2012-03-28

Honoring Lieutenant Colonel John L. Coombs; Hon. Steve Chabot of Ohio in the House of Representatives

Chabot, Steve

be established, and they should now be removed. Those of us who believe strongly in Israel’s right to a continued existence as a secure, democratic, independent state have a particular responsibility to point out that those who create and defend these settlements may undermine the chances of achieving such a result.

There are strong public policy reasons for objecting to these unauthorized, illegal settlements, as we learned when the Obama administration was so successful in blocking a U.N. vote to recognize Palestinian statehood. The defeat of that effort, led by the Obama administration’s aggressive diplomacy, was a far better result for Israel in the U.N. than we have seen in many years. And it is clear that it was because President Obama has expressed his disagreement with the existence of many of these settlements that he had the credibility to achieve that diplomatic victory.

But the Supreme Court of Israel is not motivated by these political considerations. Rather, it is committed to the rule of law—a strong distinction between Israel and most of its neighbors. Given the pressures that are brought to bear against the Judiciary in the name of security, a phenomenon we have seen in our own country at various times, the decision by the Israeli Supreme Court to order the dismantlement of an illegal settlement deserves praise and it is important that the Netanyahu administration carry out this court order. It would be a gift to critics of Israel if there were to be any faltering in the Israeli Government’s standing behind this decision of its Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, the New York Times, in an editorial on March 28, noted this, and because the example of a Supreme Court, in a nation that is engaged in a serious effort to protect itself against a determined enemy, in standing up against external enemies, is standing up against illegal settlements in the West Bank.

Although the larger settlements, home to about 300,000 Israeli Jews, are considered in violation of international law by a vast majority of foreign governments, Israel views them as legitimate in the context of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinians want to build a state on land that is now partly occupied by the settlers. But almost no outposts have actually come down, and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are frozen.

Meanwhile, Migron stands out among the outposts because its land is not simply part of a theoretical future state of Palestine but was illegally seized in the first place. It was authorized by the court’s conservative majority at the time: “You say the outpost will move in three years, but I know this type of behavior. Three years will inevitably turn into eight.”

Right-wing legislators said Sunday that they would introduce legislation to legalize Migron and other outposts. Dani Dayan, a leader of Israel’s settler movement, said that the court’s ruling had been “an act of violence if it tries to remove settlers. But he called it “very meaningful in terms of the constitutional system in Israel.”

Mr. Reshef said that had the case been decided the other way, “it would have been almost the end of the existence of the courts as the protectors of the rule of law in this country, as well as the ultimate victory of the settlers.”

He continued, “The government, threatened with violence if it tries to remove settlers, tried to convince the court that it should pull back from its decision. They thought it was based on the basic right of ownership of private property.”

The next test, Mr. Reshef said, would be whether the government is able to change facts on the ground.

Mr. Netanyahu said the government would honor the court’s decision and uphold the rule of law.
graduated from the Officer Candidate School where, in 1992, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Chemical Corps. As a Chemical Officer, he served as a Battalion and Brigade Chemical Officer in artillery, cavalry, and aviation battalions and brigades for the 1st Armored Division in Germany and the 1st Cavalry Division in Texas. In 1995, he deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina as the nuclear, biological and chemical reconnaissance platoon leader. There he developed tactics, techniques, and procedures to detect and mitigate hazardous materials at military sites occupied by U.S. forces, leveraging the capabilities of mobile mass spectrometers installed in the nuclear, biological and chemical reconnaissance vehicles.

In 2001, Captain Coombs was assigned to the Acquisition Corps, attended the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California and in 2002 graduated with a Master of Science in Business with an emphasis on federal contracting. From 2002 to 2005, as the Contracting Division Chief in the Wiesbaden Contracting Center for the U.S. Army Contracting Command, Europe, Captain Coombs supervised more than 30 contracting officers who awarded and administered more than $400 million in annual contract awards. He deployed to Kosovo for six months as the Chief of a Joint Contracting Center, where he led a joint military staff, U.S. civilians and Kosovar nationals to procure $5 million in annual contract awards. While in Kosovo, his work helped to improve multi-national relations when he negotiated a complex settlement for damages to a hotel occupied by NATO forces. The following two years, Major Coombs served as the Deputy Chief of Office in the Italy Regional Contracting Office for U.S. Army Contracting Command, Europe. He oversaw high visibility procurements including letter contracts to lease properties supporting the 2006 Winter Olympics security operations in Torino. He was named as the Army Europe Contracting Officer of the year in 2005. An Army fellowship at the RAND Arroyo Center in Santa Monica, California brought this Hamilton, Ohio native back to the U.S. There he developed RAND’s recommended acquisition strategy for Future Combat Systems to balance cost control for the Army and risk to the contractor. Since 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Coombs has been assigned to Army Headquarters at the Pentagon. He has served as the Executive Officer, Deputy Director and several senior positions in the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement. His expert knowledge of operational contracting policy for military operations, natural disasters and humanitarian relief has been invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, for more than two decades, Lieutenant Colonel John L. Coombs has faithfully served our Nation as a dedicated steward for American taxpayers. As he enters this next phase of his life with his beloved wife Kellie and their four children; Lyndsay, Adam, Emily and Jesse; I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lieutenant Colonel John Coombs upon his retirement and thank him for his service in the U.S. Army.

CONGRATULATING THE LOUISVILLE BALLET ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH
OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, today I have the distinct privilege of recognizing and celebrating the Louisville Ballet on its 60th anniversary. As Kentucky’s official ballet company, the Louisville Ballet has been a source of pride and distinction for the people of our community and the Commonwealth. Since its formation in 1952, the Louisville Ballet has transformed from a small, understaffed-yet-dedicated company, to one of the Southeast’s premier artistic institutions—employing a world-class company of dancers and an equally talented staff of professionals that make each performance come to life.

Today, the company has a repertoire of more than 150 works, has been the recipient of numerous accolades, and maintains the distinction of being the only regional company to perform with the great Mikhail Baryshnikov. It also contributes to the artistic and cultural core of Louisville, which is one of only 11 U.S. cities with all five major arts institutions.

Under the leadership and vision of Artistic Director Bruce Simpson, the past 10 years have been among the Ballet’s strongest, with the company commissioning 13 world premieres. Each performance offers the precision and grace witnessed among ballet’s elite.

On behalf of the 3rd Congressional District, I wish the Louisville Ballet Company future success and look forward to another 60 years of excellence and awe-inspiring performances.

Mr. Speaker, for more than two decades, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta of the National Farm Workers Association and later the United Farm Workers, an organization that came to be known as the driving force of the organized labor movement for farmworkers in the U.S.

This movement, or “La Causa” as it was known in millions of homes including mine, taught us that solidarity, even in the face of brutal adversity can lead to victory. The “No