Paso INS Investigations Team, headed up by Assistant District Director Roberto S. Saenz, is receiving the INS Commissioner's Meritorious Service Award on October 26, 1998 at the Commissioner's Conference in Denver, Colorado. I would also like to recognize the outstanding leadership of District Director Luis Garcia and the superb job he has done in El Paso.

In addition to Assistant District Director Saenz, the following members of the El Paso team deserve special recognition: Special Agent Jeffrey Roberts; Special Agent Hector Valencia; Supervisory Deportation Officer Qasem M. Al-Ali; Immigration Inspector Ahmed Adil Abdallat; and Supervisory Special Agent Clyde McKenzie. This team brought down a smuggling ring responsible for bringing hundreds of illegal aliens from nations that are state sponsors of international terrorism and each of these men should be applauded.

It is difficult to account for all of the accomplishments of *Operation: Eastern Star*. However, on every level it was a tremendous success. I believe the manner in which this operation was planned and executed speaks volumes about the professionalism and dedication of the agents involved. Primarily, as a result of this investigation, the El Paso District Office for Investigations focused attention not only on the existence and magnitude of Middle Eastern smuggling organizations, but also on their potential threat to the national security of our nation. In light of growing tensions and activities in the Middle East, *Operation: Eastern Star* brought attention to the INS's ability to participate in international operations aimed at protecting the United States from foreign threats.

As a result of this investigation, *Operation: Eastern Star* was able to establish excellent liaison on a District level with federal agencies focused on National Security issues. *Operation: Eastern Star* was called upon by several United States federal agencies, as well as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for its expertise and ability to communicate with the nationalities involved. El Paso District agents continue to be utilized by these agencies, as well as other INS Districts and Sectors, in an effort to further enhance cooperative law enforcement efforts worldwide. This effort was responsible in part for the identification of over fifteen major smugglers trafficking in Middle Eastern nationalists from their home countries through Asia, and Central and South America.

The ultimate goal of *Operation: Eastern Star*, however, was accomplished through its successful dismantling of a Global Alien Smuggling Organization, preventing its members from further activity. Perhaps the most fulfilling achievement was the successful apprehension and prosecution of renowned alien smuggler Geroge Tajirian, who has eluded United States authorities for over twenty years. He was sentenced to a mandatory thirteen years in federal prison, thus ending his estimated earnings of more than $3 million each year. Compare this staggering amount to the less than $95,000 cost to the U.S. taxpayers for this operation. The small team of highly trained El Paso INS Special Agents managed to arrest Tajirian in Panama with the invaluable assistance of the State Department and the Department of Justice Office of International Affairs. The team of agents used their investigative experience and fluency in multiple languages to infiltrate this highly sophisticated network within one year. Tajirian's arrest led to other arrests to include three members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and a citizen of Yemen who is wanted for genocide in his home country.

We all owe these agents a word of thanks and our deepest gratitude for a job well done. All too often, we only hear about the job of our law enforcement community when something goes terribly wrong. I am glad to stand here today and celebrate a job well done by the El Paso INS Investigations Team.

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER INTERFERENCE WITH FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF JUDICIAL AND ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS IN PERU

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing this resolution to express concern over interference with freedom of the press and the independence of judicial and electoral institutions in Peru.

I have been one of Peru's strongest supporters in Congress. There is no question that Peru has made it back from the brink of the abyss. No one should forget that not so many year ago, Peru was a terrorized nation.

Peru has also become a good partner in the war against drugs. Now that coca prices in Peru have dropped to historically low levels, there is a real chance to help farmers grow legitimate crops. I have been pleased to encourage our European allies to join us in seizing this opportunity to promote meaningful alternative development in Peru.

During my visit to Peru this past spring, I made it clear that President Alberto Fujimori deserves much credit for these accomplishments.

Nonetheless, I feel it is important for the Congress to speak up at this time. I am increasingly concerned by signs that the independence of Peru's legislative, judicial and electoral branches is being compromised.

Moreover, the continuing actions taken by the government of Peru against Baruch Ivcher, the Israeli-born owner of television station Channel 2, have become emblematic of government interference with freedom of expression in Peru. It is chilling that these acts of blatant intimidation were precipitated by Channel 2's exposes of abuses—including alleged torture and murder—by Peru's intelligence service.

This resolution resolves that the erosion of the independence of judicial and electoral branches of Peru's government and the blatant intimidation of journalists in Peru are matters for concern by the United States. It would be very unfortunate if these trends were to undermine Peru's hard won stability and progress.

This resolution also calls for an independent investigation and report on threats to press freedom and judicial independence in Peru by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States. I believe that it is most appropriate for the Inter-American community to look into these matters.

