

HONORING THE SPECIAL GRADUATES OF THE JOHN D. WELLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much effort and hard work which has lead and will lead them to continued success. In these times of uncertainty, limited resources, and random violence in our communities and schools, it is encouraging to know that they have overcome these obstacles and succeeded.

These students have learned that education is priceless. They understand that education is the tool to new opportunities and greater endeavors. Their success is not only a tribute to their strength but also to the support they have received from their parents and loved ones.

In closing, I encourage all my colleagues to support the education of the youth of America. With a solid education, today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. And as we approach the new millennium, it is our responsibility to pave the road for this great Nation's future. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives I ask you to join me in congratulating the following Academic Achievement Award Recipients: Lizandro Gonzalez and Aris Rodriguez.

WOMEN IN CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

Mrs. KELLY. Mrs. Speaker, I insert the attached speech for the RECORD. This speech was given by Fanny Palli-Petralia, a member of Greece's Parliament at a conference that was held in Washington, D.C., in March of this year, hosted by the International Women's Democratic Union. I found it to be quite insightful and would recommend it to my colleagues.

[At the Conference of IWDU, Washington, Mar. 3-5, 1999]

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE FANNY PALLI-PETRALIA

First, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the organizers of the conference for the invitation to participate and address this gathering. I consider it a privilege and a unique opportunity to share with leaders from all over the world my perspectives on the role of women contemporary politics and the problems they face in Europe and especially my own country. I am referring of course, to women belonging to the conservative, or as I prefer to state, Center and Center-Right ideological spectrum.

However, before I discuss specific problems I believe it is necessary for us to define or redefine certain concepts and to reflect on the

following question: what defines conservative politics in our time. I believe a new definition of conservatism is essential, given the fact that the central criterion used to distinguish between Right and Left ideology i.e.—i.e. economic philosophy—is no longer valid. As we all know, belief in a free market economy, espoused by conservative thinkers has been coopted with unrestrained enthusiasm by old and new liberals. Whether we are talking about Great Britain, Germany or the United States, we see Social Democrats, Liberals and their American equivalent, the Democratic Party, endorsing and applying Milton Freedman's doctrine of free markets with the zeal usually displayed by late converts to a cause. No wonder that we now see big business, traditionally viewed as allies of conservative parties, moving to the socialist corner of the political arena. I have only one explanation for this phenomenon: either big business cannot see the difference between the two philosophies, which I doubt, or the dividing lines between ideological camps have been blurred beyond recognition. In either case, now that our economic philosophy has caused global mass conversion among the liberal ranks, there is a need to differentiate our agenda by other criteria.

Now that liberal and the left-wing politicians have embraced free market over socialist planning, we have to ask what is next in our philosophical agenda in an era that often seems as being in a-moral drift? The answer, in my opinion, is obvious: though the economic philosophy of conservatism has triumphed, a cultural war is under way globally and whether we want it or not, we must be concerned and respond. Far too many of the core values that served as the glue to keep society in harmony have been trashed and a climate of moral relativism permeates the industrial world. We are witnesses to a troubling trend since the collapsed of the Communist bloc: traditions, family, history, religion, culture are under assault by "feel good crowd." These are the values that have and ought to distinguish the Center-Right political parties: we cherish them while the Liberal left makes them optional.

The question is what is the role of women in the field of culture? At the risk of sounding immodest, let me state at the outset that women have always been in the forefront of cultural battles and helped shape the core values of free societies. More precisely, women have been persistent defenders of human rights and effectively linked rights, values, economics and politics and in the process, redefined the latter for the better. However it is also true that, by and large, the contributions of women in the political life of nations and the affirmation of social and political values have been achieved through men. The old cliché "next to a great man stands a greater woman," still rings true. But our concern today is not what Aspasia or Theodora, Eleanor Roosevelt, or Hillary Clinton have done behind the scenes. The question is what happens in the public domain—and here is where a convergence of view emerges among women of all political persuasions.

II

It is obvious that inequalities between men and women persist and opportunities for women are limited by artificial barriers in all societies, including the United States where the struggle for equality started, at end of the 19th century.

As conservative women and political leaders in our own right, we can not ignore gender disparities in public life; neither can we ignore the fact that traditions and values,

prevalent for generations, do play a role in defining our place in contemporary society. Because women have played a central role in defining core values, they must now assume a similar role in defining a political system that assures the promotion of the most central of all values—equality without qualifications.

I am cognizant of the fact that social trends take time to be set in motion and even more time to be reversed. We cannot ignore the role of history and special conditions that have played a role in determining a woman's place in society. In Southern Europe, for example, cultural factors, religion and social attitudes made change a slow and arduous process when compared to northern European societies. For example, the right to vote in my country, Greece, was granted to women in 1952 and full equality in all walks of life was constitutionally guaranteed in 1974.

