

SPEECH OF

**HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2000*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4811) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4811, the FY 2001 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. I am deeply dismayed at the lack of funding for such critical, life-saving programs as debt relief, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and international family planning.

At a time when many developing countries are consuming 30 to 40% of their annual budgets on debt repayment, they are simultaneously depleting monies that would be better spent on health care, education, and economic development. The Foreign Operations Appropriations bill for FY 2000 established clear and specific criteria which developing nations must meet in order to qualify for debt relief. These conditions include performing satisfactorily under an economic reform program, promoting civil society participation, implementing anti-corruption measures and transparent policy making, adopting strategies for poverty reduction, and strengthening private sector growth, trade, and investment. New governments in nations such as Bolivia and Mozambique are succeeding in their concentrated efforts to democratize and stabilize their respective countries, and have met the qualifying standards for debt relief. It is unjust to continue to punish the poorest civilians for debts incurred and for promises unfulfilled by former dictators.

Nearly four decades of economic development, particularly on the continent of Africa, are currently unraveling before our eyes. The proposed funding level in H.R. 4811 of \$202 million—\$42 million less than the President's request—is simply not sufficient to effectively combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic at its current growth rate. The global AIDS crisis is a threat of unprecedented magnitude, and it has been unsparing in its attack on the world's children. UNAID reports that more than 3.8 million children under 15 have already perished as a result of AIDS. An additional 1700 children per day are newly infected with HIV and join the 1.3 million who are currently living with the disease. The U.S. Census estimates that the life expectancy in many Sub-Saharan African countries will fall to age 30 within the next 10 years.

This indiscriminate plague gravely affects even children fortunate enough not to have contracted the disease themselves, by rendering them orphans—13.2 million to date. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has estimated that by the year 2010, there will be 42 million AIDS-

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related orphans, many of whom will be susceptible to abuse or recruitment into gangs or militia.

In addition to the horrific and exponential increase in suffering and loss of human life, HIV/AIDS inevitably will have an enormous and devastating impact on future economic development, political stability, trade and commerce, and international security. Since effective medical research and counseling intervention have been proven to drastically reduce the mother-to-child transmission rate of HIV around the globe, from the United States to Thailand, there is absolutely no excuse not to help fund these vital programs.

As world experts meet this week in Durban, South Africa for the 13th International HIV/AIDS Conference, we must do our part in this country and in this bill to alleviate the unimaginable suffering that HIV/AIDS is causing in the developing world.

A crucial element of reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is adequate access to family planning resources and information. Pregnancy, childbirth, and unsafe abortions claim the lives of 600,000 women annually, primarily due to early and frequent childbearing and poor access to health care and contraception. Family planning helps prevent high-risk and unwanted pregnancies and reduces the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and life-threatening infections such as HIV/AIDS. The Administration's request for a \$169 million increase to USAID population assistance would likely result in 1.5 million fewer unintended births; 2.2 million fewer abortions; 15,000 fewer maternal deaths; and 92,000 fewer infant deaths.

I oppose this bill because it does not provide assistance to the women and families that most need our help. H.R. 4811 hinders the dissemination of accurate and complete reproductive information for women in developing countries by limiting which family planning options foreign NGOs may discuss with their clients. Under this bill, even organizations that use their own funds to engage in pro-choice lobbying efforts to provide abortions, or to even discuss this reproductive option will not be eligible for U.S. funding. I cannot morally support a measure such as this, that would not withstand constitutional scrutiny within our own country.

With the understanding that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", I would encourage my colleagues to seriously consider the moral, social, and economic ramifications of not providing aid when we, as a nation, are clearly in a position to do so.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose the Foreign Operations bill. We can and must do better.

## INDIA IS A VALUABLE PARTNER FOR THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

**HON. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2000*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

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consideration the bill (H.R. 4811) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Burton Amendment to Restrict aid to India.

Each time that this amendment has been offered in previous years, the House has resoundingly voted it down. I expect that it will meet with a similar fate this time.

Strengthening our partnership with India needs to be a fundamental part of America's strategy in Asia. This amendment would damage U.S.-India relations at a time when our countries are cooperating on a number of issues of interest to us both.

Earlier this year, President Clinton traveled to India, in affirmation of the ties that bind our nations together. India is on the front lines of the battle against terrorism. In light of this, the Government of India committed to the President during his visit that India would work closely with the United States to combat terrorism. The joint U.S./India working group on terrorism established during the President's visit can help both our nations counter this threat. Cutting assistance to India would put this cooperation at risk just as it is getting off the ground.

Furthermore, India has acted responsibly to deal with conflict with her neighbors, showing restraint when provoked during the Kargil crisis and later when terrorists seized an Indian airlines flight and hijacked it to Afghanistan. The conduct of the Indian Government when faced with these immediate threats demonstrates that India is a reliable strategic partner.

But the U.S./India relationship goes deeper than just strategic need. India is the world's largest democracy, a natural partner for the world's oldest democracy, the United States. India provides an example for the rest of Asia of how democracy and free market economic growth can go hand in hand.

And contrary to what some may contend, India has a long tradition of harmony among people of different backgrounds and faiths. India is the original melting pot, and like our own nation, derives strength from its diversity.

We have witnessed the strength of these values through the Indian-Americans who have come to settle in this country. My hometown of Chicago is home to a vibrant Indian-American community. Indian-Americans in Chicago add to the richness of our neighborhoods, and community leaders such as Dr. Bharat Barai, Mr. Bhagu Patel, Dr. Vijay Dave and Mr. Niranjan Shah have shown their neighbors that the values of tolerance and respect they brought with them from India are the same values we cherish here in the United States.

Cutting off the meager, amount of assistance to India in this bill would not save the United States a great deal of money. It would, however, hinder our ability to reduce poverty and build lasting cultural and economic relationships with the people of India.

It would also send a dangerous message to the world about America's commitment to democracy abroad. If we, as Americans, want democracy to flourish around the globe, then