

We all know that Bashar al-Assad, the President of Syria, is a brutal dictator. But this resolution's purpose is not merely to recognize him as such. Rather, it is a call to action. Specifically, it is a call to escalate our war to overthrow the Syrian government of Assad.

For the last five years, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others have been working hand-in-hand to overthrow the Assad government, supposedly for humanitarian reasons. But how has our war to overthrow Assad helped humanity?

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed. Millions have become homeless refugees. Much of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed. Terrorist organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and others have taken over large areas of the country and are engaging in genocide. And now, the same people who are behind this war to overthrow Assad want to escalate that war, and this resolution is an attempt to gin up public support for such an escalation.

This resolution urges the Administration to create "additional mechanisms for the protection of civilians" which is coded language for the creation of a so-called "no-fly" or "safe zone." The creation of a "no fly zone" or "safe zone" in Syria would be a major escalation of the war. Such a measure would cost billions of dollars, require tens of thousands of ground troops and a massive U.S. air presence, and it won't work. Furthermore, it will likely result in a direct confrontation between the United States and Russia. Fortunately, President Obama has thus far resisted pressure to escalate the war in this way.

The fact is that the main area in Syria where Christians, Alawites, Shiites, Druze, Yazidis and other religious minorities can practice their faith without fear of persecution is in the Syrian territories where Assad maintains control. Therefore, the overthrow of Assad would worsen the genocidal activities by ISIS, al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations against Christians, Alawites, and other Syrian religious minorities.

H. Con. Res. 121 could be used to lay the groundwork for the escalation of the present U.S. military action aimed at overthrowing the Assad government.

Previous Congresses passed Iraq and Libya resolutions, which were used for remarkably similar ends in several ways. The Iraq resolution was introduced in 1998, and it called upon the United States to "take steps necessary, including the reprogramming of funds, to ensure United States support for efforts to bring Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi officials to justice."

The Libya resolution went further, urging "the United Nations Security Council to take such further action as may be necessary to protect civilians in Libya from attack, including the possible imposition of a no-fly zone over Libyan territory." Both of those statements, while not legally binding, were a part of the public campaign that were later used to build support for U.S. military action.

Similarly, H. Con. Res. 121 urging "the Administration to establish additional mechanisms for the protection of civilians and to ensure consistent and equitable access to humanitarian aid for vulnerable populations" could be used for similar ends by a future administration.

Of course, there are many differences in the Iraq, Libya and Syria conflicts, as well as the

military action taken. But if the U.S. learned nothing else in Iraq and Libya, we should have learned that toppling ruthless dictators in the Middle East creates even more human suffering and strengthens our enemy, groups like ISIS and other terrorist organizations, in those countries.

It is undeniable that in both Iraq and Libya, humanitarian conditions today are far worse than they were before those governments were overthrown, and ISIS and other terrorist organizations are more powerful, causing even more human suffering.

If the U.S. is successful in its current effort to overthrow the Syrian government of Assad, allowing ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups to take over all of Syria, including the Assad-controlled areas where Christians and other religious minorities remain protected, then the United States will be morally culpable for the genocide that will result.

This is exactly what happened when we overthrew Saddam Hussein in Iraq. It is what happened in Libya when we overthrew Muammar Gaddafi. To do the same thing over and over and expect a different outcome is insanity.

#### HONORING BLM UKIAH FIELD DIRECTOR RICH BURNS

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 21, 2016*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I, along with Representative GARAMENDI and Representative HUFFMAN, rise to recognize and honor Director Rich Burns for his great contribution to the designation of the Berryessa Snow Mountain Monument by President Barack Obama on July 10, 2015.

This outstanding accomplishment was made possible by the tireless work of countless advocates. Their commitment to engaging friends, colleagues, local residents, businesses, stakeholders across the country, and policymakers in a coordinated effort to achieve permanent protection was critical to the establishment of the Monument.

Now, the Berryessa Snow Mountain Monument may be counted among the hundreds of pristine parks across the country that represent America's most treasured public resources. The region's unique geological formations will play host for the world's scientists for years to come. Centuries-old archeological sites will draw curious historians and researchers as they piece together the stories of generations past. And avid bikers, hikers, campers, horsemen, and sportsmen will be able to enjoy this landmark that is now forever open and accessible to outdoor enthusiasts from Northern California and beyond.

The Berryessa Snow Mountain Monument serves as proof of the value of the Antiquities Act and the power of the Executive to protect these lands in the face of inaction by Congress. After extensive input from interested parties and substantial evidence of this region's value, the Obama Administration honored the support of stakeholders, and the gravity of conservation.

The legacy of public lands is one of the most important we can leave for future generations. The Berryessa Snow Mountain

Monument is a critical piece of a preservation system that stretches from the Hawaiian Islands to the Maine Coast. It has been a privilege working with Director Burns to further our mutual goal of preserving our nation's great open spaces, and we look forward to collaborating in the future.

#### MILESTONES AWARD RECIPIENTS

#### HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 21, 2016*

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following biographies.

BAKER O'BRIEN

This year's Milestones Award Recipient for the Arts category is Baker O'Brien, an established world-class glass artist and long-time supporter of the arts in Toledo, Ohio. Ms. O'Brien was the sole apprentice of legendary glass-master Dominick Labino and has been mixing, melting, blowing and casting vividly colored glass for over 30 years.

Her work is part of private collections around the world, and some of the more well-known recipients of her work include Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani, Dr. C. Everett Koop, China Wildlife Conservation Association of Beijing, Beijing, China, and concert pianist André Watts.

Ms. O'Brien has also donated her work to a wide variety of local organizations for fundraising. Over nearly 30 years, she has further supported the development of the arts in the Toledo area by educating docents from the Toledo Museum of Art. These docents, who are primarily women, are on the front lines of public arts education. Ms. O'Brien passionately ensures that they have correct and accurate information to pass along to museum patrons regarding both the art and science of glass. Her lectures and demonstrations include a combination of not only the science and history of glass art, but also the Labino Studio. She has served as a guest artist for the museum on numerous occasions.

Outside of her work creating and supporting the arts, Ms. O'Brien has a passion for animals and owns several horses and purebred dogs. This community is truly fortunate to have a local champion for the arts and art education.

KATHLEEN ZOUHARY

Kathleen M. Zouhary is this year's Milestones Awards Recipient for her work advancing women in Business. Ms. Zouhary is a lawyer by trade and became one of the first female partners in the law firm of Fuller and Henry in 1981.

Her distinguished legal career is punctuated by other firsts, such as becoming the first Vice-President and General Counsel for St. Luke's Hospital in Toledo. She also served as the Vice-President and General Counsel for Ohio Care Health System, Inc. Her wisdom and expertise assisted physicians, board members, and executives in fulfilling the mission of providing healthcare to Toledo-area residents. Ms. Zouhary currently owns her own business, Zouhary Dispute Resolution, which provides many forms of dispute resolution services to the financial and health care communities.

In addition to her professional work, Ms. Zouhary has served on the Susan G. Komen Board for many years, the Miami University Board of Trustees, and the Toledo Legal Aid