beaten with impunity, while political prisoners face years of jail time. The new guilty verdict imposed on Mikhail Khodorkovsky late last year makes it appear that the only crime that's actually punishable in the Russian Federation is opposition to Putin.

Days after the verdict was handed flown, opposition leader and former Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov was arrested for participating in a peaceful rally. He had committed the grave offense of expressing support for the protection of constitutional rights and condemning the sham Khodorkovsky verdict.

Hostility to the rule of law extends beyond Russia's own borders, as we saw in the August 2008 invasion of our democratic ally Georgia. Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity remains under threat today.

In our relationship with Moscow, we must learn to balance the twin imperatives of effective engagement and criticism of gross miscarriages of justice. This will only become more essential in the context of the coming debate on Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization.

Russia has moved closer than ever to acceding to the WTO. We are likely to face this prospect in the coming year and the resulting vote on whether to extend Permanent Normal Trade Relations. We will need to have a full and robust debate on this issue. We will need to ensure that PNTR is not granted until we have confirmed that Russia has fulfilled the basic obligations that WTO membership demands.

If those obligations are met, my view is that WTO accession would be a very positive step forward. Bringing Russia into a rules-based trading system would bind Moscow to the rule of law. It would create consequences and enforcement mechanisms for failure to live by its commitments. WTO membership is by no means a panacea, particularly for systems as deeply flawed as Russia's. But it would be a significant step in the right direction.

Not only would it impose the rule of law in Russia's trading relationships. It would demonstrate that even Moscow recognizes the value of international rules of fairness. This should serve as a reminder that their presumed indifference to our criticism is no excuse for failing to voice that criticism. We need to engage with Russia, but Russia also needs to engage to with us. We cannot shy away from taking a public stand against increasingly brutal repression at the hands of those with whom we have important negotiations.

Neither can we lose sight of the fact that supporting the rule of law is not just about promoting American ideals. One of the most important lessons of the last decade it that democracy strengthening is as firmly grounded in realpolitik as it is steeped in lofty, high-minded ideals. If our moral clarity helps to strengthen democracy advocates in Russia, we will further our strategic goals in the long run. A less corrupt, less autocratic regime in Moscow will result in a better international partner.

As Vladimir Kara Murza has written in World Affairs, defending the rule of law is not just our right but our duty. Last week Vladimir wrote that statutes of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to which both the U.S. and Russia are party, make this clear. The statutes state ''issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect for these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of the international order'' and ''commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States.''

As a member of key international bodies and an aspirant to the WTO, Russia has subjected itself to international norms. The U.S. and its Western allies must take seriously the responsibility to hold Russia accountable for its commitments and its actions.

The Russian people have a long and tremendous history. Their government has very tragically tried to return this great people to a dark chapter of that history. But if we refuse to stay silent in the face of egregious human rights violations while constructively engaging in key negotiations, I believe we can effectively encourage positive change in Russia.

RECOGNIZING MARY EVELYN ARNOLD

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleague, Representative MIKE THOMPSON, to recognize Mary Evelyn Arnold, who has been named the City of Sonoma's 2011 Alcaldessa, or Honorary Mayor.

The title, ''Alcalde'' or ''Alcaldessa'' when referring to a woman, is the Spanish word for ''Mayor.'' During the Spanish colonial period in California, the Alcalde was the primary civil authority. In modern times in the City of Sonoma, it is an honorary title and the contemporary Alcalde or Alcaldessa presides over ceremonial events for the city.

Alcaldes and Alcaldessas are nominated by the community and are representative of individuals with a long record of volunteer work. Ms. Arnold is no exception to this rule.

At the top of the list of Ms. Arnold volunteer passions is the library. She has served on both the Sonoma County Library Commission and as Chair of the Sonoma Valley Library Advisory Board.

She also serves as Treasurer and Chair of the Investment Committee at Vintage House, organizes the Wednesday cooking crew at Meals on Wheels and bakes birthday cakes for the WillMar Center, which offers support and counseling for children and teens grieving the death of a loved one.

Pets Lifeline (where she is the unofficial cat cuddler), Kiwanis Club of Sonoma Plaza and the AAUW Scholarship Committee round out her volunteer community activities.

Ms. Arnold is also very active in her church, serving on the Committee on Ministry of the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ and serves as Vice Moderator of the First Congregational Church of Sonoma.

Ms. Arnold moved to Sonoma County in 1987 and was the co-owner of a specialty wine business and worked for the Wine Business Monthly and Wine Business Insider for several years, finishing her career with internet.com.

Mr. Speaker, Mary Evelyn Arnold is the quintessential volunteer, a dynamic and well respected member of the community. It is therefore appropriate that we acknowledge her today as the City of Sonoma's Alcaldessa for 2011.

HONORING MICHAEL LATIKER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Latiker. Mr. Latiker was the first born to the late Charlie and Earnestine Latiker. He is a lifelong resident of Yazoo City, Mississippi. He attended school in Yazoo City and graduated from Yazoo City High School in 1977. Michael is a man with a heart of gold. He is a selfless servant to the public, a helping hand to those in need, a visitor of the sick, and a fierce friend.

Latiker was introduced to Christianity at an early age by his parents. He is an active and a most dedicated member of King Solomon Baptist Church, where he serves on the deacon board and a committed usher. Besides his Christian duties, he acquired other responsibilities which include: The Outreach Program of the community established by Herman Leach, The King Solomon Male Choir, softball coach of males at Roy Capernella Park (ages 6 through 14), Yazoo Brotherhood and mentor for the youth as well as his children Roderick Miguel, Verneda, and Eureka.

Michael's work never ends without a loving smile. No task for him has ever been too enormous. The philosophy he shares, ''Never too early; Never too late, Just call.'' He has affected and changed the lives of many people and has made the community a better place in which to live. With his faith in Christ, he in a portrait true of brotherhood.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidable detained in my district and missed several votes on February 14, 2011. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall No. 35, the Motion to Recommit with Instructions, and ''no'' on rollcall No. 36, final passage of H.R. 514.

IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH ACCEPTING THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today President George H.W. Bush accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama.

President Bush, dubbed ''41,'' and I share the common bond very few combat veterans have experienced. We both were shot down while flying for our country. I am thrilled to report that he had a better experience after the