

U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN DISCUSSES THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S SELF INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND GLOBAL VALUES

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, standing at the dawn of the new millennium, we have an incredible opportunity to create a more peaceful, more humane, and more orderly world. We are entering a new era in which previously ignored social issues must be addressed. In today's increasingly globalized world, we have seen remarkable advances in trade and technology. The time has come, however, when the new global economy must embrace social responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the Secretary General of the United Nations, my dear friend Kofi Annan, addressed a number of these issues in an important message last month. He discussed the fundamental partnership between business and human rights and the importance of having international values and principles to guide our global economy. The United Nations is an extremely important element of our nation's foreign policy and it plays a fundamental role in enhancing respect for the rights of women and men around the globe as well as enhancing the value of human life.

The Secretary General addressed these issues in a message to the Workshop "Today and Tomorrow: Outlook for Corporate Strategies" which was organized by the Ambrosetti firm and was held this September in Cernobbio, Italy, under the leadership of my friend Alfredo Ambrosetti.

Mr. Speaker, the message of the Secretary General to the conference is most appropriate to consider as we face the new millennium. I offer the message of Secretary General Kofi Annan to be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give it serious and thoughtful attention.

[Message of Secretary General Kofi Annan to the Workshop]

TODAY AND TOMORROW: OUTLOOK FOR CORPORATE STRATEGIES

It gives me great pleasure to convey my greetings to all who have gathered for the Villa d'Este workshop, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary. Congratulations on this milestone.

You have gathered to examine a global predicament that is deeply ambivalent. Peace spreads in one region while violence rages in another. Unprecedented wealth coexists with terrible deprivation, as a quarter of the world's people remain mired in poverty. Through it all we can see the contours of a new global fabric taking shape. The globalization of markets, technology, finance and information is defining new realities, re-shaping our notions of sovereignty and challenging us to reconsider many of the assumptions that have guided policy-making until now.

As you know globalization is under intense pressure. And the multilateral trading system is in the line of fire. The problem is not with trade or transnational companies or market per se; the trading system is one of the great success stories of the past half century. Rather the problem seems to be that

while so much has been done to make the trading system the success it is, other urgent issues—such as safeguarding the environment, protecting human rights and ensuring labour standards—have failed to attract similar attention.

The result is a serious imbalance on the international agenda. We have a global trading system with potentially strong governance and a strong institution—the World Trade Organization. Strong, if universal and if the most powerful countries comply with the rules. Strong, also, if we avoid saddling the trade regime with a load it cannot bear conditionalities—and instead build bridges between trade and environment, between trade and labour, between trade and human rights. We need to strengthen the pillars of global governance in these areas. After all, a bridge cannot rest on only one pillar.

It was with this in mind that I proposed, earlier this year at the World Economic Forum in Davos, a "Global Compact" between the United Nations and the world business community. The Compact asks the international business community to advocate for a stronger United Nations. It asks individual businesses to protect human rights within their sphere of influence, support the abolition of child labour, adopt a precautionary approach to environmental challenges and take other such steps which, of course, also make good business sense. The Compact offers a practical way forward to reconciling one of the key questions in the debate on globalization: how to sustain open markets while meeting the socio-economic needs of societies. It envisages business doing what it does best—creating jobs and wealth—while rooting the global market in universal values and giving the global market more of a human face.

It may not seem fair that business should be called upon to undertake such initiatives, but in today's globalizing world, economic power and social responsibility cannot be separated. This issue—and in particular the risk of protectionism and other unwelcome interventions—will not go away unless business is committed, and seen to be committed, to global corporate citizenship. Just as national markets reflect the values, laws and rules of a given society, so must the new global economy be guided by an international consensus on values and principles.

I have been speaking of "business" as if it were some monolithic presence in the world economy. In the end we are talking to individual businessmen and businesswomen with the power to influence the world for the better. Let us remember that the global markets and the multilateral trading system we have today did not come about by accident. They are the result of enlightened policy choices. If we want to maintain them in the new century, all of us—governments, corporations, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations—have to make the right choices now. We have an opportunity to usher in an age of global prosperity comparable to that enjoyed by the industrialized countries in the decades after the Second World War. We will tip the scales to the positive only if we work together and, in particular, only if the leaders amongst us step forward and do their part. In that hopeful spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful workshop.

CONCERNING PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH M. HOEFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 4, 1999

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in favor of Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization. While I have strong feelings on the issue of Taiwan's status in the world, I know there are some who disagree with me. On the issue of the health of the Taiwanese people, I don't think there can be any disagreement. Taiwan should have full participation in the World Health Organization.

As this legislation states: "Good health is a basic right for every citizen of the world and access to the highest standards of health information and services is necessary to help guarantee this right." Health risks do not recognize political boundaries. Unfortunately, politics has kept Taiwan from participating in WHO activities and other international organizations and the effects of this policy have had serious repercussions.

The World Health Organization was unable to help Taiwan with a viral outbreak which killed scores of Taiwanese children and infected more than 1,000 Taiwanese children in 1998.

More recently, Taiwan was struck by an earthquake which did substantial damage to the island. The latest estimates are that just over 2,000 people have been killed and about 100,000 are homeless. In the wake of this disaster, I was shocked to read news reports about the United Nations' response. According to one report, instead of immediately harnessing its resources and heading to Taiwan to help with the relief effort, the United Nations instead sought approval from China before sending United Nations relief workers to the scene of the disaster. If this is true, lives were again needlessly put at risk.

Ensuring the health of the people of Taiwan is a commendable goal and it is time that we put their health above politics. I commend the sponsor of the legislation, Mr. BROWN, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLACK COWBOYS PARADE IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Black Cowboys Parade held every year in Oakland, California since 1974. The parade commemorates the contributions made by African Americans and other ethnic groups to the development of the American West.

African Americans, primarily from Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, poured into California to build ships during World War II. These states were all "horse country" where African Americans had raised and trained horses. Northern California could therefore easily support the