who will be 100 years old on August 10, 2001. As is the case with most Jews born in the early twentieth century, Sophie's life began very peacefully, and happily. She was born on August 10, 1901 in Ochtrup, Germany. In 1938, with the rising strength of the Nazi party, Sophie was forced to flee Germany. While at first she was able to make a new home in Belgium, the outbreak of World War Two forced her to flee again, this time for France, Spain, Portugal, and finally Casablanca. As if being uprooted from one's home and having a death marking on one's chest were not bad enough, Sophie was also separated from her family for a very painful period of time. We have all heard tales of the horrors for the Jews during World War Two, but this woman lived them, and she did it not knowing what would become of her family.

Sophie was reunited with her husband and family in Casablanca, and from that point slowly began to relearn the small joys in life, even amidst pain. Casablanca led Sophie and her family to Cuba, and then eventually to the United States in 1942. They moved to Goshen, New York where Sophie earned her U.S. citizenship in 1947. Sophie and her husband worked diligently and humbly in their first months in the United States. She worked as a housekeeper for a wealthy landowner, and her husband Arthur as a farm hand. After a mere nine months, Sophie and Arthur had the resources to fulfill their American dream enabling them to purchase the family farm in Wallkill, New York. The Heimbach family flourished during their time in Wallkill, and succeeded in developing their farm to over 400 acres.

Arthur is now deceased, but he and Sophie are followed by two children, Charlotte and Louis, five grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Sophie is a woman of great devotion and dedication to her temple, her home and her family. She has lived a full life with as much grief as joy, hardship as luck. I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring her on her millstone 100th birthday.

PROSPECTS FOR UNITED STATES-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS IN THE CHAVEZ ERA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, United States-Venezuelan relations recently have become a matter of concern on the current administration's Latin American foreign policy agenda due to some provocative statements made by President Hugo Chavez. The United States imports 14 percent of its oil from Venezuela, and with President Chavez being driven by his concern over maximizing profits to help serve one of his own policy goals of creating a ''Latin American Union,'' the United States has possible cause for worry that what may be good for Venezuela may not be good for American interests.

Chavez also has visited recently with Saddam Hussein and Fidel Castro, criticized Plan Colombia and denounced Washington's $1.3 billion funding of it, which has heightened Washington's edginess over the new status quo. But all of us must keep in mind that it is all but certain that the Venezuelan president's vision for a more unified Latin America will not disappear, and is shared by millions of other Latin Americans.

It is clear that patience is being called for as well as a sense of proportionality. After all, Chavez, at the present time, poses no danger to vital United States interests, and we risk destructive backlash from Latin America if the United States acts too harshly against the Venezuelan leader. Moreover, many of his condemnations of the development model are also being echoed by dissident IMF and World Bank officials.

The following research memorandum was authored by Pamela Spivack and Jill Freeman, Research Associates with the Washington-based Council of Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), an organization that has been long committed to addressing issues associated with democracy and human rights throughout the Hemisphere. COHA's researchers have often spoken out about controversial United States policies towards Latin American countries, and we have all benefited over the years from such insights. The attached article, which will appear in this organization's estimable biweekly publication, The Washington Report on the Hemisphere, addresses United States-Venezuelan relations and how Chavez's rhetoric has worried and concerned Washington. The article also points out that these alienating attitudes toward the United States as well as Venezuela's status as the world's third largest oil exporter are potential causes for the United States to reexamine its benign policies toward Caracas, emphasizing that caution and moderation are now required.

[From the Washington Report on the Hemisphere, June 25, 2001]

CAPITAL WATCH: PROSPECTS FOR U.S.-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS IN THE CHÁVEZ ERA

As concern grows in Washington over President Hugo Chávez's domestic and foreign policy moves, relations with Caracas could soon being to seriously erode. Chávez's leftist Bolívarian rhetoric, his opposition to U.S. antidrug initiatives in Colombia, his close friendship with Fidel Castro, as well as the country's status as a major supplier of petroleum to the U.S., may persuade the administration to reexamine its relatively docile policies towards Venezuela.

The hero of the country's poor, his constituency carried him to an overwhelming victory first in 1998, and then again in 2000. Chávez speaks about integrating the continent, including the military, which is of great importance for both the goals of justice and the ability to combat external imperialist measures. Meanwhile, the Bush administration's fears that the strong man will need to be cut down are growing. Although the State Department's Peter Romero blasted Chávez's support of Colombia's leftist guerrillas in front of a Miami-Cuban audience, Washington's fears had remained latent, far down on its hemispheric agenda. This benign stance was due to the Clinton administration's ''positive engagement'' policy, geared to facilitate equitable ties with the rest of the region. However, there is speculation that Bush may more intensely monitor Caracas' political and economic actions in an effort to block Chávez's ''Latin American Union'' from coming to fruition.

