

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, on May 25, 2000, this body unanimously adopted a resolution commending Israel for its "redeployment" from Lebanon. I voted yes, despite the extremely one-sided nature of the resolution, even down to the use of the word "redeployment," which most of the world terms as withdrawal.

Let us not forget. This is a valiant victory for the people of Lebanon who have suffered immensely both before, but more tragically since, the Israeli occupation lasting over 22 years. Now our own government can pride itself on one less U.N. Resolution which it so embarrassingly failed to enforce for more than two decades.

The following article, which appeared in the May 26, 2000 edition of the Los Angeles Times, and written by Hussein Ibish, communications director for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), puts into much more balance the recent House action.

[From the Los Angeles Times, May 26, 2000]
 KNOW NOW THAT ARAB LIVES ARE AS WORTHY AS ISRAELIS'
 (By Hussein Ibish)

As the Lebanese people have finally liberated themselves from more than two decades of Israeli occupation, most American commentators are reacting with only one concern: Will northern Israel be safe from attack?

The focus on this misleading question is the result of a widespread acceptance of the official Israeli line that its 22-year rampage in southern Lebanon was in essence a futile quest for peace in a hostile region. This view is consistent with the pattern of putting Israeli lives and concerns over those of Arabs, but it is completely inconsistent with the history of the occupation and the experiences of its Lebanese victims.

It is blind to the tens of thousands of Lebanese civilians killed by Israel during the occupation, the hundreds of thousands made homeless and the scores of destroyed villages and cities. It forgets the ghastly massacres of unarmed civilians for which the Israelis have been responsible in Lebanon, including the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and the U.N. base at Qana. It ignores the Lebanese civilians held hostage to this day in Israeli prisons and the hundreds of Lebanese men, women and children held prisoner and tortured at the notorious Khiam detention center run by the Israeli-controlled militia, the South Lebanese Army. It does not acknowledge the pain of the Lebanese nation at being divided for almost a quarter of a century and subject to continuous attacks on its civilian population and infrastructure.

No wonder, given this history, that the scenes of liberation from south Lebanon have been truly extraordinary. Hundreds of Lebanese streamed back into villages and towns from which they had been expelled by Israel. Tears of joy flowed as relatives were reunited after years of separation. Hundreds of civilians stormed Khiam, freeing about 140 prisoners and exposing the hideous apparatus of torture and terror employed there.

These scenes have potentially far-reaching implications. Can others in the Middle East living under foreign military occupation, such as the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, have failed to register what real liberation looks like?

Everywhere Hezbollah fighters, derided by the Israeli and U.S. governments as "terrorists," conducted themselves in an exemplary manner, handing prisoners over to government troops and ensuring that the liberation was not marred by acts of vengeance. These supposed fanatical terrorists were once again shown to be a disciplined and responsible liberation force.

How quickly it is forgotten that Hezbollah is itself a product of the Israeli occupation, founded in 1982 with the aim of driving out the Israeli army and freeing the south of the hellish experience of occupation. The fretting about potential Hezbollah rocket attacks on northern Israeli towns is misplaced, given that since 1996 Hezbollah has almost always carried out such attacks in response to Israeli killings of Lebanese civilians, often only after repeated atrocities. By contrast, in recent months Israel repeatedly attacked Lebanese civilian targets, such as power stations, in response to attacks on its soldiers in Lebanon.

The Israeli army may have fled Lebanon in chaos and humiliation, but not without issuing dire threats of massive attacks against Lebanon. Israel's retreat from Lebanon is incomplete and insufficient. Israel was driven out of most of southern Lebanon by an extraordinary campaign of popular resistance, but continues to occupy the Shabaa Farms area. It holds numerous Lebanese hostage.

There is every indication that Israel still feels it can attack the Lebanese people with impunity. Israel's foreign minister, David Levy, recently threatened that Israel would continue to target Lebanese civilians "blood for blood, child for child."

The international community, while paying lip service to Lebanese territorial integrity, failed to exert any pressure on Israel to end its occupation. Instead it was left to resistance groups such as Hezbollah to enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which in 1978 demanded Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon "forthwith."

The United States, Israel's main patron, financier and arms supplier, has been particularly culpable by repeatedly using its diplomatic muscle, including its Security Council veto, to protect Israel from international criticism after its invasions and atrocities. Rather than helping enforce Resolution 425, which it voted for, the U.S. government line has been that "all foreign forces should withdraw from Lebanon."

This was an obvious ploy intended to buy time and space for Israel by drawing a false

moral and legal equivalence between Israel's brutal and illegal occupation of south Lebanon and the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Syria's role there is controversial, supported by many and opposed by others as overbearing, while the Israeli occupation was universally despised, as was amply demonstrated by the instantaneous collapse of its proxy militia. Had the United States been willing to stand by international law rather than making disingenuous excuses for outrageous Israeli conduct, the international community might have been able to act responsibly toward Lebanon.

The obvious questions now are: Will Israel be forced to complete its withdrawal from all of Lebanon, or will it be allowed to hang on to the Shabaa Farms, where it has built a ski resort and a settlement for Ethiopians? Will Israel be seriously pressured to release the Lebanese hostages, or will it yet again be granted an exception to the most basic international human rights norms? Will Israel be made to pay the reparations it owes to the Lebanese for the invasions, bombings and occupation, as is supposed to now be the norm for international aggressors? When will the American government and media acknowledge that Lebanese and Arab lives and rights are as important and worthy as those of Israelis?

Finally, and most importantly, will the international community at long last live up to its responsibility to prevent Israel from ever again invading or bombing Lebanon and murdering its people?

