

RACISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting as I had the opportunity to share with the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) on a very important legislative initiative, this comes to mind that a key word that everything we do in this country and this Congress is engage, engagement, to be engaged.

I would be remiss if I did not take this time to join my colleagues, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) and as well the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON), to speak to a situation, a conference, a series of events that are going on in South Africa that I think have been sorely misrepresented and misinterpreted, that is, the historic World Conference on Racism, the first conference like this in the past 18 years.

Of course, the first conference was in 1979. The second conference was in 1983 where the focus was on apartheid in South Africa. Gratefully, that conference was successful. Those who have not yet visited South Africa can see a country, with the opportunity to visit it, that seeks reconciliation, a country that is diverse, that struggles every day to ensure that no matter what one's color is, there is a seat at the table of empowerment.

I was very proud to be a member of the United States delegation comprised of Members of Congress, particularly and, in addition, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), as well as members from the State Department.

What I was most disappointed in is that the country that is the greatest democracy that the world knows, the United States of America, founded in the Declaration of Independence, that declares that we all are created equal, had the misguided interpretation that the best role for them would be to disengage and not to be engaged. That meant that they did not send, did not allow Secretary Colin Powell to be a part of this world conference.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe, having been intimately involved in the processes of this conference for a good number of days at the heart of the conference, that the leadership of the United States, the leadership of Secretary Powell, would have been immensely important in steering this conference to its rightful place in history. What is that place? The place of reconciliation.

After I returned to the United States, it pained me to see Catholic school girls running the gauntlet of attempting to get to their schools as Protestants stood by and chanted and jeered and cast aspersions, but more importantly, perpetrated violent acts.

This world is riveted by ethnic, religious, and racial divide. The conference

that we were at was not one to cast doubt, to cast accusations, but frankly it was to bring about resolution.

The bulk of the people there, unfortunately, not brought to the attention of the American people, but the bulk of the people there were of goodwill and good intentions. Clearly they wanted to seek to clear the air. Gypsies were there asking for the ability not to be discriminated against. The untouchables of India were there to ask not to be discriminated against. The countries of Africa that suffered so brutally in the trans-Atlantic slavery as well as colonization were there asking, not to accuse, but simply asking to create a better world.

Those of us from the United States who were descendants of slaves were there asking that we provide a sense of healing, how can we move our Nation away from the divisiveness of race. Yet there was another issue, the tragedy of the Mideast, the PLO, and the Israelis. But there was a misguide there, a misdirect, a misconnect, and there was an attempt to write hateful language that should not have been present.

On September 2, 2001, I stood in that conference and denounced that kind of language, that we should move away from hateful language accusing one nation of racism, Zionism is racism; and, frankly, we should be engaged in the Mideast process to bring about peace.

An issue separate and apart from the racism conference, truly an issue for the United Nations and the United States, be engaged in peace, but do not bring down a conference of reconciliation, a conference that should be healing, a conference that should bring us together around the question of race.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the media has not told the story, the stories of meeting with heads of states, diverse heads of states, the President of Latvia, an Eastern European country, who wanted to be part of solving the question of race.

Those stories, the Mexican delegation, the delegation from Israel, the Arabs who were interested in ensuring that the conference was successful.

I am here to tell the story and say apologetically that the United States missed its opportunity of leadership, missed its opportunity to use the bully pulpit to stand before the world, 169 countries, denounce Zionism as being racist, and talk about peace and reconciliation, talk about bringing us together and healing the racial divide and making a difference.

Mr. Speaker, this conference will be successful if the right people take charge, and I will continue to work for peace and reconciliation and ending the racial divide.

D.C. APPROPRIATION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY FROM COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor not to take the whole hour, but for a few minutes because the D.C. appropriation today passed in full committee under the chair of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH). This was a noteworthy subcommittee markup.

Mr. Speaker, the controversy often associated with the D.C. appropriation was not there today. The bill passed unanimously. One important reason for this, indeed the most important reason for the smooth way in which the bill transacted its way through the committee today was its chairman, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG). Like a laser beam, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) has been focused on the clear obligation of the chair of an appropriation subcommittee, and that is to get his bill to the floor as clean as he can get it so that it can get the necessary votes on the floor from both sides of the aisle.

I appreciate the way this bill was handled in subcommittee today, especially in contrast to when the District of Columbia appropriation finally got out of the House last year. It was in December, remember. The appropriation year ends September 30. My colleagues can imagine the hardship on our local jurisdiction that does not get its budget until almost Christmas. It was so late even when we got the bill itself out, that was sometime in November, it was held over in order to be the vehicle to carry other appropriations that had had difficulty getting out of committee.

So here we had the spectre of a local jurisdiction not being able to spend its own money while the bill was held hostage for Federal appropriations. It seems to me there is something in reverse order about that, that the smallest appropriation was being held to carry gigantic appropriations like HHS over.

I am deeply grateful that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) helped me get this bill out. I went to his office and described the hardship. I asked Mayor Tony Williams to help me describe it. With the help of the Speaker, we finally got our bill out in December.

What the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) has done is to take a first step toward avoiding any kind of train wreck of that kind for the District of Columbia.

□ 1730

Perhaps it will not happen because, if there are riders on our appropriation, get yourself ready for a fight. But if there are, they certainly will not be there because the chairman has been an enabler of such extraneous, irrelevant, undemocratic riders.

True to his word, the chairman himself respected local decision-making, and the way he did so was by announcing in advance shortly after he assumed the chairmanship that he did