

MISTREATMENT OF AFGHANI WOMEN IS NOT CULTURAL—IT IS CRIMINAL

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about an item that ought to outrage not only everybody on this floor but everybody throughout the world. The plight of Afghani women is desperate. So desperate, in fact, that at least half of the passengers on a recently hijacked Afghani airliner have now sought political asylum in England. So desperate that English authorities continue to investigate whether some of the passengers, men and women, aided their captors in an effort to escape the brutal, vicious, thug-like Taliban regime in Kabul.

Mr. Speaker, as we enter a new century marked by hope and optimism, marked by the expansion of freedom and democracy, the Taliban regime seems bent on dragging its citizens, and in particular its women, back to the dark ages. In fact, it is probably worse than the dark ages.

To be female in Afghanistan today is to be a target, a target for repression, a target for brutality, a target for physical and emotional terror that knows no peer.

As First Lady Hillary Clinton has stated, "We must all make it unmistakably clear this terrible suffering inflicted on the women and girls in Afghanistan is not cultural, it's criminal. And we must do everything in our power to stop it."

The First Lady was absolutely correct. Ever since the Taliban seized power in 1996, it has enforced edicts that have destroyed basic human rights for Afghani women.

According to the U.S. State Department and human rights groups, women and girls are prohibited from attending school. With few exceptions, women are prohibited from working outside the home. Women and girls may not go outside unless they wear a head-to-toe covering called a Barca. A three-inch square opening provides the only means for vision.

Women are prohibited from appearing in public unless accompanied by a male relative. My colleagues, listen to this: Access to medical care for women and girls is virtually nonexistent.

Mr. Speaker, I am the father of three young women, three girls, and the grandfather of a beautiful 13-year-old granddaughter. Intolerable situations.

Women are not allowed to practice medicine. And listen to this: Male doctors are prohibited from viewing or touching women's bodies. How can a woman get medical services if women are prohibited from practicing medicine and men are prohibited from viewing or touching women?

Windows in houses that have female occupants must be painted so that one cannot see from the street.

It is hard to believe that any society in the world would force its citizens to

endure such Draconian conditions. But, in the 21st century and the dawn of the century, it is the sad truth.

Violations of the Taliban code brings swift, brutal punishment from the religious police, known as the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtues and Suppression of Vice.

What a warped understanding of virtues the Taliban has. Women have been beaten on the street for showing an inch of ankle below the Barca or for wearing shoes that make sounds while walking. One woman reportedly was shot for appearing in public while taking her sick child to a doctor. What a warped sense of virtue these Taliban have.

Other women are randomly rounded up and imprisoned for no apparent justification. Women are frequently stoned, hung, and beaten for alleged violations of various Taliban laws.

Some, I suppose, would argue that the treatment of Afghani women and girls half a world away is none of our business. But when basic human dignities are stripped from so many and so violently, we should not, we must not stand by silent. Indeed, we must express our collective outrage and, yes, perhaps do more than that. It would be, Mr. Speaker, unconscionable for us to look away while an entire generation of Afghani women are desperately crying out for help.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this time, but more importantly, I appreciate the fact that all of my colleagues join in expressing this outrage and reversing this criminal behavior. I am pleased to have the opportunity to join my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), in bringing this matter, this desperate matter, to the attention of our colleagues.

SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT COLOMBIA ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the administration has recently sent to Congress a request for \$1.6 billion, primarily in military and security assistance, to be sent to the Government of Colombia over the next 2 years. The majority of this assistance, namely \$800 million to \$900 million, will be voted on next month as part of an FY 2000 supplemental appropriations bill. These monies will supplement the \$300 million in mainly security assistance that the Congress has already approved for Colombia for fiscal year 2000. The remainder of the funds is requested for fiscal year 2001.

The ostensible purpose of these funds is to cut the supply of drugs coming out of Colombia to the United States and to support Colombian President Pastrana's efforts to negotiate peace with guerilla factions and to reform government institutions.

Now, I am sure that everyone in this Congress shares the administration's

concerns about the threat to Colombia's democracy and development from narcotics traffickers, rebel forces, and paramilitary groups. And I am sure everyone in this Congress supports President Pastrana and the peace process in Colombia. These issues are not in question.

