

THE APPRECIATION OF JOSE
CORONADO

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in recognizing Mr. Jose Coronado, Director of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System to show our appreciation for his life long career in public service, culminating in ensuring the best possible health care to the veterans of South Texas.

Mr. Coronado, a U.S. Army veteran who served as Battalion Operations Sergeant in the 11th Armored Cavalry Division, was awarded both the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Outstanding Service Award.

After his service in the Army, Jose received his B.S. in Chemistry and Zoology from Texas A&I-Kingsville, and went on to earn an M.S. in Education Administration there before receiving a M.H.A. in Hospital Administration from Baylor University.

Jose Coronado then began his career in Veterans Administration to improve the care given to the thousands of Americans who risked their lives for this country. In 1962, he started with the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Houston, continuing his work in Kerrville, Texas.

In 1973, Mr. Coronado became Assistant Director of the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital in San Antonio, Texas; two years later, he was appointed Hospital Director. There, he served America's veterans for 20 years, ensuring the efforts and sacrifices of America's warriors would not be forgotten. He contributed to saving the lives of countless veterans through improved services.

When the Kerrville and Audie L. Murphy Veterans Hospitals merged in 1995, Jose Coronado directed the new South Texas Veterans Health Care System. He has overseen an extensive network of health care delivers and operated an intricate health care system with many varying divisions of expertise.

As Director, Jose Coronado was recognized many times for the outstanding service he provided to America's veterans. He was awarded the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executives by both Ronald Reagan and George Bush. In 1999, President Bill Clinton presented Mr. Coronado with the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Executives.

While Jose received countless awards over the years, his distinguished character and his quiet ability to find solutions for our veterans were central to his dedicated service to the South Texas Veterans Health Care System.

I ask the House of Representatives to join me today in celebrating Mr. Jose Coronado's commitment to those veterans who dedicated their lives for American freedom. His tireless efforts have provided the medical assistance that South Texas veterans earned from uniformed service to our country.

RECOGNIZING JOHN ANTHONY
CLIZER FOR ACHIEVING THE
RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize John Anthony Clizer, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 314, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

John has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years John has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending John Anthony Clizer for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PULITZER PRIZE WINNER NICHOLAS
KRISTOF: INTRODUCING
AMERICANS TO AFRICA—ONE
ASPIRING JOURNALIST AT A TIME

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter into the RECORD a column by Nicholas Kristof: "The Drumroll, Please" in the May 23, 2006 edition of The New York Times and his column of March 26, 2006 entitled "A Woman Without Importance."

Mr. Kristof uses his New York Times column to bring to our attention important, little known and neglected human rights causes. In the past 12 months many of these causes have come from Mr. Kristof's observations during his many trips to countries in Africa. As a persistent, compassionate journalist advocating for women's rights in Africa, Mr. Kristof has no peer. To me, he is a quiet but powerful voice forcing our recognition that women and girls are without basic human rights in many countries in Africa and other countries as well such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Pakistan.

In a column of March 26, 2006, Mr. Kristof wrote about Aisha Parveen who at the age of 14 was living in northwest Pakistan when she was hit over the head while walking to school. She awoke to find herself imprisoned in a brothel where she was tortured and imprisoned for 6 years. When she escaped she married a man who helped her. The brothel owner sued the couple claiming he had married the 14-year-old Aisha Parveen. She was accused of adultery and was ordered to go back to the brothel owner.

Girls in Africa are often sold as sex slaves or servants. In some countries girls are inherited or used to payoff debts. Marriages are arranged for them when they are as young as 12 years. They have babies before their bodies are able to deliver a child vaginally. With no medical help most labor for days to deliver a dead baby and are left with terrible birth in-

juries. If the mother is incontinent because of an injury called a fistula she is shunned by her family and her husband forced to live away from the village.

Mr. Kristof won the Pulitzer Prize for risking his life returning to the Darfur region of southern Sudan again and again to tell the stories of the people suffering from the remaining victims of a concerted effort by the Arab government in Khartoum to eliminate every last one of them. Kristof has chronicled genocide in Darfur as it has continued unabated for three years and goes on now in spite of a newly signed peace accord brokered in part by the United States.

Kristof has told the personal stories of people who have suffered from the rampages of the Janjaweed, the proxy murderers of the Government of Sudan in Khartoum. He has personalized the murders, the maiming, the rapes, the killing of children, by telling the heart breaking stories of people who have lost their homes, their children and parents, husbands and wives, their livestock, their lands and their freedom.

Perhaps because so little print had been spent on Darfur, Mr. Kristof, decided people were not familiar enough with Africa to become sympathetic to the plight of people who are targets of a ruthless, cruel genocide.

