

billowing proud and tall in the same soft breeze, I am reminded of why that flag is still flying. This is my commitment to America's future, and it is something that not only I, but all of us, as Americans, must never forget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the house, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONCERN ABOUT DEMOCRATIC VICE PRESIDENT NOMINEE

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

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I come before the House tonight as a Member of Congress concerned about the impending Presidential race and particularly concerned about the Vice Presidential nominee chosen this week by the Democrat nominee for President.

I am very concerned, Madam Speaker, because the choice that has been made is a divider rather than a uniter, and I think we are about to engage in a debate that will determine who will lead us for the next 4 years. I am very concerned that someone has been chosen that has talked about two Americas, and that is a great concern to me, the framing of this debate around two Americas.

Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, I am concerned about two Americas. I am concerned about giving access and a platform to the trial lawyers in America, a stage and the ability to launch their efforts, which is unprecedented in the history of our Republic.

I see two Americas. A lot of trial lawyers, attorneys are my best friends, but I see an America with a few trial lawyers who have benefited greatly and substantially financially, and I see an America in which the rest of us have paid and are paying every day for what those trial lawyers have done to our society and our country.

This is a very serious issue because we are going to decide in this campaign if we continue to let trial lawyers have two Americas, where a few benefit, and then we all pay.

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I do not know any American that has been paying lower hospital bills or lower medical care costs. And if we look at the root of the higher costs, it is because of the system that has evolved. A few are suing, and a few are benefiting. I am very concerned about what I see for health care costs and, in manufacturing, the jobs that have been driven out of this country. I come from the business sector. I am so pleased I am not in business because of the threat of lawsuits today.

Everything we do in our society now, the cost is dramatically affected; not

just prescription drugs or health care, access to health care, but also manufacturing, our ability to compete in the world. Sometimes we compete on a wage basis, but when we look at lawsuits, I will give two examples.

One, the only bill that we overrode when President Clinton was in office was one in which we attempted to do something about civil aircraft manufacturing. We were losing it in the United States, and we had lost most of it. We did override a veto, and we did restore some civil aviation manufacturing. However, we have lost all regional jet manufacturing, lost 50 percent of the large aircraft manufacturing. If we look around the States, North Carolina, the South, the North, Ohio, we see manufacturing closing down, because we would not want to manufacture in the United States when we can take that activity outside the United States.

Another example is Orlando Helicopter, in my own backyard in central Florida. It does not exist anymore. They moved to South America and China. Why? Because of liabilities.

So I see two Americas. I see an America where we may have a great opportunity for people to get health care at affordable costs, I see opportunity where we can expand jobs and have great economic opportunity, but I do not see it with, unfortunately, the Democratic nominee who is being brought forth.

What concerns me, too, having just survived 2 years ago a \$5 million unprecedented election by a contestant who was a trial lawyer who spent \$5 million to oust me from office, I see that same onslaught of funds coming in to try to capture the second highest office in our land. I see two Americas, and I see one that does concern me.

STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, as we mark the first anniversary of the President's historic tour of Africa, we cannot help but wonder when, if ever, the government of this country will end the "promise game" they are so adept at playing with the peoples of Africa.

The administration's whirlwind, 1-week tour was ostensibly undertaken in pursuance of a policy "to work with others for an African continent that lives in liberty, peace, and growing prosperity." It offered a laundry list of financial aid and development initiatives that could wipe out its poverty and dependence.

It is up to us to insist that the promises are kept and not relegated to unfunded programs for Africa, so characteristic of compassionate conservatives.

Startled by the realities of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a threat potentially more devastating than global terrorism, the administration announced a tripling of its relatively modest commitment to battling the spread of the dreaded disease in Africa. The proposed \$15 billion appropriation over the next 5 years in a region in which the pandemic has infected more than 30 million people, a tenth of them being children under the age of 15, is a drop in the bucket compared to the several billions we are committing annually to the pursuit of geopolitical strategies of a significantly less danger to the world at large.

But as generous and noble as this initiative is and touted to be, it is subject to political strings and is actually presented as another means of imposing our ideological concepts on the suffering people of Africa.

The other priority of the administration's African policy is the so-called advancement of political and economic freedom. Considering the means by which this government sat itself in power, it remains a source of wonder that they have had the unmitigated gall to propose to lecture any other state, least of all ancient African kingdoms, on the arts of governance and the democratic path to freedom.

The supposedly well-intended African Growth and Opportunity Act, known as an AGOA, is designed to build trade capacity with Africa and will, no doubt, be renewed and extended. Yet its full effect may never be realized until its implementation is not limited to those African nations that place themselves under the thumb of U.S. business interests.

The administration's third African policy priority is, they say, to create peace and regional stability. This would and could have been a lofty goal in itself had it not been proffered by an administration whose overall relations with other nations is based on a doctrine of preemptive aggression and regime change by violent external force.

We of the Congressional Black Caucus have been dubbed the conscience of this Congress. It is our duty to watch over the actions and activities of this government and to insist that, in words as well as in deeds, the interests of our constituency primarily and of the Nation ultimately are served.

In closing, Madam Speaker, our priority, therefore, is to ensure that the advantageous promises made to Africa are kept, and that every cent committed is spent as appropriated; that this and every other administration become fully convinced that its appropriations to Africa are not charitable contributions, but at least are reparations for past exploitations and, at the most, investments in the prosperity of Africa's people and all of the world.