What I do question is whether the proposed aid package for Colombia is the right aid program and the right policy for Colombia. I do question whether the aid under consideration will meet either the counternarcotics objective, let alone further the peace process.

Our current policy, which has already involved hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance to the Colombian security forces, has not, I repeat, has not reduced coca cultivation in Colombia, the flow of cocaine or heroin to the U.S. from Colombia, or the profits of drug traffickers. Why do we believe that more of the same is better?

I also question providing substantial assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces, which has a long and rotten history of human rights violations, including support for paramilitary groups. I question a package that does not address at all the problems posed by the paramilitary groups, which are responsible for the majority of human rights crimes, the internal displacement of more than 1.5 million Colombian peasants and who are more directly linked to drug lords than the guerillas.

I urge my colleagues to not rush consideration of the Colombian supplemental. I urge my colleagues to ask the administration whether this is a counternarcotics strategy or a counterinsurgency strategy.

I urge my colleagues to ask the administration how long they expect the United States will need to be in Colombia to accomplish even their stated objectives.

This package is for 2 years, by which time most of the military equipment will be just arriving in Colombia. Are we going to be in Colombia for just 2 years, or for 4 years, or 6 years, or who knows how many years?

I challenge the administration to explain how launching military operations in Colombia at a time when the peace negotiations are moving forward will help the peace process.

Mr. Speaker, we must ask these questions now because later may be too late.

I will just close by again urging my colleagues to carefully consider the implications of this aid package. Let us not rush to judgment on this package and do something that we will regret in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following letter that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) and I sent to Secretary Albright about these issues:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, February 3, 2000.

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT,

Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: In the President's State of the Union Address and in the media, it has been reported that the Administration will submit a supplemental request to provide as much as \$600 million in counter-narcotics assistance to Colombia, primarily assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces. It is our understanding this is but one piece of an overall \$1.3 billion package, primarily of military, military-related and counter-narcotics assistance.

We share your concerns about the threat to Colombia's democracy and economic development from narcotics traffickers, rebel forces and paramilitary groups. However, it is clear our current policy, which has already involved hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance to the Colombian security forces, has not reduced coca cultivation in Colombia, the flow of cocaine or heroin to the U.S. from Colombia, or the profits of drug traffickers. Rather than increase funding for a strategy that has not proven effective and requires even larger amounts of military assistance for the foreseeable future, we believe the U.S. and other friends of Colombia must provide stronger support for diplomatic efforts to strengthen the peace process and promote stronger economic and alternative development programs, thereby creating the conditions necessary for a more effective counter-narcotics strategy. These objectives should not be relegated to poorly funded "add-ons" to large-scale military assistance packages.

We are also concerned about providing substantial assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces, which has a long history of human rights violations, including support for paramilitary groups. Our concern is compounded by the lack of accountability in the Colombian military for human rights violations committed by military personnel. Even when Colombian government prosecutors have abundant evidence showing that high-ranking military personnel have committed serious violations, these officers are rarely prosecuted fully or punished. Recent measures by Colombia's leaders to reform the Military Penal Code and criminalize torture, genocide and forced disappearance are important steps forward, but they are not yet final. Further, they do not adequately address other crimes against humanity, such as extrajudicial killings or the continuing lack of accountability of military tribunals.

The need for accountability is critical. If the U.S. does provide assistance, it should be conditioned on the rigorous application of the August 1997 ruling of Colombia's Constitutional Court, which requires that crimes against humanity allegedly committed by military personnel be investigated and tried in civilian courts. Neither the Colombian military nor the Superior Judicial Council has abided by this Constitutional Court ruling; they have continued to refer human rights cases to military tribunals. We believe that as a condition of U.S. assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces, the Government of Colombia take the necessary measures to require the military to support civilian jurisdiction in cases involving credible allegations of human rights abuse by military personnel, including cases where officers are accused of conspiring to commit or facilitate murders and massacres. In this way, President Pastrana can ensure that all cases involving human rights abuses by military personnel are sent to civilian courts, which are best equipped to investigate them impartially and guarantee due process.

The Administration should also provide periodic reports to Congress on the number

of Colombian military and police personnel who are investigated, prosecuted and convicted of human rights violations in both the civilian and military justice system. The reports should include the sentences they receive and the number suspended from active duty pending the outcome of such proceedings. Such Administration documentation will allow the Congress to assess the extent of accountability by the Colombian military for human rights violations.