DISSEMINATION OF VENEZUELAN RHETORIC

To the consternation of Washington policymakers, specific events have highlighted Chávez's efforts to export his peaceful revolution to neighboring countries. He has roundly criticized Plan Colombia, a massive U.S. military-driven scenario aimed at interdicting and destroying the drug cartels. He recently denounced Washington's $1.3 billion funding of it as well as its components, such as intensified training of the military and Bogota's growing deployment of offensive helicopters, as a dangerous intervention that will not be successful. At a news conference at the U.N. Millennium Summit, September 2000, Chávez emphasized, ''The only solution for Colombia is peace. Sending helicopter gunships to Colombia will not achieve peace.''

Colombia is not the only regional country of interest to the Venezuelan leader. According to El País of Spain, there is evidence that Caracas has supported radicalized indigenous movements in Bolivia to demonstrate the solidarity of like-minded movements. At the Ibero-American Summit in Panama, 2000, Bolivian president Hugo Bánzer exhibited some animosity towards Chávez for his alleged support of such movements. As has been noted in the Miami Herald, Chávez also has been accused of supplying equipment to the indigenous and military figures who later staged a coup in Ecuador. The paper implicated the Venezuelan leader in the delivery of over $500,000 to Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, who overthrew the Ecuadorian government of Jamil Mahuad. In his failed coup attempt in 1992, Gutiérrez adopted a populist slogan much like Chávez's own. The presence of such marrings on Chávez's hemisphere report card has been troubling to Washington.

THREATS TO U.S. INTERESTS

Chávez's recent association with such U.S. ''enemies'' as Saddam Hussein and Fidel Castro, has heightened the State Department's anxiety over his intentions. In particular, his evolving friendship with Castro puts the U.S. in a quandary, given that Venezuela is the third largest foreign supplier of crude oil to this country. Chávez flouted U.S. efforts to isolate Havana in devising a five-year deal with the Cuban leader to provide the island with oil to compensate for Cuba's lost Soviet aid. Venezuela will supply Cuba with 53,000

barrels of oil a day, at an annual market price of $3 billion. By granting cheap credits and a barter system, the cost to Cuba will be substantially less. Increased oil revenues from growing U.S. imports that fill Chávez's coffers ironically help to subsidize Cuba's own consumption. Before his visit to Cuba, Chávez suggested, ''We have no choice but to form an 'axis of power,'' challenging U.S.-hemispheric dominance. Chávez's declared objective is to generate good will for Venezuela throughout the region by offering similar preferential oil deals to many other Caribbean countries.

Despite climbing oil prices in the past two years, Venezuela remains a victim of increased poverty, rising crime rates and a shrinking economy. Chávez has set out to expand the state oil company to provide more jobs. To further this strategy, Venezuela will utilize its aggressive leadership in OPEC to sustain high world oil prices. With the U.S. importing 14 percent of its oil from Venezuela, Chávez bold strategy of maximizing profits to serve his policy purposes runs counter to U.S. interests.

Chávez also expanded his presidential powers to undermine the independent power of the judiciary, legislature, media and civic offices, all of which were known for their corruption under previous regimes. Up to this point, Washington has restrained itself, implicitly adjusting to Chávez's style of rule, a difficult position to maintain in light of the growing tempo of his socialist rhetoric and recent controversial policy proposals.

POTENTIAL U.S. ACTION

While the Clinton administration overlooked Chávez's political maneuvers in Latin America to maintain a semblance of amicable relations, some of his outcries evoked the wrath of Cuban-Americans wishing to punish him for pro-Castro activism. This is likely to build up the pressure on the Bush administration to ''get tough on Chávez.'' Observers in Caracas assert that he has never concealed his goal of a unified Latin America distanced from Washington. It is doubtful whether a tougher response form Washington would hinder Chávez's defense of such a union. Former State Department official, Bernard Aronson, is already claiming that any disruption of oil agreements with Venezuela could weaken the U.S. economy. Due to economic difficulties and heightened crime, Chávez's promises of jobs and increased security have had to be delayed. However, it is important to note that he has been in office a relatively short period, and appears to have factored in U.S. scorn while seeking his public sector reforms. Whether Washington can long maintain its positive engagement policy towards Chávez's actions remains to be seen, but it is a certainty that he will continue to champion his messianic vision for Venezuela and Latin America.

FEDERAL PHOTOVALTAIC UTILIZATION ACT

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, the recent increase in oil prices has focused national attention on the benefits we could achieve by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels by meeting more of our energy needs from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, biomass and geothermal energy. Today, I am introducing legislation to promote one of the most promising of these technologies, solar photovoltaics.

Quite simple, a photovoltaic, or PV, system converts light energy into electricity. The term ''photo'' is a stem word from the Greek ''phos'' which means light. ''Volt'' is named for Allesandro Volta, a pioneer in the study of electricity. Photovoltaic literally means ''light electricity''.

