

same period much has been written by independent journalists and travelers to Tibet about the real situation in Tibet and not what they have been shown. Most of them portray a very different picture than what the Chinese government claims, clearly criticizing China about the lack of human rights, religious freedom and self-rule in Tibet. What has actually happened and is still happening is that since the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region the real authority has been solely held by Chinese leaders. As for the Tibetan people, they have been facing suspicions and growing restrictions. The lack of true ethnic equality and harmony based on trust, and the absence of genuine stability in Tibet clearly shows that things are not well in Tibet and that basically there is a problem.

Prominent and respected Tibetan leaders in Tibet have spoken out on this from time to time and even suffered because of their courageous acts. In the early 1960s, the late Panchen Lama outlined the sufferings and aspirations of the Tibetan people in his petition to the Chinese leaders. Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, one of the foremost Tibetan communist leaders, in his recent biography published in English dwells at length on the need to meet the interests of the Tibetan people. In fact, it is clear that most senior Tibetan officials in Tibet deep in their hearts are extremely dissatisfied.

This year the Chinese government will mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. There will be much fanfare and many commemorative events to celebrate the occasion but these will be meaningless when they do not reflect the ground realities. For example, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were celebrated with great pomp as real achievements at the time they took place.

China has made tremendous economic progress during the past more than two decades. China today is not what it was twenty or thirty years ago. Much has changed in China. As a result she has become a major player in the world and China rightly deserves this position. It is a big nation with a huge population and a rich and ancient civilization. However, China's image is tarnished by her human rights records, undemocratic actions, the lack of the rule of law and the unequal implementation of autonomy rights regarding minorities, including the Tibetans. All these are a cause for more suspicion and distrust from the outside world. Internally, they are an obstacle to unity and stability that are of utmost importance to the leaders of the People's Republic of China. In my view, it is important that as China becomes a powerful and respectable nation she should be able to adopt a reasonable policy with confidence.

The world in general, of which China is a part, is changing for the better. In recent times there is definitely a greater awareness and appreciation for peace, non-violence, democracy, justice and environmental protection. The recent unprecedented response from governments and individuals across the world to the tsunami disaster victims reaffirms that the world is truly interdependent and the importance of universal responsibility.

My involvement in the affairs of Tibet is not for the purpose of claiming certain personal rights or political position for myself nor attempting to stake claims for the Tibetan administration in exile. In 1992 in a formal announcement I stated clearly that when we return to Tibet with a certain degree of freedom I will not hold any office in the Tibetan government or any other political position and that the present Tibetan administration in exile will be dissolved.

Moreover, the Tibetans working in Tibet should carry on the main responsibility of administering Tibet.

I once again want to reassure the Chinese authorities that as long as I am responsible for the affairs of Tibet we remain fully committed to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking independence for Tibet and are willing to remain within the People's Republic of China. I am convinced that in the long run such an approach is of benefit to the Tibetan people for their material progress. It is encouraging that there is support from various parts of the world for this approach as being reasonable, realistic and of mutual benefit to the Chinese and Tibetans. I am particularly encouraged by the recognition and support that has come from certain quarters of the intellectual circle from within China.

I am happy with our renewed contacts with the Chinese leadership and that the third round of meetings last September shows that gradually our interactions are improving. Now that our elected political leadership is shouldering more responsibility in Tibetan affairs, I have advised them to look into the issues raised by the Chinese side during our third round of talks and to take steps to address or clarify them as needed. We remain hopeful that eventually we will be able to develop the necessary trust and resolve this long-standing issue to our mutual benefit.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express the Tibetan people's gratitude and appreciation to the people and Government of India for their steadfast sympathy and support. I very much feel a part of this nation not only because of the centuries-old religious and cultural ties that India and Tibet enjoyed but also because I and most of the Tibetans in exile lived in India for the past 45 years.

I offer my prayers to the brave men and women of Tibet who gave their lives for the cause of Tibetan freedom.

TRIBUTE TO MS. CATHY STROUD

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise during this month dedicated to the celebration of Black History to pay tribute to Ms. Cathy Stroud, an outstanding woman who has dedicated her life to empowering others.

Cathy was born in New Bern, North Carolina. She attended J.T. Barber High School and received her bachelors degree from Livingston College. For the past 18 years she has served as the Tenant Association president for her building. In this role she works as a liaison between tenants and management helping to resolve disputes that may arise between the two.

Committed to uplifting the people of her community, Cathy serves as Executive Director of River Watch Inc., a neighborhood network center, which is committed to developing and implementing educational and training programs to empower residents of the Bronx. She also directs a youth activity center that provides homework assistance, fun activities and trips for community youth.

A widowed mother of three, grandmother of seven and adopted grandmother of four, Cathy still finds the time and energy to serve as the New York State Committeewoman of the 77 AD and be an active church official at Refuge Temple Annex.

Mr. Speaker, during this month of February in which we celebrate Black History it is important that we give extra praise and recognition to African American women, who overcame not only racial discrimination but gender discrimination as well. Strong women such as Mary McCloud Bethune, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, who was also known as Moses on the account that she led so many of her people to freedom. I believe that we have an obligation to continue not only to recognize these strong influential women for the many contributions they have made to American society but also to recognize the women of today who overcome oppression in order to lead the people of their community from the bondage of despair. In that spirit, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Ms. Cathy Stroud.

HONORING JAMES O. PEOPLES, JR.

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today on behalf of Foss Avenue Baptist Church, in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, to honor James O. Peoples, Jr., for 48 years of dedicated service as the Church's Director of Music. On Sunday, March 13, 2005, the congregation of Foss Avenue will recognize Mr. Peoples' accomplishments during a celebration, which will include a musical program and reception, to be held at the church.

James Peoples, Jr. has been blessed with a natural talent and passion for music. His obvious abilities were refined as he studied Management and Music at C.S. Mott Community College, and later Music Theory at Cook Conservatory of Music. James's education did not end there, as he spent 11 years under the direction of various professionals in a wide array of styles including opera, classical, and lyrical melodies and harmony.

Since 1956, Mr. Peoples has performed the Lord's work as Director of Music for Foss Avenue Baptist Church. As Director, he has managed over 200 voices and staff, and recorded three albums. In addition, from 1987 to 1992, he served simultaneously as Director of Music for the Wolverine State Baptist Convention and Musical Director of the National Baptist Convention. Mr. Peoples has also acted as Director of the Flint Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Peoples is best noted for his work with anthems, hymns and spiritual arrangements. He has conducted music workshops throughout the state, and in March 2003, he was recognized as Music Director of the Year by the Wolverine Baptist Convention Women's Auxiliary. Aside from being an outstanding leader and role model, Mr. Peoples is also a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, Psalms 66:1-2 says: "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious." For 48 years, the members of Foss Avenue Baptist Church have indeed made a joyful noise, and it is because of people like James Peoples, Jr. I ask my colleagues in the 109th Congress to please join me in honoring Mr. Peoples' contributions to spreading the Lord's word.