Maybe Mr. Kristof had the idea that more students should make travel to other countries part of their college education and more universities should offer such trips. As he announced in his video a "win a trip" contest in March he felt he got a great education from his trips when he was a student that he was sponsoring a "win a trip" competition because he had learned so much from his trips to other countries while he was a student that he felt more students needed to experience life in other countries. Kristof's idea of visiting other countries is visiting places where the people of the country live, not visiting tourist places like Paris and London.

In Mr. Kristof's video announcing the "win a trip" contest, the camera views him from above as he appears to be standing on a wide sand beach. Mr. Kristof begins by talking about spring breaks and how many American college students spend their spring breaks and summers reveling beaches. But as the camera closes in, it become clear Mr. Kristof is not on a beach and not near an American city or village recognizable to most Americans until the camera broadens its view to take in a skinny donkey with a rider and a few people wearing the long draped clothes and hoods common to desert peoples who are always needing protection from a brutal, relentless sun.

For years Mr. Kristof has used his column in the Times to chronicle the continuing slow genocide in Darfur with the individual stories of people who have been maimed, raped and had children killed in front of them and to stop the genocide in Darfur. He has told the stories of the individuals who have lost everything they had; families, homes, livestock and parents. He has traveled to places in Africa where women are the least of the least and has chronicled stories of women who are shunned by their families if they are raped or worse go to jail even though they are the victims of crime.

The fact that 3,800 aspiring journalists from universities around the country applied to accompany Mr. Kristof on an admittedly "rough" reporting trip to "a neglected area in Africa"

speaks volumes about the esteem in which these students hold Mr. Kristof. The number of applicants wanting to go to Africa gives me enormous hope for Africa and our country. There is no better way for Americans to know Africa than to go there. And for those who will not be able to go themselves they will benefit from the journalists like Casey Parks the winner of the first "win a trip" contest who is accompanying Mr. Kristof this summer to Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

My wish for Ms. Parks is that she has a long career as a journalist who will write so intimately and well of her journey, that the people of Africa will be seen as individual human beings to her readers. My hope for Mr. Kristof is that he is able to take a different aspiring journalist every year and convince Universities and colleges around the country of the value of establishing programs for students to live in countries they will not visit as tourists to see how the people of these countries live their lives.

[From the New York Times, May 23, 2006]

THE DRUMROLL, PLEASE
(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

In March I opened a "win a trip" contest, offering to take a university student with me on a rough reporting trip to a neglected area in Africa.

Some 3,800 applications poured in, accompanied by boxes of supplementary materials, ranging from senior theses to nude photos. After weeks of sifting through the applications, I finally have a winner.

She is Casey Parks of Jackson, Miss.—an aspiring journalist who has never traveled abroad. We'll get her a passport and a bunch of vaccinations—ah, the glamour of overseas travel—and start planning our trip.

Casey, who turned 23 on Friday, attended Millsaps College in Jackson and is now a graduate student in journalism at the University of Missouri. She has won a string of awards for her essays and other writing.

In her essay, Casey wrote about growing up poor: "I saw my mother skip meals. I saw my father pawn everything he loved. I saw our cars repossessed. I never saw France or London." (The essays by Casey and a dozen finalists are posted at nytimes.com/winatrip.)

"I so desperately want to leave this country and know more," she wrote. Now she'll have the chance.

We'll most likely start in Equatorial Guinea, bounce over to Cameroon and travel through a jungle with Pygmy villages to end up in the Central African Republic—one of the most neglected countries in the world. We'll visit schools, clinics and aid programs, probably traveling in September for 10 days. Casey will write a blog about it for nytimes.com and will also do a video blog for MTV-U.

But the point of this contest wasn't to give one lucky student the chance to get malaria and hookworms. It's to try to stir up a broader interest in the developing world among young people.

One of our country's basic strategic weaknesses is that Americans don't understand the rest of the world. We got in trouble in Vietnam and again in Iraq partly because we couldn't put ourselves in other people's shoes and appreciate their nationalism.

According to Foreign Policy magazine, 92 percent of U.S. college students don't take a foreign language class. Goucher College in Baltimore bills itself as the first American college to require all students to study abroad, and the rest should follow that example.

So for all the rest of you who applied for my contest, see if you can't work out your

own trips. Or take a year off before heading to college or into a job. You'll have to pay for your travel, but you can often find "hotels" for \$5 a night per person in countries like India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Morocco, Bolivia and Peru—and in rural areas, people may invite you to stay free in their huts. To get around, you can jump on local buses.

Is it safe? Not entirely, for the developing world has more than its share of pickpockets, drunken soldiers, scorpions, thugs, diseases, parasites and other risks.

Twenty-two years ago, as a backpacking student, I traveled with a vivacious young American woman who, like me, was living in Cairo. She got off my train in northern Sudan; that evening, the truck she had hitched a ride in hit another truck. Maybe if there had been an ambulance or a doctor nearby, she could have been saved. Instead, she bled to death.