We also believe that U.S. assistance should be conditioned on actions by the Colombian Government to ensure that all links, at all levels, between the Colombian security forces and paramilitary groups are severed. U.S. assistance should not be provided to those who aid or abet or tolerate the activities of paramilitary groups, which are most responsible for internally displaced people, as well as responsible for human rights violations and narcotics trafficking. The capture of paramilitary leaders would be an important measure of the Colombian government's commitment to this goal.

For Congress to be able to assess the extent to which the links between the military and paramilitary groups have been severed, the Administration should provide periodic reports on the enforcement by the Colombian National Police and the Armed Forces of outstanding arrest warrants against paramilitary leaders and members, the suspension from active duty of military personnel credibly alleged to have aided or abetted the activities of the paramilitaries, and the prosecution in the civilian justice system of military personnel for human rights violations, including murder and conspiracy to commit murder, committed in the course of their support for paramilitary groups.

As you well know, respect for human rights and accountability for human rights violations require a civilian court system that functions effectively. Our assistance should include, therefore, funds to strengthen Colombia's civilian justice system. This should include reform of the rules governing disciplinary proceedings carried out by the Procuraduria Government's Office of the Procuraduria against members of the military and police. These reforms should also include the elimination of the statute of limitations on crimes against humanity and the establishment of a policy to immediately dismiss and prosecute in civilian courts any officers found responsible for such crimes.

It is vitally important that U.S. assistance to Colombia be used to support human rights organizations and monitors, protect the security of human rights defenders, and strengthen non-governmental organizations and civil society. U.S. Embassy personnel should also investigate reports of human rights violations in accordance with the purposes of the Leahy provisions enacted into law (Section 564, PL 106-113 and Section 8098, PL 106-79).

As you prepare to send to Congress your proposal for increased assistance to Colombia, we hope you will seriously consider these important issues. As always, we look forward to working with you to achieve our shared goals of supporting a democratic Colombia, where the human rights and welfare of its people are safeguarded.

Sincerely,

JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
Member of Congress.

JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY,
Member of Congress.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS LOW WHILE UNDEREMPLOYMENT IS HIGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I have said before that while our unemployment rate is very low, our underemployment is terrible. We have young people with degrees or even graduate degrees all over this country whose highest paying employment is as a waiter or waitress in a nice restaurant. While working in a restaurant is certainly honorable employment, it is sad that so many millions now have degrees or even graduate degrees and cannot find jobs in their degree fields.

In yesterday's Washington Times, an article said that far less than half of those who have received doctorates, Ph.D.s in English or foreign languages, were able to find college teaching jobs.

The story told of one man who received a doctorate in English from the University of Colorado and who did not bother to apply for a job at a small college in northeast Texas after he found out that he would have been the 350th applicant for that job.

We now have a trade deficit of \$350 billion. Most economists tell us that we lose conservatively 20,000 jobs per billion. This means we lost roughly 7 million jobs to other countries last year alone. Because of weak trade dealings and because environmental extremists do not want us to drill for any oil, dig for any coal, cut any trees, or use our natural resources in any way at all, we are losing many of our best highest paying jobs to other nations.

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First this was a trickle. Now it is happening very, very fast. We cannot base our whole economy on the tourism that the environmental extremists always want and always bring up unless we want millions more working at minimum wage or barely above minimum-wage jobs. Also, our colleges and universities are doing a real disservice to the young people of this country if they do not start warning students that certain fields have almost no jobs or good job prospects; and I think they should at least warn the young people and parents and entering freshmen should check out these things very closely, because it is a very sad thing to sit with parents or grandparents of very fine, nice-looking young people who have made very good grades and who have received degrees, sometimes even graduate degrees and cannot find good jobs after getting these degrees.

Secondly, I heard while driving in this morning that because of rapidly rising oil prices, some fishermen and others in the Northeast have asked the President to declare a state of emergency because fuel and home heating prices are going up so fast, particularly in the Northeast. Everyone knows that we have become far too dependent on foreign oil. We have done this at a time that we are sitting on billions and billions and billions of barrels of oil. We could easily bring down the price of oil or at least hold it steady by drilling for