

raft of affiliated groups, including the Bharatiya Janata party that now leads India's coalition government.

After an hour of toe touches, deep knee bends and push-ups, the volunteers sat cross-legged in the dirt and lay down their long bamboo staffs to listen raptly to their leader, K.S. Sudarshan. He inspired them with a vision of India as an ancient and tolerant Hindu nation, but warned that the country was threatened from within by Christian churches that he described as foreign dominated and funded.

Although Christians have lived in India for 2,000 years and make up only 2 percent of its one billion people, he raised the specter of Christian conversions diminishing the dominance of Hindus and leading to secessionist movements. He criticized Christian and Muslim Indians who have refused, in his eyes, to embrace their Hindu heritage. He called on Christians to sever links with "foreign" churches and set up a Church of India. And he condemned Roman Catholic missionaries who believe that only their path leads to salvation.

"How can we allow such people to work here?" he asked from his podium high above the ground. A larger-than-life likeness of the Hindu god Krishna loomed behind him.

Fifty-three years after India gained its independence from British rule, Mr. Sudarshan's movement is still agitating for a redefinition of the nation's founding secular values. They were enunciated in the 1950 Constitution, which guarantees "the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion." And they were ardently defended by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who believed that religious minorities could retain their identities and still be loyal Indians.

In contrast, the Hindu nationalist ideology defines India as a Hindu nation whose people share a common geography, culture and ancestry. In this view, Muslims and Christians were converted from Hinduism and need to be reintegrated into the Hindu mainstream—a theme first sounded in the 1920's and articulated by Mr. Sudarshan today.

After the closing ceremony, thousands of volunteers, all dressed in paramilitary-style khaki shorts, white shirts and black caps, rushed from their rigid grid on the field toward the dignitaries sitting on red velvet couches in the blazing sun. A group of them surrounded Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani, who started in the R.S.S., moved to the Bharatiya Janata party, and is now believed to be in line to inherit the mantle of leadership from Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who joined the R.S.S. back in the 1940's.

As orders blared from a tower of loudspeakers, Mr. Advani joined the rows of men in making the movement's salute (hand held stiffly across the chest, palm down) on the count of one, lowering his head on two and dropping his arm on three.

His presence here was another tantalizing clue in one of the country's favorite parlor games: Are the R.S.S. and the B.J.P.—the political party that is part of the Sangh Parivar, or R.S.S. family—hand in glove or at each other's throats?

The answer seems to be a little of both. There is a natural tension between them, Mr. Sudarshan's movement, which is striving to build a Hindu nation from the grass roots up, is purist in its ideology. The ruling party, which is striving for political power, has set aside many of its Hindu nationalist planks to win the support of regional parties with secular outlooks. It is no longer pushing for

the construction of a Hindu temple on the site of a demolished 16th-century mosque in Ayodhya, for example.

But the movement and the governing party also need each other. The party relies on the movement's vast network of committed volunteers at election time. And the movement enjoys a measure of political influence because of its close ties to the party.

"The relationship is a bit like that between the Christian Coalition and the Republican Party," said Ashutosh Varshney, a political scientist at Notre Dame and an expert on India.

More than half a million boys and men attend the daily meetings of the R.S.S. in 45,000 local branches all over India. The group's appeal is part Boy Scouts, part crusaders. Many become volunteers for the daily physical exercise, sports and camaraderie, but were later fired by the association's idea of nationhood.

The camp here in Agra was an organization feat, subdivided into many smaller neighborhoods where sanitation, roads, electricity and cooking facilities had all been installed by the association.

At 4:30 this morning, a bugle woke the swayamsevaks, or volunteers, while a full moon still dangled over the grounds. By 6 a.m., as dawn broke and a pinkish-orange orb of sun rose, they had lined up for exercise drills. Afterward, they sang a song calling on the volunteers to awaken to threats from India's enemies and traitors. The high-pitched voices of young boys cut through the low hum of the men's singing.

Many of those here were new recruits. Rajkumar Gupta, 13, could explain little of the group's ideology. He studies in a school run by an affiliate of the association. He and the 160 students in the school had come with their teachers "because the school told us to."

Abhinay Kumar Sharma, 15, was attending his second camp and he had learned some of the association's thinking. "The Sangh is here to fight social evils, for example, conversions to Christianity," he said. "This is a Hindu nation and conversions are divisive and this will lead to the division of the country."

Lal Singh, a 65-year-old farmer, echoed the same theme, saying: "Conversion is wrong. This is against our culture. And in these other religions, this sense of humanity and service to man is not there, while it is in our religion."

Yashpal Singh Nayak, 26, a traveling perfume salesman, worried that extended families are breaking down into nuclear families and that women are leaving their faces unveiled in front of elders and males. "If it continues like this," he said, "it will be a serious threat to Indian culture."

