SIKHS MUST HAVE A FREE KHALISTAN, ALL OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS HAVE THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, SIKHS ARE SEPARATE RELIGION, CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND PEOPLE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 28, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, all over the world, religious and ethnic groups have their own countries. There are numerous countries dominated by Christians and as we have recently been reminded, there are numerous Muslim countries as well. The Hindus rule India and a few other countries. There are a number of Buddhist countries. The Jewish people have Israel. Only the Sikhs do not have their own country.

Sikhs declared their independence from India on October 7, 1987, naming their country Khalistan. Unfortunately, Khalistan continues to live under a brutal occupation by India that has cost a quarter of a million Sikhs their lives since 1984. Earlier this year, the Movement Against State Repression issued a report showing that India is holding at least 52,268 Sikh political prisoners, by their own admission, in illegal detention without charge or trial. Some of them have been held since 1984. Former Member of Parliament Atinder Pal Singh noted that ''there is no family in the 12,687 villages of Punjab of which one or the other Sikh member has not been killed by the police.''

As I have previously said, ''The mere fact that they have the right to choose their oppressors does not mean they live in a democracy.'' My colleague, the gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, has said that for Sikhs and Kashmiris, ''India might as well be Nazi Germany.'' I cannot make a better statement of how brutal India's occupation of the Sikh homeland is. A new Indian law makes any act a ''terrorist offense'' to ''threaten the unity or integrity of India.'' Under this law, anyone who peacefully advocates independence for Khalistan or any of the minority nations such as predominantly Christian Nagaland, Kashmir, or any other can be held as a ''terrorist'' for as long as it suits the Indian government to do so. This is not democracy, Mr. Speaker.

When India got its independence from Britain, Sikhs were one of the three nations that were to receive their own sovereign state. Muslims got Pakistan, Hindus got India. Sikh leaders stayed with India because Mr. Nehru and Mr. Gandhi promised them that they would enjoy ''the glow of freedom'' in Punjab and no law would pass affecting Sikhs without their consent. However, as soon as the ink was dry on the agreement for Indian independence, the Indian government put out a memo describing Sikhs as ''a criminal class'' and began the tyrannical harassment of the Sikhs. Accordingly, no Sikh representative has ever signed the constitution of India.

Sikhs ruled Punjab as an independent country from 1765 to 1849, when the British conquered the subcontinent. Punjab was recognized by most of the major countries at that time. Under Sikh rule, Punjab was a secular state in which Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians all had a part in the government. The people prospered.

In June 1984, the Indian government attacked the Sikh religion's most sacred shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the Vatican or Mecca of the Sikhs. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a leader of the Sikh freedom movement had warned that ''If the Indian government attacks the Golden Temple, it will lay the foundation of Khalistan.'' After the Golden Temple attack, the movement for an independent Sikh country, Khalistan, took on steam. As a result, India stepped up the repression. In the words of Narinder Singh, a spokesman for the Golden Temple who appeared on NPR in August 1997, ''The Indian government, all the time they boast that they're democratic, they're secular, but they have nothing to do with a democracy, they have nothing to do with a secularism. They try to crush Sikhs just to please the majority.''

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. I must join Atinder Pal Singh, the former Member of Parliament in asking, ''why can't the Khalistan, Sikhistan, or whatever name you might like to give it be formed for the Sikhs?''

India claims to be ''the world's largest democracy.'' If that is so, then why can't India do the democratic thing and let the people of Khalistan and the peoples of all the minority nations have a free and fair plebiscite, with international monitoring, to decide the question of independence? Isn't that the democratic way? The United States does it for Puerto Rico, Canada does it for Quebec. Why can't ''the world's largest democracy'' do it for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Christian Nagaland, and all the other minority nations? Only when these nations are free will the repression of minorities in India end.

The U.S. Congress should go on record in support of self-determination for all the people of South Asia and we should stop American aid to India until the repression ends. The only answer is freedom. Let's do what we can to support it and expand it.

TRIBUTE TO KAREN STEIN—OUTGOING MAYOR, CITY OF CORONA

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 28, 2001

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication to the community and to the overall well-being of my hometown of Corona, CA, is exceptional. The city of Corona has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated business and community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give time and talent to making their communities a better place to live and work. Karen E. Stein is one of these individuals.

On December 4, 2001, Karen Stein will be honored as the outgoing 2001 City of Corona Mayor, after serving two terms on the city council. Currently serving on the Corona City Council's Infrastructure and Economic Development Committees, Karen was first elected to the Corona City Council in 1994. Previously she was a member of the Corona/Norco Unified School District Board of Trustees, the Corona Parks and Recreation Commission and the Corona Chamber of Commerce.

As a past chairwoman of the Regional Water Quality Control Board-Santa Ana Region, Karen Stein spearheaded a successful effort in 1995 to expand the city of Corona's wastewater treatment plant.

Karen Stein's leadership has been instrumental in strengthening the bonds between the city and business community. A person with passion and principles, who has strived to have a positive effect upon her local community, her other community activities include: the Fender Museum of the Arts Foundation Board of Directors, member of the Corona Historic Preservation Society, charter member of UNITY (United Neighbors Involving Today's Youth) and more.

Unquestionably a leader of women in her community, Karen has received numerous awards including being named ''Woman of Distinction'' by the Inland Empire Business Press and Soroptimist International.

Karen's tireless, engaged action have propelled the city of Corona forward in a positive and progressive manner. Her work to promote the businesses, schools and community organizations of the city of Corona make me proud to call her a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that all of Corona is grateful for her contribution to the betterment of the community and salute her as she departs. I look forward to continuing to work with her for the good of our community in the future.

RECOGNIZING VICKI WILLIAMS AND DEBBIE McMICHEN, BOSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CHEROKEE COUNTY, GEORGIA

HON. BOB BARR

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 28, 2001

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the teachers of today are extraordinary human beings, dedicated to educating America's youth. Today I would like to recognize two teachers in Georgia who are a step above extraordinary, especially to one little boy.

Just before 8:00 a.m. during the before-school program at Boston Elementary School in Cherokee County, Georgia, Vickie Williams looked over the children watching television and noticed that something was not right with one of the first-grade boys. When the boy began to clutch his throat and became discolored, Ms. Williams realized the child was choking; she responded immediately. While Ms. Williams preformed the Heimlich maneuver, Ms. Debbie McMichen dialed 911 and alerted the appropriate individuals. The two teachers, both CPR certified, successfully dislodged a small hairclip from the first-grader's throat.

Both Mrs. Vickie Williams and Ms. Debbie McMichen were recognized at a Board of Education meeting on October 9, 2001, and today I recognize them for not only being extraordinary teachers, but now, life-savers.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 28, 2001

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the ''Metropolitan Washington