III

The equal rights movement in Europe, in which women from all political persuasions participated, was fought not only to secure basic political and individual rights but also equal opportunities in education, the work place, equal compensation for comparable work and, above all, equal participation in decision-making structures. No doubt after many false starts and strenuous efforts, progress has been made, albeit slowly, in all fields. The latest achievement that I can briefly mention is the incorporation of an equality clause of the Amsterdam Treaty entered upon by members of the European Union and which, I am proud to say, was ratified only days ago by the Greek parliament. This Treaty makes equality of genders in the European Union a legal, social and political reality. As the Treaty States (article 2) states, "equality between women and men is now part of the mission of the European Union." Yet, in spite of all progress, we are far from the final goal of complete equality between men and women. As far as laws, rules and regulations are concerned, we are fully equal! In practice, matters are quite different. It is hardly a "militant stance" to note that:

In almost every country the working woman continues to maintain two careers, home and the work place without compensation and often without moral recognition.

Women' unemployment, at least in Europe, is double that of men and concerns younger, female university graduates.

The presence of women in Cabinet level positions is poor and symbolic rather than substantive.

These facts suggest that equality between the sexes remains an elusive goal. And I do not believe this goal will be reached unless all human beings are given the opportunity to make their contributions through full participation at all levels of government and wherever economic, political and social issues are decided.

Conservative women know where inequality exists and have the solutions to the problem. It is to be found in the gross under representation of women in all public institutions. Thus, while the women make up 51% of the global population, the world average of women in parliaments, for example, is 12.3%. In the European Parliament itself, out of a total of 626 members only 173, or 27.6% are women, while the average the national assemblies of member states of the EU is only 21.4%. The gap between countries is even greater. Under representation is higher in the southern countries, while the northern ones have made remarkable strides in

the past three decades. In Sweden, for example, women make up 40.4% of the Parliament, in Denmark 30.3% and in Germany 25.7%. The picture changes dramatically as we look south. Greece, with an electorate of 52% women has only 6% women members in the current parliament.

The situation is similar for participation in high government positions: Sweden, again has a cabinet divided equally among men and women: 39% of cabinet posts in Finland and 35% in Denmark are held by women. In Greece, in a fifty member cabinet, only three posts are occupied by women.

These figures show that there is a deficit in the democratic game of politics and a surplus of explanations of its causes.

Some have argued that culture has been the culprit that discourages women from pursuing public office. There is some truth to this and similar arguments as well as to the argument that the system itself has something to do with it. It is a system built by men and its rules and regulations reflect its origins. As designed, the political system is more like a "hunting adventure" rather than a family game. Power, not sensibility or efficiency seem to be its main characteristic. Of course, all women that take part in the existing political game, must learn the man-made rules and how to use them to their advantage. In short, they must learn to "hunt" or risk becoming spectators of someone else's game. We have come too far and have too much at stake to accept such a fate.

Finally, let me conclude with some tentative answers to the question what can be done? Well, as I stated at the beginning there is a general need to redefine the identity, the goals and methods of Center and Center-Right political parties. And there is a greater need to reassess women's roles in the cultural field so as to become full participants in the ongoing debate about values. I believe ultimately it will be the outcome of what some people call the "cultural wars" that will shape global political and by extension, economic agendas. Though I am not a proponent of a "women" made political system I, nevertheless, believe that women can restructure, sensitize and adapt the existing one with a view of making it fully democratic. This can be achieved, with emphasis on full participation in all level of government and full use of women's imagination, sensitivity, efficiency and intellect to improve the human condition.

Unless women work for the day when they can place their own seal on the political system, the Margaret Thatchers and Madeleine Albrights, will be looked upon as an alibi for the maintenance of the status quo.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES ABBOTT

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, my district recently lost one of its most committed residents, Charles H. Abbott, Jr. I rise today to honor his memory and to acknowledge the legacy that he leaves behind for Rancho Palos Verdes.

When I received the news about Charley's untimely passing, my immediate reaction was one of pure disbelief. Charley had been my friend for 15 years. As I entered the political

arena, Charley became a trusted advisor; I sought out his judgment and wisdom because he knew, better than most, the problems and issues facing the community. Importantly, he had suggestions to improve all of our lives. His unexpected death hits close to home because he was one of the most active, vital people I knew. His death causes me to reflect on my own mortality.