PV generated power offers distinct advantages over diesel generators, primary batteries, and in some instances, over conventional utility power lines. PV systems are highly reliable, and have no moving parts, so the need for maintenance is virtually non-existent. This is one of the main reasons they are used in satellites today, for which maintenance is both costly and time consuming. In addition, PV cells use sunlight to produce electricity—and sunlight is free!

The potential for photovoltaics is boundless. By way of illustration, solar panels in 1% of the Mojave Desert would provide enough energy to meet California's expected electric shortfall. The electricity needs of the entire United States could be met by panels in a 100 by 100 mile area in the South-Western United States.

PV cells are ideal for supplying power to remote communication stations, such as those in our National Park system, and on navigational buoys. Because they burn no fuel and have no moving parts, PV systems are clean and silent. Compared to the alternative of burning kerosene and diesel fuels that contribute to global warming, this quiet, clean source of power becomes even more attractive.

Another important feature of PV systems is their modularity—they can easily be adapted to any size, based on energy consumption. Homeowners can add modules as their needs expand, and ranchers, for example, can use mobile stations to produce electricity for pumps to water cattle as the animals are rotated to different grazing areas. After Hurricane Andrew in 1993 the Florida Solar Energy Center deployed several PV emergency systems right at the disaster locations where the energy was needed.

Because a PV system can be placed closer to the user, shorter power lines can be used if power were brought in from a grid. Shorter lines, lower construction costs, and reduced paper work make PV systems especially attractive. Transmission and distribution upgrades are kept to a minimum, which is especially important in urban areas. PV systems can be sized, sited, and installed faster than traditional energy systems.

I have had a longstanding interest in promoting the development of this technology. In June 1977 I introduced H.R. 7629, which established a program for the Federal government to encourage the development of PV technology by using it in federal facilities. At that time, photovoltaic technology was in its early developmental stage, and produced energy at a cost of more than $1.00 per kilowatt hour, compared to less than $.10 a hour for energy from fossil fuels. In these circumstances, there is a ''chicken and egg'' problem: because the technology is expensive, consumers will not purchase it, but, unless there are purchases, the produces will not be able to make the investments and engage in the large-scale production needed to being the cost down.

The Federal government, which purchases billions of dollars of energy each year, is in a unique position of facilitate a breakthrough for photovoltaics. Under my 1977 bill, the Federal government would have purchased substantial quantities of photovoltaic technology. These purchases would have given industry the resources and incentives to develop the technology and mass production efficiencies necessary to make photovoltaics competitive.

My 1977 bill became part of a larger bill to establish a comprehensive national energy policy, PL 95–619. Most unfortunately, the Reagan administration chose not to fund the bill, resulting in not only a lackluster renewable energy program but also a serious deterioration of national focus.

The collapse of the oil cartel and the return of low oil and gas prices in the early 1980's had a chilling effect on federal renewable energy programs. Despite Congress' consistent support for a broader, more aggressive renewable energy program than either the Reagan or George H.W. Bush administrations supported, federal spending fell steadily through 1990. Funding for renewable energy R&D grew from less than $1 million on the early 1970's to over $1.3 billion in FY 1997, but then nose-dived during the Reagan and Bush administrations. Funding steadily declined during the 1980's to $136 million in FY 1990.

The trend was reversed during the Clinton administration. In June 1997 President Clinton announced the Million Solar Roofs Initiative. The program called for the installation of one million solar energy systems on homes and other buildings by 2010. In October 1997, President Clinton committed to placing 20,000 solar energy systems on Federal Buildings. So far the results have been encouraging—over 2000 solar systems have been installed in federal facilities through the year 2000. For example, the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station in San Francisco developed a solar hot water heating project, which qualified as part of the Federal commitment. The project was completed easily and quickly, cost less than $10,000 and has energy savings of $1,100 per year, which means that has a 9-year payback period.

Just across the Anacostia River, here in the Nation's Capitol, at the Suitland Federal Center, the General Services Administration has installed a large PV system to supply electricity for the Federal center. From the Presidio in San Francisco to Fort Dix in New Jersey, the Federal government has installed numerous effective PV systems. Solar power is used extensively for diverse purposes in our National Park and National Forests—supplying lighting to the Tonto National Forest in Arizona and drinking water to hikers in the Rocks National Park in Lakeshore Michigan. The isolated research facilities at Farallon National Wildlife Refuge, California are powered by PV systems.

During disaster relief activities solar power systems step in quickly to supply efficient, easy to install, mobile power sources. In addition to solar power in federal buildings, national parks, communications, and disaster relief activities, solar power is used extensively in transportation support—bus stop lighting, parking lot lights, railroad signal lights, traffic monitoring and control, Coast Guard lighthouses, beacons and buoys. Furthermore, the government is leading the way with innovative technologies for solar powered vehicles. The Department of Energy is the chief sponsor of the American Solar Challenge, which this year