CONCERNING VIOLENCE IN MIDDLE EAST

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL PASCHELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

Mr. PASCHELL. Mr. Speaker, today, the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly for H. Con. Res. 426, a resolution Concerning the Violence in the Middle East. I voted in favor of its passage, however, I wish to register my continued concerns about the state of affairs in the Middle East.

We must be clear: there is bloodshed in both Palestinian and Israeli neighborhoods; mothers of both Palestinians and Israelis mourn over their dead and dying; there is distrust and cultural pride in both Palestinian and Israeli hearts. This situation is not exclusive to one side: it is a mutual tragedy.

I am proud that the United States has played the role of an honest broker during these recent weeks. Moreover, I support the efforts made by our Nation and our President to broker peace between these warring parties in the Middle East. I believe that the United States needs to continue dedicating our resources towards the effort of lasting and sincere peace. I voted in favor of passage of the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which provides funding and resources for both Palestinians and Israelis.

However, I am profoundly disappointed in what seems to be the inability of PLO Chairman Yassar Arafat to effectively communicate order and calm within his ranks. I see, more often than not, Palestinian rebels throwing rocks and stones in mob rule fashion. It is incumbent upon Chairman Arafat to restore order and, until that occurs, the United States will find it difficult to maintain its honest broker status.

I want to reiterate my unflagging commitment to the peace process in the Middle East. Now is not the time for the United States to pick a side. Rather, it is time for us to be prepared to play an integral and historic role in helping restore peace in that region. Without the help of both Palestinians and Israelis, this accomplishment will be impossible.

THE GAMING INDUSTRY

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I felt it necessary to speak out against alleged abuses in the gaming industry. I did so not to express disapproval of the gaming industry as a whole but to express my frustration with those in the gaming industry who may unfairly take advantage of their patrons. My earlier statement was related to the previous actions of SunCruz Casino at the time and based on the findings of Florida Attorney General Robert Butterworth and several news reports.

I was concerned that some individuals who participate in gambling for entertainment and recreation can unwittingly fall prey to unethical practices by a few rouge casino owners. I said then and will repeat now that I am not anti-gaming, and I would not call myself pro-gaming either. I do, however, strongly believe in the concept that those who choose to gamble should be able to do so in the establishments of respected gaming interest who treat their customers and their communities fairly.

Given the Attorney General's findings and the record of SunCruz under the previous owner, I did not believe that the casino was operating a fair and responsible establishment.

Since my previous statement, I have come to learn that SunCruz Casino now finds itself under new ownership and, more importantly,

that its new owner has a renowned reputation for honesty and integrity. The new owner, Mr. Adam Kidan, is most well known for his successful enterprise, Dial-a-Mattress, but he is also well known as a solid individual and a respected member of his community.

While Mr. Kidan certainly has his hands full in his efforts to clean up SunCruz's reputation, his track record as a businessman and as a citizen lead me to believe that he will easily transform SunCruz from a questionable enterprise to an upstanding establishment that the gaming community can be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of my statement is not to criticize or promote the gaming industry or to favor one casino owner over another, but rather stand by the consumers who patronize casinos as a form of entertainment. I believe that every individual who visits a gaming vessel in Florida, should know that they are gaming in an establishment that represents the community well, and gives every individual a fair shot. I hope that all casino owners and operators share in this philosophy. I look forward to the positive changes Mr. Kidan is more than capable of bringing to the gaming industry and I hope that others will follow his lead when he brings positive changes to SunCruz.

AFRICA DEMOCRACY FORUM

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, at the founding conference of the Africa Democracy Forum in Abuja, Nigeria, earlier this month, Carl Gershman, President of the US National Endowment for Democracy, delivered a thoughtful speech about the challenges and opportunities facing this important region. The conference brought together democratic activists to further cooperation in the promotion of human rights, good governance, and peace in the continent.

I submit Mr. Gershman's speech for the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give serious attention to his remarks.

AFRICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

REMARKS DELIVERED BY CARL GERSHMAN, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY, AT THE FOUNDING CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICA DEMOCRACY FORUM IN ABUJA, NIGERIA, OCTOBER 3-4, 2000

It's a great honor for me to join you in inaugurating the Africa Democracy Forum (ADF), an Africa-wide network of democratic activists that will both strengthen cooperation among democrats on the African continent and link their efforts to the World Movement for Democracy (WMD), the worldwide democracy network that was established in New Delhi, India, early last year. While this is my first visit to Nigeria, I feel like I've been here many times before since so many people in this room are friends with whom the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has worked for more than a decade. I'm speaking of Ayo Obe, the President of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), our co-host, who chaired the final session of the inaugural assembly of the WMD, and

without whom it would not have been possible to adopt by acclamation the Founding Declaration from which she just read. I'm speaking also of Olisa Agbakoba, the founder of our other co-host, the Human Rights Law Service (HURLAWS), who has been in the forefront of the struggle for human rights and the rule of law in Nigeria; of Clement Nwankwo, who was with us in Washington in May 1999 to receive the NED's Democracy Award on behalf of all the organizations comprising the Transition Monitoring Group; of Abdul Ohroh, Innocent Chukwuma, and of course Beko Ransome Kuti who has never hesitated to stand against injustice whatever the personal risk.