I attach a memorial that appeared in one of the local papers about Charley. It eloquently summarizes Charley's life and contributions. Charley's legacy lives on through the dedicated service to the public demonstrated by his family, his sons in particular. He touched the lives of many children in the community, through his years of athletic coaching, leaving a little piece of himself with each one of his athletes. Charley had an active charity agenda, and like his athletes, each charity on which he served is a better, stronger organization for his dedicated service. As a civil engineer, Charley certainly left his enduring presence on the city of Rancho Palos Verdes where he served in numerous professional capacities.

I celebrate my friend Charley and will miss him. I offer my support and deepest sympathies to his family. To each and every one of my constituents, I challenge them to follow Charley's practice of caring enough about the community to get involved.

REMEMBERING CHARLEY

By Mary Jane Schoenheider

I, like many of you, have lost a good friend. Charles Abbott, known to all of us as Charley, was called to his Maker on Monday evening, April 26 while he was working out on his treadmill before retiring for the night. He had spent a good part of that day doing what he most enjoyed; playing golf. This day, like many before was for charity. This just happened to be the Rolling Hills Covenant Church Golf Tournament, but it could have been one of many he participated in throughout the years.

Charley loved his work as a civil engineer, he loved his family, he loved his community and he loved life. He gave back over and over again to countless causes with both his time and talents. Everyone always knew you could count on Charley, be it as a coach for his two sons' baseball and soccer teams in their early years on the Peninsula, or for the past two years participating in his Rotary Club's service project as a volunteer tutor for the kids in Harbor Hills 4H after school program. His energy and involvement seemed to be endless.

My closest association with Charley and his wife Sue came in the past three years as we shared the experience as host parents for Rotary Exchange students.

With both of their boys away at college, Charley and Sue became Dad and Mom to three young women, Malina from Denmark, and Malen and Linda both from Sweden. All three of these girls touched Charley's heart and became his "adopted" daughters for life.

The Thursday evening prior to his passing, Charley presided as President at the Community Association of the Peninsula (CAP) Annual Meeting. Many of us were there listening to the light West Virginia drawl, and wit that was uniquely Charley's.

It is never fair when someone like Charley is taken in the prime of his life at 58. He and Sue were looking forward to a trip to Denmark and Sweden, his son Charlie's wedding

this summer and to retirement in a couple of years to the home they recently built at La Quinta. We who are left to carry on will do so in memory of a man who gave so much of himself to his community, and loved doing it. You're a Good Man, Charley Abbott.

Funeral services were held at Peninsula Baptist Church on April 30 with interment at Green Hills Memorial Park. Charley is survived by his wife Susan, a teacher at Peninsula High School, his two sons, Charlie and Mark, his father Charles Abbott Sr. and two brothers. Donations in memory of Charley may be made to Harbor Hills 4H Community Center c/o Palos Verdes Peninsula Rotary Club, P.O. Box 296, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274 or to Hospice Foundation, 2601 Airport Drive, Suite 110B, Torrance, CA 90505.

INDIA IS USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN KASHMIR; U.S. SHOULD STOP ITS PRO-INDIA TILT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed to find out that India has been using chemical weapons in its war against the freedom fighters of Kashmir. Reuters, CNN, the BBC, the Associated Press, and others have all reported that India fired chemical weapons shells into Pakistan. Remember that India's nuclear tests last year started the nuclear arms race in South Asia, which is very destabilizing to our ally Pakistan, to India, the subcontinent, and the world.

In recent days, there have been news reports of a mass exodus from border villages in Punjab, the homeland of the Sikhs. According to at least one report, 70 percent of the population of these villages has fled. These Sikhs are apparently afraid that India's war on the freedom fighters will spread to Punjab. There are good reasons to believe this. India sent a new deployment of troops to Punjab, Khalistan. These troops are on top of the half-million troops who were already stationed in Punjab to suppress the Sikh freedom movement.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is entirely India's responsibility. India that started the conflict in Kargil to wipe out the freedom movement in Kashmir and scare the other freedom movements into submitting to Indian rule. India introduced nuclear weapons to South Asia last year and introduced chemical weapons into this conflict. These are weapons of mass destruction, Mr. Speaker. Indian has brought these weapons of mass destruction to South Asia. Why do we still give aid from American tax dollars to India?

Recently an Indian colonel admitted that Indian soldiers are "dying like dogs." India is losing this war in Kargil, while it loudly proclaims victory. As India's desperation increases, the situations gets more dangerous. It is feared that India will use its new deployment in Punjab, Khalistan to invade Pakistan in an attempt to cut off the Kashmiris' supply lines.

Mr. Speaker, we all salute the President for his attempt to keep the fighting from escalating, but there seems to be a pro-India tilt to