

EMBRACING THE CONSTITUTION
FLAG

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, since September 11th, 2001, this nation has engaged in a debate over how best to balance national security with civil liberties. "They who would give up an essential liberty for temporary security, deserve neither liberty or security." Those words are as true today as they were when Ben Franklin said them at the dawn of American democracy.

It was in that spirit that a patriotic New Yorker named Bob Pergament designed the "Constitution Flag." The new symbol, an American Flag with the Constitution superimposed in the outline of the United States, reminds us never to undercut the freedoms guaranteed to each individual in the Constitution.

While nothing can ever replace our beloved "Old Glory," this new emblem is currently flying in homes, city and town halls, and law classrooms across the country. It is on display at the American Library Association's Chicago headquarters and the city of Mount Vernon, NY has officially adopted the flag as the city's symbol.

As we in Congress continue to struggle with ways to keep Americans safe, we should honor those who are working to highlight the civil liberties at the foundation of our democracy. I urge my colleagues to join me in embracing the Constitution Flag as an invaluable reminder of what keeps American strong.

FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
ENDORSES FREEDOM
FOR KHALISTAN—SOVEREIGNTY
WILL END OPPRESSION

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

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Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on December 8, the Tribune newspaper out of Chandigarh, Punjab reported that a former Member of Parliament, Simranjit Singh Mann, had endorsed sovereignty for the Sikh homeland, Khalistan. His endorsement is part of a rising tide that includes the Punjab government declaring its sovereignty when it ended its water agreements with the other states in India.

I note that Mr. Mann said that the Sikhs are a separate nation and promised to lead a movement to liberate Khalistan. I hope that he keeps his promise. My friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan and an invaluable resource for information about South Asian affairs, has been saying the same things for several years. It seems that India's oppression that killed a quarter of a million Sikhs and keeps more than 52,000 of them as political prisoners has failed to dampen the desire and enthusiasm of the Sikhs for their own sovereign, independent country. I salute Mr. Mann's position. It is important for leaders in Punjab to speak out strongly for Khalistan. We can help from here, but the effort must be won in Punjab, Khalistan itself.

Mr. Speaker, all peoples are entitled to live in freedom. The Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan made their choice on October 7, 1987 when they declared their independence from India, calling their new country Khalistan. India, which proudly claims to be democratic, refuses even to hold a free and fair vote on the question, just as India has never kept its promise of 1948 to hold a plebiscite on the future of Kashmir. How can a country do these things and claim to be democratic? Self-determination is the essence of democracy.

A new Congress gives us a new opportunity to take a stand for freedom in South Asia and around the world. We should stop all U.S. aid to India until it allows full democratic rights and full human rights to all people living within its borders and we should strongly support a free and fair plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan, in Nagaland, in Kashmir, and wherever people seek their freedom on the question of independence. By promoting such a plebiscite, we promote democracy and human rights for all people in that troubled region.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert the Council of Khalistan's press release on Mr. Mann's remarks into the RECORD at this time.

MANN REVERTS TO SUPPORTING KHALISTAN

WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 10, 2004—Once again, former MP Simranjit Singh Mann, leader of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), has staked out a position in support of a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Speaking in Ludhiana on December 7 at a meeting of his party, Mann said that the SAD (Amritsar) would launch a peaceful movement to achieve a separate and sovereign Sikh state, according to the December 8 issue of The Tribune (Chandigarh.) Mann claimed that his party had never given up this position.

Mann reminded his party that Sikhs are a separate nationality. He said that the foundation for an independent Khalistan was laid by Guru Gobind Singh and furthered by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and that this dream "will be materialized one day." Guru Gobind Singh gave sovereignty to the Sikh Nation ("In grieb Sikhin ko deon patshahi.") Sikhs are a separate nation. Sikhs ruled Punjab up to 1849 when the British conquered the subcontinent. Mann noted that it is in the interests of all the people in the region to have a buffer state between India and Pakistan to help ensure lasting peace in South Asia, given the deep hostility between "Hindu civilization and Muslim civilization."

Mann's remarks show that the desire for Khalistan remains strong in the Sikhs of Punjab, said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh struggle for independence. Dr. Aulakh also cited the actions taken by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, such as declaring Punjab's sovereignty in stopping all water agreements between Punjab and other states, as moving toward this goal. On October 7, 1987, the Sikh Nation declared its independence from India, naming its new country Khalistan. The Council of Khalistan was established at that time to lead the peaceful, democratic, nonviolent movement to liberate Khalistan from Indian oppression.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. Recently, the Punjab Legislative Assembly passed a bill annulling all water agreements with the Indian

government, preventing the government's daylight robbery of Punjab river water. Punjab needs its river water for its crops. In the bill, the Assembly explicitly stated the sovereignty of Punjab.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948, over 89,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family.

The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. Ghotna has never been brought to trial for the Jathedar Kaunke murder. No one has been brought to justice for the kidnapping and murder of Jaswant Singh Khalra.

According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Tens of thousands of other minorities are also being held as political prisoners, according to Amnesty International. We demand the immediate release of all these political prisoners.

"It is encouraging that Mr. Mann has comeback to demanding Khalistan," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "This is another step forward for the movement to liberate our homeland from Indian oppression."

"As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh noted. "We must continue to press for our God-given birthright of freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish. A sovereign Khalistan is essential for the survival of the Sikh religion."

HONORING COMMAND SERGEANT
MAJOR MARVIN L. HILL

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Command Sergeant Major Marvin L. Hill of Memphis Tennessee, and the dedication and courage with which he has served our Nation.

A warrior and exemplary combat veteran, Command Sergeant Major Hill will be moving onto the 1st Army, under Lieutenant General Russel Honore, overseeing training and mobilization readiness for Army National Guard Units within its area of responsibility. Command Sergeant Major Hill's distinguished career is particularly noteworthy for his contributions to the legacy of the 101st Airborne Division, "Screaming Eagles," the post he is departing.

Command Sergeant Major Hill joined the Army on January 18, 1978. After completing Basic Combat Training at Ford Leonard Wood, Missouri and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Benning, Georgia, he became an