The NED has been honored to support the democracy movement in Nigeria during the most difficult period of military dictatorship. Dave Peterson, our senior program officer for Africa who spear-headed that support, could not be with us at this conference, but his partner Learned Dees is here, and I don't think I have to explain to anyone the importance of Learned's contribution to democracy in Nigeria and in Africa generally. I also want to recognize Ann Macro of the Human Rights Unit of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which has made a grant supporting African participation in this conference and in the WMD's next assembly that will take place November 12-15 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. We've worked closely with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, our partner democracy foundation in the United Kingdom, and we look forward to further cooperation with our British friends in supporting other important democratic initiatives in Africa.

It would be hard to exaggerate the tremendous changes that have taken place in Africa since the mid-1980s when the NED came into being. At the time, all but a small handful of African countries were dictatorships, democracy movements were repressed, and democracy NGOs were invisible or nonexistent. The progress since then has been significant, if uneven. As Abdul Ohroh has pointed out in the background paper drafted for this conference, today 8 African countries are rated as free according to the Freedom House annual survey, while 24 are rated party free, and 21 are not free. Abdul's paper also notes that there are in Africa today 20 electoral democracies, the term used by political scientists to describe countries which hold reasonably fair elections, but where full democratic participation and guarantees are constrained by a variety of factors, among them official corruption, centralized executive power and weak parliaments, weak media, excessive military influence in politics, and a judiciary that is not fully independent.

With that caveat, it is important to note that there have been historic democratic gains not only here in Nigeria but in other African countries such as South Africa, Mozambique, Niger, Namibia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, and Benin. At the same time, in countries such as Kenya, Gabon, Liberia, and Cameroon, electoral forms have been used to conceal continued authoritarian rule; the results of a real election were overturned in Congo-Brazzaville; and civil war and state collapse have overwhelmed the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Angola.

Clearly democracy faces enormous challenges in Africa, and the difficulties that lie ahead are compounded by the extent and depth of poverty and by the alarming spread of the devastating AIDS virus. Nonetheless, there is a common element in all the gains that have been made, which offers hope and inspiration for the future. This element is

the decisive contribution made in every situation, even those where violence has temporarily gained the upper hand, by democratic political activists and the non-governmental forces of civil society.

Certainly this has been the case in Nigeria, where so many organizations represented here led the resistance to the military dictatorship and where the coalition of human rights organizations, a combative independent press, women's groups, trade unions, students, and others all raised the Nigerians' understanding of and support for democracy. The pressures they mounted against the Abacha regime, organizing domestic protests and rallying international sympathy for their cause, undoubtedly induced the interim government of Abdusalami Abubakar to move ahead with democratic elections after Abacha's demise. The more than 60 organizations that joined together in the Transition Monitoring Group strengthened the credibility of the election process while exposing its flaws, thus helping to make possible the transition from military to civilian rule—a contribution, as I've already noted, that we recognized last year with a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol. Significantly, these groups have not ceased their labors since then but remain hard at work fighting corruption and organized crime, and leading efforts to reform the police, strengthen local government and independent media, improve the environment, educate for democracy, reconcile communities in conflict, and redress the problems in such areas as the Niger Delta.

Elsewhere, the contribution of African democrats has also been impressive:

In South Africa, where civil society groups led the opposition to apartheid, built the culture of negotiation that led to the 1994 negotiations, and have since reinforced the remarkable transformation of that society. While the challenges of AIDS, crime, and poverty remain in South Africa, civil society has found an effective new role in addressing these problems in a democratic society;

In Zimbabwe, where a coalition of groups formed the National Constitutional Assembly that first proposed democratic reform of the constitution and then led a campaign against a government attempt to hijack the initiative in a constitutional referendum. The defeat of the government proposal marked a reversal in its monopoly of power, and culminated in the elections in June that restored multi-party democracy to Zimbabwe.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where despite the increasing repression by the government of Laurent Kabila and the reign of terror imposed in the territory controlled by the rebels who oppose him, human rights and democracy activists have preserved hope for the future. They were a driving force behind the Lusaka Accords and the call for a national dialogue that would include civil society. They have maintained a steady flow of information on the horrendous human rights abuses committed by all sides in the conflict, ensuring that the plight of the people of the Congo is not forgotten by the international community. They have decreased the appeal of politicians who resort to ethnic hatred, protected the independent press, and increased popular awareness of human rights. Their work has been heroic.

In Sierra Leone, where civic groups led by the trade unions staged a general strike lasting nearly a year that helped bring down the military junta that had overthrown the democratically-elected civilian government of Tejan Kabbah. These groups struggled for