

Ripon Educational Fund Holds Its Inaugural Fall Forum September 14, 2004



Cong. Mike Oxley

(September 20, 2004) – On Tuesday, September 14, approximately forty-five Ripon Educational Fund (REF) members, congressional staffers, and friends joined Congressman Mike Oxley, Congresswoman Sue Kelly, and REF Chairman Ed Bethune for REF's first annual *Fall Forum*. The forum, *Fighting Terrorism and Global Crime – Financing, Intelligence & Intervention*, was held at the Rayburn House Office Building in conjunction with a catered luncheon.

Chairman Bethune kicked-off the event with a review of the changes that have occurred since the start of the year with the separation of the Ripon Educational Fund from the Ripon Society. He added that the fall forum is the type of educational opportunity that the newly revamped REF will offer in addition the TransAtlantic Conference. Before introducing the first speaker, Bethune noted that Congressman Hal Rogers was originally scheduled to participate but an unforeseen event with Vice President Cheney in his district delayed his return to Washington.

Congressman Mike Oxley, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, was the first to present. He spoke to REF members about their August hearing on U.S. efforts to dismantle and disrupt the terrorists' financial networks. The lead witness was the Co-Chairman of the 9/11 Commission. In its final report, the 9/11 Commission found that the PATRIOT Act, which his Committee has jurisdiction over, has effectively targeted terrorist financing, due in large part, to the extraordinary cooperation that financial institutions have given to law enforcement. As the Congressional Co-Chairman of the 2004 TransAtlantic Conference, he looks forward to seeing the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest, where the FBI and other U.S. law enforcement agencies train Hungarian and other Eastern European Police Officers in the collaborative use of use sophisticated techniques to target international criminal activities like money laundering. Chairman Oxley concluded his remarks by introducing the second panelist, U.S. Rep. Sue Kelly, who chairs the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Rep. Kelly spoke about how she created the bipartisan Congressional Anti-Terrorist Financing Task Force last July to bring together Members of Congress from different Committees in order to build upon the successful disruption of identifiable sources of terrorist financing. She cautioned REF that the unknown sources of terrorist financing were so numerous that Congress needed to be much more proactive in monitoring financial services transaction in order to preempt illegal diversion of funds by perfectly legal means like consumer debit cards.



Rep. Sue Kelly

REF's next event is a reception at the residence of Ambassador and Mrs. András Simonyi, which will be held in honor of the Honorable Ms. Katalin Szili, Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament. The reception, which is Tuesday, September 21, will provide REF members an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with the ways of Hungary as the November TransAtlantic Conference to Budapest fast approaches.

If you have any questions, please contact REF Executive Director Terri Pazirandeh office at (703) 536-4040 (tpazirandeh@riponfund.org). Thank you for your continued support.