

are only doing this to extend the investigation, to drag it out, so that it eventually wears out the American people and they are able to hide behind that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is something that should be stopped. I think the President should not claim executive privilege, he should get on with the investigation, he should make a clean breast of all this before the American people so that the American people know the facts.

THE PRESIDENT'S HISTORIC VISIT TO AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, as we watch the historic visit of the President to the Continent of Africa, to be able to put into perspective this very important trip for it highlights many issues. For many, it was thought that this was a trip to talk about trade and economic development and opportunities of partnership on the issues of trade and economic development between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa, but we are finding that there is much more that can occur and that will occur, and I think it is vital for the countries that the President is visiting to be singled out for their individual merits and as well to acknowledge the problems and the future efforts that will be needed to enhance Africa's international position and as well its friendship and partnership with the United States of America.

I would like to personally acknowledge my appreciation for my own hometown newspaper, the Houston Chronicle, which has taken a great interest not only in the President's visit but the whole new opportunities that may be available, not only for this Nation but for Texas and Houston. They had a very large article on the issue of trade in the African Growth and Opportunity Act, explaining its viability and possibilities for large corporations but particularly small- and medium-sized businesses. They offered and editorialized their support for the African Growth and Opportunity Act and, as well, as I said earlier, they have a reporter from the Chronicle traveling with the President. Likewise, one of my local television stations, ABC Capital Channel 13, is as well viewing this as an important effort.

But what do we expect to see? Many of the news footage yesterday showed the President warmly received by the President of Ghana who has been re-elected democratically and has shown an economic recovery in that country that competes well internationally. We saw a crowd that was, in its excitement, pushing toward the President, and I hope that we understood that his reaction was to protect those who were being crushed in the front and no other reaction other than to recognize how well he was being received.

But do we realize the leaps of faith and success that Botswana has experienced, another country that he will visit, having had democracy for 31 years? As long as it has been an independent country, it has been democratic. It has had few Presidents. The economics of the country is amazing. Housing is there, but yet it has a severe and serious HIV problem, and when I visited in December they offered to say that there were individuals who have seen six members of their family buried due to HIV. Uganda, who has implemented an economic program to increase the employment of the underemployed and unemployed, and yet has some problems which we will work on and need to expose as relates to the rebels' action in parts of that country in doing heinous acts; but the President stands against that, and we must emphasize human rights along with his visit to Rwanda.

As I listened to my colleagues talk about the Balkans, human rights violations and tragic genocide and ethnic cleansing are going on in Africa, and those of us who believe in human rights must stand up against it. It is important for the President to be in Rwanda to talk about these extreme abuses and the tragedies against families and children. It is all right for us to see that, but we must see that in the context of the whole Africa.

And that is why it is so very important as we visit this continent that the President also visits and interacts in South Africa and visits with Nelson Mandela, the father of Africa, who through his peaceful existence for 27 years of incarceration helped bring about the end of apartheid, and now South Africa has its position as one who can lead Africa in the course of economic development and human rights.

Then the President's visit to Senegal is extremely important as he realizes the tragedy of slavery. I hope that this will generate a healing process, and I hope that many who will view this will acknowledge the importance of this trip, Mr. Speaker, and that we will work together to heal any racial divide and, as well, bring us together around issues like an apology to African Americans because we have seen the connection and the viability and the positive relationship.

CONGRATULATIONS TO INDIA'S NEW PRIME MINISTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my congratulations to the newly-elected leader of the world's largest democracy, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee was sworn in last week as the Prime Minister of India. India's Parliament will hold a confidence vote later this week on Prime Minister Vajpayee's new government. Pending

the outcome of the confidence vote, the Prime Minister is poised to lead the world's second most populous nation into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the new Prime Minister is a veteran political leader in India who was once introduced by Prime Minister Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, as the future Prime Minister of India. He is a member of the party commonly referred to as the BJP, which has been described as a nationalist party. While some media accounts have portrayed the party in a negative light, Prime Minister Vajpayee has shown every indication of his intent to follow a moderate course. He has already reached out to India's neighbors, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, expressing the desire to build on recent efforts to foster friendlier relations among the nations of south Asia. In fact, the Prime Minister also intends to oversee the foreign affairs portfolio. During the 1970s Mr. Vajpayee served as Foreign Minister in a coalition government and won widespread praise for helping to reduce Indo-Pakistani tensions.

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He has also indicated that he intends to stay the course on the free-market reforms that have transformed India into one of the world's most dynamic emerging markets.

Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Vajpayee has also spoken of his commitment to maintain the secular principles of India's constitution.

I had the opportunity to meet the new Prime Minister last year in New Delhi, then in his capacity as leader of the opposition in the Parliament. I also met with members of his shadow cabinet, many of whom will now assume the leadership of the various ministries.

I found Mr. Vajpayee and his colleagues to be sincerely dedicated to building a better future for India's nearly 1 billion people, continuing the free-market reforms while better developing the nation's infrastructure.

Given the negative characterizations of the BJP as a chauvinistic or fundamentalist party, I was impressed by the party's grassroots strategy of building alliances with regional parties representing India's many ethnic and religious groups.

Perhaps most important, as a visiting Representative of the U.S. Congress, and by extension of the American people, I was very happy to hear of Prime Minister Vajpayee's strong desire to work for close ties between India and the United States.

True, there have been some voices in India expressing concern about protecting India's culture from too much American or Western influence, but the leaders of India's new government have made it very clear, in my meeting with them and in the countless other forums, that they welcome U.S. trade and investment.

In fact, BJP leaders often point out that their party was at the forefront of