So, yes, be aware of the risks, travel with a buddy or two, and carry an international cellphone. But remember that young Aussies, Kiwis and Europeans take such a year of travel all the time—women included—and usually come through not only intact, but also with a much richer understanding of how most of humanity lives.

There are also terrific service options. Mukhtar Mai, the Pakistani anti-rape activist I've often written about, told me she would welcome American volunteers to teach English in the schools she has started. You would have to commit to staying six weeks or more, but would get free housing in her village. You can apply by contacting www.Aanaa.org.

Then there's New Light, a terrific anti-trafficking organization in Calcutta. Urmi Basu, who runs it, said she would welcome American volunteers to teach English classes to the children of prostitutes. You would have to stay at least six weeks and budget \$15 a day for food and lodging; for more information go to www.uddami.org/newlight.

In the 21st century, you can't call yourself educated if you don't understand how the other half lives—and you don't get that understanding in a classroom. So do something about your educational shortcomings: fly to Bangkok.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 26, 2006]

A WOMAN WITHOUT IMPORTANCE

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

KHANPUR, PAKISTAN.—Aisha Parveen doesn't matter. She's simply one more impoverished girl from the countryside, and if her brothel's owner goes ahead and kills her, almost no one will care.

Ms. Parveen, an outspoken 20-year-old woman with flashing eyes, is steeling herself for a state administered horror. Just two months after she escaped from the brothel in which she was tortured and imprisoned for six years, the courts are poised to hand her back to the brothel owner.

Sex trafficking, nurtured by globalization and increased mobility, is becoming worse. The U.N. estimates that one million children are held in conditions of slavery in Asia alone. Yet it never gets much attention, because the victims tend to be the least powerful people in these societies: poor and uneducated rural girls.

Ms. Parveen was a 14-year-old Pashtun living in the northwest of Pakistan when she was hit on the head while walking to school. She says she awoke to find herself imprisoned in a brothel hundreds of miles away, in this remote southeastern Pakistani town of Khanpur.

A person of unbelievable strength, Ms. Parveen fought back and refused to sleep with customers. So, she says, the brothel

owner—Mian Sher, the violent sadist who had kidnapped her—beat and sexually tortured her, and regularly drugged her so that she would fall unconscious and customers could do with her as they liked.

This went on for six years, during which she says she was beaten every day. The girls in the brothel were forced to sleep naked at night, so that they would be too embarrassed to try to escape. Ms. Parveen says she believes that two of them, Malo Jan and Suwa Tai, were killed after they repeatedly refused to sleep with customers. In any case condoms were never available, so all the girls may eventually die of AIDS.

I wanted to look into the eyes of a man who could do these things. So I barged into Mian Sher's brothel, identified myself and interviewed him.

He warily offered me tea, pleasantries and flashes of violent temper. He denied kidnapping Ms. Parveen, saying that he had married her six years earlier. He also denied that he pimped the girls—a claim undermined by a customer who was walking out of his brothel as I arrived. Others working in the area said that Mian Sher unquestionably ran a brothel, and that Ms. Parveen had been imprisoned in it.

In January, Ms. Parveen got a break. A metalworker, Mohamed Akram, had been doing work in the brothel, and he pitied her. "She laid her scarf down on my feet and begged me, in the name of the Holy Koran, to rescue her," he remembers, and soon he felt not only pity but also love.

So on Jan. 5, Ms. Parveen stealthily arose in the middle of the night, crept past Mian Sher and padlocked the door with him inside. Then she ran to a car that Mr. Akram had sent. The next day, they were married.

Then the judicial nightmare began. Mian Sher brought charges against the couple, claiming that Ms. Parveen is his wife and must return to him.

"The police have taken money from him," Ms. Parveen said. "They say, 'You're married to him, so you should go back to him.' Well, I would rather die than go back to the brothel."

The police are now prosecuting Ms. Parveen for adultery. She is free on bail, but thugs have attacked her home and tried to kidnap her.

Mian Sher told me his plan: if Ms. Parveen is jailed for adultery, then as her supposed husband he will bail her out and take her away. Ms. Parveen says she believes he will then rape and torture her, and finally kill her.

So the judicial system, while ignoring the sex trafficking of children, may now, in the name of morality, hand a young woman over to a brothel owner to do with her as he wants.

The new abolitionism, against sex trafficking, is being pushed in America by an unlikely coalition of religious conservatives and liberal feminists; leaders include the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Ecpat, Equality Now and International Justice Mission. But progress is slow because the victims tend to be voiceless young people like Ms. Parveen.

Whether Ms. Parveen is returned to her brothel owner and killed may be, in terms of global issues, a small matter. But after spending a couple of days with this smart and lovely young woman, after seeing her in moments of giddy laughter and terrified weeping, I can't help thinking that slavery should be just as outrageous in the 21st century as it was in the 19th.

A court hearing to decide Ms. Parveen's fate is scheduled for tomorrow here in Khanpur. I'll let you know what happens.