

WELCOMING THE ROMANIAN
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, to welcome Romanian Foreign Minister Cristian Diaconescu to the United States. It is an honor to meet with Foreign Minister Diaconescu and highlight his extraordinary role, and that of our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) ally and partner Romania, in addressing pressing international challenges including NATO-Russian relations, the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran's developing nuclear program. It is clear to members of Congress and the Administration that Romania is integral to American, European Union and international efforts to promote democracy, rule of law and human rights.

As many of my colleagues know, Foreign Minister Diaconescu assumed his current role at the head of Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2008. He has repeatedly expressed a strong commitment to enhancing transatlantic relations and has been unwavering in championing the values our two nations share. To that end, the Foreign Minister has been vocal in promoting political and economic reform in Eastern Europe by strengthening democratic institutions and structures, and working to end conflict in Europe through the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

I also want to praise Romania's efforts in supporting the EU's Eastern Partnership efforts that will bolster democratic transformation in this region and hopefully lead to closer EU and Western relations with Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It is my understanding while in Washington, Foreign Minister Diaconescu will meet with Obama Administration officials and members of Congress to discuss issues of importance to both the United States and Romania, including economic, political and security conditions in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Black Sea regions. I welcome the discussion of these important and timely issues and the opportunity to highlight Romania's strong military and security commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq alongside U.S. and NATO forces. I know I share the sentiments of all Americans in expressing our gratitude for the sacrifice of brave Romanian troops, including those killed in the line of duty.

As a member of Congress who has strongly supported expansion of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to critical allies such as Romania, I look forward to discussing Bucharest's progress with the Foreign Minister and his nation's future participation in this program.

Madam Speaker, Romania is a strategic partner of the United States, and in its fifth year as a NATO member Romania has contributed at the highest levels in several missions worldwide. In April 2008, Bucharest hosted the largest NATO Summit in history and was recently praised by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer for its commit-

ment to NATO missions. I join all of my colleagues in applauding Romania's pledge to maintain its troops in Kosovo, as well as in Afghanistan, where it already has approximately 860 troops deployed. We are also grateful that the Romanian government has pledged to send additional trainers and medical personnel to the mission in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, it is essential that Congress continue to support and enhance cooperation between the U.S. and our ally Romania. As a staunch supporter of American-Romanian relations, I urge my colleagues to join me in welcoming Foreign Minister Diaconescu and the Romanian delegation to the United States, and I thank the Foreign Minister for his efforts and unwavering commitment to this unbreakable bond between our two nations.

HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK
OF BART ANDERSON

HON. JIM MATHESON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. MATHESON. Madam Speaker, southern Utah has lost a local treasure with the passing of Bart Anderson of St. George, Utah.

Bart Anderson was often described by people who meet him for the first time as "bear-sized Bart Anderson". He loomed large in the community life of Washington County. He was a retired St. George hematologist, historian and folklorist. Everyone knew him as "Ranger Bart" because he devoted his golden years to giving slide shows at nearby national parks—including Zion National Park—as well as at state parks.

I knew Bart Anderson as a man with a passion for the stories of this part of the West, known as Utah's Dixie—so named because cotton was one of the crops grown by the Mormon settlers here at the time of the Civil War.

One of Bart's most popular presentations was one on the outlaw Butch Cassidy. It featured vintage photos of Butch Cassidy, who Bart often pointed out, could charm the locals and even the lawmen of that era.

Bart was a talented and versatile man, who turned down a number of more lucrative business offers because they would take him away from Dixie and he said he had too much red dirt running through his veins to leave.

As a child, he contracted polio and when doctors said he wouldn't walk again, his father threw him in the swimming pool to help make him strong. When he was 11, Bart's father arranged for him to work for the Boy Scouts as a guide into the back country. He developed a great love of hiking, including the Grand Canyon.

As an adult, he merged his love of hiking with his passion for story-telling by giving walking tours in downtown St. George. That morphed into a series of history lectures for which he developed over 100 slide programs that communicated his love of place to residents and visitors alike.

He married his sweetheart—Delorice—whom he called "the wind beneath my wings."

She was often in the audience during his lectures and performances. Whether he was reciting "The Ballad of Sam McGee" around a campfire with a troop of Boy Scouts, or researching history at the Washington County Historical Society, Bart Anderson was happiest when he was immersed in folklore. He received many local state and national honors, including an award as Outstanding Volunteer from former First Lady Hillary Clinton.

One of his close friends—Lyman Hafen—told the local newspaper that Anderson was one-of-a-kind—with a heart as big as Zion Canyon. I was very proud to be his friend and while he will be missed, he will never be forgotten.

FIRST AID SQUAD OF
WEEHAWKEN, NEW JERSEY

HON. ALBIO SIRES

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Volunteer First Aid Squad of Weehawken, New Jersey, which is celebrating its 40th Anniversary on May 8, 2009. This organization has provided 40 years of free emergency medical service to the Township of Weehawken and the North Hudson Community.

In 1969, the Weehawken Volunteer First Aid Squad was the first volunteer squad to form in Hudson County. It is now only one of two remaining volunteer squads still operating in the County. Over the last forty years, the squad has responded to over 75,000 calls for help, providing initial medical treatment and transportation to the appropriate medical facility at no charge to the patient.

The squad primarily covers the Township of Weehawken, and for the last twenty years, the Town of Guttenberg, it has been directly involved in all of the most serious incidents that have struck the metropolitan area. In 1993 the squad responded to Manhattan to provide assistance to the World Trade Center when it was first attacked by terrorists. It then coordinated treatment of tens of thousands of the victims that were evacuated to New Jersey after the second terrorist attack in 2001.

Two years later the volunteer squad provided comfort to thousands of commuters who were stranded in New York City during the blackout of 2003. Most recently, the squad coordinated the response of over 50 emergency medical service units who responded to the Weehawken Ferry Terminal to assist treating passengers of the "Miracle on the Hudson" plane crash.

The squad has been a training ground for many residents who have chosen careers in the medical profession. Over the years, the volunteer squad has been honored to have six members who have gone on to become medical doctors, and hundreds who have chosen careers as nurses, paramedics and emergency medical technicians.

Please join me in congratulating the Weehawken Volunteer First Aid Squad and all members of the squad for providing the residents of Weehawken, Guttenberg and North Hudson with excellent emergency health care.