I am pleased that the distinguished ranking Democratic member of our Committee, the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. HAMILTON, and the gentleman from California, Mr. LANTOS, also a member of our Committee, have joined me in co-sponsoring this resolution.

We must, of course, continue to fully engage Peru in our important bilateral relationship, particularly in our shared fight against drugs and terrorism. Peru's efforts in these areas deserve our recognition and strong support. However, despite these very positive aspects in our relationship, the United States should not be expected to turn a blind eye to interference with freedom of the press and the independence of judicial and electoral institutions in Peru.

I realize that this resolution is being introduced on the last day of this session. However, I believe it is important to bring this resolution to the attention of our colleagues and to the attention of Peru's authorities.

H. RES. 609

Whereas the independence of Peru's legislative and judicial branches have been brought into question by the May 29, 1997, dismissal of 3 Constitutional Tribunal magistrates;

Whereas actions related to efforts to authorize President Alberto Fujimori to seek a third term in office have raised questions about the independence of the National Council of Magistrates and the National Election Board in Peru;

Whereas the Department of State's Peru Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, dated January 30, 1998, found that ''[i]ncidents of harassment of media representatives increased to such an extent as to create the perception of an organized campaign of intimidation on the part of the Government, specifically, on the part of the armed forces and intelligence services'';

Whereas the Department of State's Peru Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 states that Channel 2 television station reporters in Peru ''revealed torture by Army Intelligence Service officers; the systematic wiretapping of journalists, government officials, and opposition politicians; and the income tax return of Vladimiro Montesinos, President Fujimori's senior intelligence adviser'';

Whereas on July 13, 1997, Peruvian immigration authorities revoked the Peruvian citizenship of the Israeli-born owner of the Channel 2 television station, Baruch Ivcher;

Whereas Baruch Ivcher subsequently lost control of Channel 2 under an interpretation of a law that provides that a foreigner may not own a media organization, leading the State Department's Report on Human Rights Practices to conclude that ''the Government's action in this case was widely interpreted as an attempt to prevent the station from broadcasting any more negative stories about the regime'';

Whereas the Peruvian Government empaneled a special court to prosecute Baruch Ivcher for alleged tax offenses employing judicial procedures described by Peruvian legal experts as completely irregular and as constituting political interference in the independence of the judiciary; and

Whereas the Peruvian Government has issued an INTERPOL warrant for Baruch Ivcher's arrest and has initiated investigations aimed at prosecuting members of Baruch Ivcher's immediate family: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the erosion of the independence of judicial and electoral branches of the Government of Peru and the blatant intimidation of

journalists in Peru are matters for concern by the United States; and

(2) the United States should seek an independent investigation and report on threats to press freedom and judicial independence in Peru by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM NOTIFICATION SYSTEM ACT

HON. SCOTTY BAESLER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. BAESLER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce the Victims Notification or ''VINE'' Act to amend the Violence Against Women Act. This Act builds on the success of the Violence Against Women Act, the 1994 Crime bill and provisions I authored to prevent rural domestic violence, and the establishment of the first statewide VINE system in my home state of Kentucky.

Kentucky Governor Paul Patton's Office of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services launched the first statewide VINE system in the nation in 1997. Since its inception, the statewide victim notification system has registered almost 4,300 victims and others who wished to be registered, and has made over 1,000 notifications upon the release of an inmate. In January of 1998, the juvenile detention facilities were also brought on line with the VINE system.

Drawing on the proven success of the VINE system and the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the new National VINE system established by this legislation would constitute an integrated computer and phone system whereby victims of domestic and sexual crimes would receive notification of vital information concerning their assailants, such as release from prison, probation hearings, etc. Like the National Crime Information Center and the computer systems for child support enforcement and child care background checks, VINE would enlist state-of-the-art technology as a weapon in the war against domestic violence and sex crimes.

The legislation does this by establishing a private, non-profit entity to establish and run a VINE system with a Justice Department grant. The VINE system will provide information concerning domestic violence and sex crime convicts' correctional and legal status to sex crime and domestic abuse victims, as well as information concerning legal recourse and resources available to victims. Finally, the legislation outlines logistical requirements for the VINE system, including creation of a 24 hour toll free hotline and automated system that would proactively call to contact victims.

Mr. Speaker, the VINE system was originally created in Jefferson County, Kentucky, as a county-wide notification system for victims after the 1993 murder of Mary Byron. Ms. Byron was killed by her ex-boyfriend after he was released from the Jefferson County correctional system without her knowledge. She was shot seven times by Donovan Harris as she left work on that day, her 21st birthday. Mr. Harris had been incarcerated for the rape and kidnapping of Ms. Byron less than a month before. Congress should enact this legislation on behalf of all the victims of domestic violence and sexual crimes—and to the memory of Mary Byron.

OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT OVER IRAQ

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for legislation in the 106th Congress to compensate the families of the Americans who were killed on April 14, 1994 while serving in Operation Provide Comfort over Iraq. This is an important issue and should be a priority in the next Congress.

On April 14, 1994, 15 Americans, 14 military personnel and 1 civilian, and 11 foreign nationals, were killed when their Army Black Hawk helicopters, were shot out of the sky by two Air Force F–15's. According to the General Accounting Office, this horrible tragedy resulted from over 130 separate mistakes by the Air Force and the Army. After this incident, the Department of Defense made $100,000 payments to the families of the foreign nationals in addition to the other death benefits they received from their own countries. Unfortunately, the Pentagon was not willing to give the same treatment to the American families.

Mr. Speaker, the Pentagon was wrong not to give our own personnel the same treatment that they gave the survivors of the foreign nationals. The Immigration and Claims Subcommittee held a hearing on this issue on June 18, 1998 and heard from both Government witnesses and the families. At that hearing, the Pentagon was unable to provide a credible answer for why they did not give the Americans the same treatment as the foreign nationals. The Pentagon first could not answer whether they had the authority to make the payments to the Americans. Later, the Pentagon acknowledged that they had the authority to act but simply were unwilling to.

At that hearing, the Subcommittee members heard the stories of the American families and the pain they suffered. This hits particularly close to home for me because Anthony Bass, one of the personnel killed, was the son of my cousin and I know the great suffering his family has endured. The Basses and all of the families, put their sons and daughters, and husbands and wives, in the care of our armed forces, but they were let down when the foreign nationals were treated better than their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I would particularly like to commend the leadership of Mr. WATT, the Ranking Member and Mr. SMITH, the Chairman of the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee, who have worked in a bipartisan fashion to make the Pentagon do the right thing. There were a number of bills introduced during the 105th Congress, including Congressman WATT's bill, H.R. 3022, to correct this tragic inequity and fairly compensate the families. Unfortunately, the Subcommittee did not have time this year to consider this important issue because of the many other issues before the Committee.

I look forward to the 106th Congress when we will pass legislation if the Pentagon continues to refuse to correct this injustice. Let me say, though, I hope the Pentagon chooses to act so Congress does not have to. Thus far, the Pentagon has sent a message to tell our military personnel and civilian employees that the lies of foreigners are worth more than theirs. That is wrong and must be corrected.

MISSILE THREAT

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, the following is an excellent analysis of the world's missile threat presented by Mr. Robert Walpole to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

SPEECH AT THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

(By Robert D. Walpole, National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs)

Good morning. I welcome the opportunity to be here today to talk about the ballistic missile threat to the United States. Assessing and defining that threat to our homeland and interests worldwide is one of the most important intelligence missions in the post-Cold War world. And I must tell you that we consider foreign assistance to be fundamental to the threat, not merely an incidental aspect of the problem. Finally, the threat is real, serious, growing, and dynamic. For example, since our annual report six months ago, the Ghauri, Shahab 3, and Taepo Dong 1 missiles/launch vehicles have all been tested. For these reasons, we are mandated by Congress to report on our assessments of this threat annually.

At the outset, let me emphasize how appreciative we are of the Commission's work. I particularly like the fact that they received approval to publish a relatively detailed unclassified report on the threat. As you have undoubtedly heard, we gave the Commission access to all the available intelligence information, regardless of classification. The Commission made a number of excellent recommendations for how we can improve our collection and analysis on foreign missile developments. Indeed, their report reinforces the DCI's call for a stronger investment in analysis and more aggressive use of outside expertise. Incorporating the Commission's ideas will strengthen our own work in this area.

We and the Commission agree that the missile threat confronts the Community with an array of complicated problems that require innovative solutions. At the same time, the Commission challenges some of our conclusions and assumptions, particularly those in our 1995 National Intelligence Estimate—Emerging Missile Threats to North America During the Next 15 Years (NIE 95–19). Our March 1998 Annual Report to Congress on Foreign Missile Developments was prepared in response to a request by Congress for a yearly update of that assessment.

Under the DCI's direction, the 1998 report responded to legitimate criticisms levied at our earlier work. It also incorporated the recommendations of outside experts who reviewed the 1995 NIE. As a result, the 1998 report already addresses many of the Commission's concerns, especially those regarding how we discuss foreign assistance, alternatives to increasing a missile's range, and approaches to circumvent development. Work is already underway on the 1999 report, and we are looking differently at how we characterize uncertainties, alternative scenarios, and warnings as a result of our interaction with the Commission the past several