

a nuclear weapons free world. Of all nations, Kazakhstan has the most legitimate voice, as no other nation has been courageous enough to disarm. Frankly speaking, when it comes to strengthening the global partnership for a nuclear weapons free world, President Nazarbayev has set the standard for other nations to follow.

As Strobe Talbott, President of the Brookings Institution, recently noted, “the goal of eventually abolishing nuclear weaponry is written into the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which the U.S. Senate ratified nearly 40 years ago.” And yet what have the members of the nuclear club done to disarm? In many ways, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, which includes the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the People’s Republic of China are the worst examples of how the world should deal with nuclear challenges, but I remain hopeful that the U.S., under the leadership of President Obama, will form a strong alliance with Kazakhstan in moving the world forward on this issue.

Kazakhstan has also made great strides towards democracy, earning the support of 56 member nations to head the OSCE in 2010. Today, Kazakhstan has become the most stable and prosperous nation in Central Asia, and is the first country in the Commonwealth of Independent States to be granted market economy status by the United States. With more than 130 ethnic groups and 40 faiths living in peaceful coexistence, Kazakhstan is also a model for religious tolerance.

By its actions, Kazakhstan has proven itself to be a key ally of the United States and, as such, I welcome Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin’s visit to Washington, D.C.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF LIEUTENANT JAMES THOMAS, FIREFIGHTER

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 2009

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, on June 28, 2000, the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD)—and indeed, the entire Baltimore community—lost a dedicated and passionate advocate and brother, Mr. James Thomas. He had retired from BCFD in 1992 after nearly 37 years of dedicated service.

Mr. Thomas started his career in 1956 with Engine No. 6, three years after African Americans were allowed to be employed by the fire department. In 1962, as member of Engine No. 8, Jim was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, which made him the first African American Officer within the BCFD. Jim took on many responsibilities and leadership positions within the BCFD, serving as a fire and safety inspector.

However, as it is widely known firefighters do not ever retire. They just stop going to the fire house everyday and this was also the case for Mr. Thomas. After his retirement, firefighter cadets and those with years of experience often sought out Jim for his advice, guidance, and instruction or simply to listen to his experiences within the BCFD.

Madam Speaker, in addition to being a dedicated firefighter, Jim above all else was a de-

voted husband to his wife Maureen and a man of faith. Although he passed away nearly nine years ago, his life remains an inspiration to us all, speaking volumes for what can be accomplished when a person’s faith and determination are synchronized with his conduct. It is my hope that the family and friends of Mr. James Thomas continue to hold on to the fond memories they shared with him.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GLENN THOMPSON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on rollcall no. 208 I was absent on the evening of April 27, 2009 because I was attending a public meeting at the Allegheny National Forest in Warren, Pennsylvania regarding the pending Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), ongoing litigation, and the proposed “settlement.” Recent Forest Service actions on the Allegheny have created adverse economic distress in my rural district and are unfairly denying my constituents access to their legally owned subsurface mineral rights.

Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 2009

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor today in support of World Press Freedom Day, celebrated on the 3rd day of May each year. I do so with a profound sense of humility and with a sense of privilege about being able to come to the floor to speak in support of freedom of the press around the world.

World Press Freedom Day has been observed for 16 years now and serves as a reminder to us all of the vital importance of this core freedom. It is a day in which we celebrate the indispensable role played by journalists in exposing abuses of power, while at the same time we sound the alarm about the growing number of journalists that are still being silenced by death or jailed as they attempt to report on important issues of the day and bring to light information in the public interest.

Since this day was first celebrated, 692 journalists have been killed. The majority of victims were local reporters covering topics such as crime, corruption, and national security in their home countries. Adding to this tragic figure are the hundreds more each year who face intimidation, censorship, and arbitrary arrest—guilty of nothing more than a passion for truth and a tenacious belief that a free society depends on an informed citizenry. In every corner of the globe—from Iran to Zimbabwe, Burma to Pakistan, Cuba and Venezuela—there are journalists being actively harassed and exercising self-censorship because of threats and intimidation from repressive regimes.

As part of combating this intimidation and censorship, Mr. ADAM SCHIFF of California and

I recently introduced the Daniel Pearl Freedom of Press Act. As many will remember, Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and murdered by terrorists in Pakistan, just 4 months after the September 11th attacks.

At the time of his kidnapping, Pearl served as the South Asia Bureau Chief of the Wall Street Journal, and was based in Mumbai, India. He went to Pakistan as part of an investigation into the alleged links between Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, Al Qaeda and Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence, ISI. He was subsequently beheaded by his captors. This legislation is dedicated to Daniel Pearl, the many that have gone before him, and those that still face such dangers today. The legislation seeks to highlight and promote freedom of the press by establishing an annual State Department report on the status of press freedom in every country in the world and create a grant program aimed at broadening and strengthening the independence of journalists and media organizations.

Now, more than ever, the defense of the freedom of the press must continue. Here at home, the Constitution of the United States provides: “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.” Not since those words were adopted has this body passed a law to ensure the freedom of the press. Last month, the House passed the Free Flow of Information Act of 2009, legislation I was honored to introduce with Representative RICK BOUCHER of Virginia. The bill provides a qualified privilege of confidential sources to journalists—which is sadly missing in Federal law—and enables reporters to shield sources in most instances from disclosure. I urge its swift passage by our colleagues in the Senate.

While it is my great hope that a Federal Media Shield bill will soon be signed into law here at home, the struggle for freedom of the press is much more primitive in its evolution in many parts of the world. And for that reason we must stand in solidarity with all those around the globe who love freedom and continue to strain at the bonds of tyranny and oppression on this day of remembrance.

On this day, we remember reporters like Roxana Saberi. Miss Saberi is a 31-year-old American journalist who was arrested in February 2009, and is being held in Iran on charges of espionage, which her lawyer and the U.S. Department of State call baseless. Saberi is a freelance journalist who moved to Iran 6 years ago and reports for NPR, the BBC, and other news organizations. A true representative of this melting pot that is America, she grew up in Fargo, North Dakota, the daughter of Reza Saberi, who was born in Iran, and Akiko Saberi, who is from Japan.

As we learn of cases like Miss Saberi, we understand the stakes that are at risk here. We understand why oppressive regimes like that of Iran want so desperately to muzzle the unfiltered reporting of journalists like Saberi. And we understand why it is so important to cherish and protect freedom of the press as a vital check on abuses of power. Today, we call on the government of Iran to free Miss Saberi, hospitalized in her desperate attempt to win her freedom with a hunger strike that might appeal to the conscience of her oppressor where her valid legal arguments did not.

As a conservative who believes in limited government, I believe the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press. A free press ensures the flow