STATE REPRESENTATIVE PHYLLIS MUNDY RECEIVES ATHENA AWARD

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to State Representative Phyllis Mundy of the 120th Legislative District in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, who will receive the prestigious ATHENA Award from the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce of Business and Industry at its annual Business Awards Luncheon on June 8.

The ATHENA honor is presented to a person who has attained professional excellence, devoted time and energy to the community in a meaningful way, and assisted women in attaining their full potential. That description certainly applies to Representative Mundy.

Phyllis is one of the hardest working, most effective, and more committed legislators in Pennsylvania, and I am proud to consider her a friend as well as a colleague. I consider her a valued partner and a true asset and leader for the community, as well as for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

She is a strong leader who has done an outstanding job encouraging women in Northeastern Pennsylvania and throughout the state. From her support of programs like

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

June 7, 2000

WILL—Women in Legislative Leadership—to the assistance she provides to lower-income working women and their children, she exemplifies the qualities recognized in the ATHENA Award.

She has authored many legislative proposals to assist women, including bipartisan legislation to establish the "Ounce of Prevention" home visiting initiative to provide early intervention services for at-risk women and children.

Her monthly luncheons for women encourage business networking and friendship. She has served as a mentor for Leadership Wilkes-Barre and as a member of the Advisory Committee of the Domestic Violence Center, the Board of Sponsors for Wilkes University's School of Business, Society and Public Policy and the Wyoming Area Kiwanis Club. As a volunteer, she has worked with the Junior League, Domestic Violence Service Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Volunteers for Literacy. She has also served two terms as President of the League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area.

Among her many honors, Representative Mundy has received the Guardian of Small Business Award from the National Federation of Independent Business, the Legislator of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Mental Health Counselors Association, the Distinguished Service Award from Bloomsburg University, the John Heinz Friend of Nursing Award, and the Pathfinder Award from the Wyoming Valley Women's Network.

In her work as Representative from the 120th District, she serves on the Education, Commerce and Economic Development and Appropriations Committees of the House. A strong advocate for the taxpayers, she is well known in Harrisburg for her thorough questioning of high state officials during the annual hearings on the budget. She also uses her committee assignments to promote the economic health of our region and all of the state, and to advocate for common-sense policies and priorities that will bring the greatest benefit to the greatest number of children. As she is fond of pointing out, for every one dollar invested in early childhood development programs, we can save up to seven dollars over the lifetime of an individual in the areas of education, health care, and crime.

Joined by numerous advocates for children, she has worked tirelessly and in a bipartisan manner to ensure that lower income working families would continue to receive a state subsidy that enables them to keep working and place their children in quality day care. On this issue, she has been second to none.

Representative Mundy resides in Kingston, Pennsylvania, and is the parent of a son, Brian, who lives in Walnut Creek, California, with his wife, April, and son, Mason.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber in honoring Representative Mundy. I send my best wishes for her continued success and my thanks for her hard work on behalf of our shared constituents.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ANNUAL CHISHOLM TRAIL ROUND-UP

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an honored tradition in the Great State of Texas and in Texas' Twelfth District—the Annual Chisholm Trail Round-Up. This is the twenty-fourth year for the Round-up which will take place on Friday, June 16, 2000. This classic festival gives folks the opportunity to "Saddle Up," "Ride on the Old Chisholm Trail," and celebrate the western heritage of the City of Fort Worth. Folks bring their own horses, authentic western wear, and zeal for the Old West festivities. This year's theme, "Salute to the Fort," will recognize the U.S. Military and its veterans and will feature the biggest red, white, and blue parade in history.

This year promises to be the biggest and best Round-Up ever. From the Big Ball in Cowtown Gala to the traditional Chisholm Trail ride, Fort Worth will be alive with western culture. In addition to great food, there will be great entertainment with Nashville recording artists and the finest Texas music entertainers. The event will also include Old Western Heritage re-enactment groups that celebrate how life used to be in Fort Worth.

The Chisholm Trail Round-Up is the biggest event of the summer in Fort Worth. Everyone joins in to continue the tradition and celebrate our western heritage and culture. The Annual Chisholm Trail Round-Up is a wonderful way to unite the community in the rich heritage which ties us all together. I salute this historic event and all the people who give their time and energy to make this event successful.

SUPPORT FOR H.R. 4094

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the deplorable conditions of so many of our nation's public schools.

One need only listen to the stories of our teachers to know what those facilities are really like.

For example: "Often the children weren't able to have large group meetings because the room had peeling paint and ceiling tiles falling. When tropical storm Floyd hit, my daughter complained that they didn't have enough buckets to put under all the leaks."

Or: "The school in which I teach was just closed down following an emergency evacuation due to a collapsed ceiling and subsequent flooding."

And: "Our middle school was condemned 30 years ago and is still being used. It is in fairly good shape considering that, but we do have one downfall that no corporation would put up with. We have bats!"

If my fellow Members of Congress visited schools in their districts during the Memorial Day recess, as I did, they witnessed facility

conditions firsthand. Chances are many were run down and out of room.

School bonds can help. School bonds are good for our communities, they're good for our schools and, most importantly, they're good for our children.

That is why I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4094, the "America's Better Classroom Act of 2000." This bipartisan legislation, authored by Representatives NANCY JOHNSON and CHARLIE RANGEL, helps communities leverage funds for school bonds.

The 106th Congress has the opportunity to pass meaningful school construction legislation. Endorsing this bill, as Members on both sides of the aisle have done, will enable the House to consider a valuable bill and begin to help our schools prepare to educate a new century of students.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. HOWARD BRAVERMAN

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Howard Braverman of Hollywood, Florida. On June 24, 2000, Howard will be sworn in as the 79th president of the American Optometric Association (AOA) during the AOA's annual Congress in Las Vegas, Nevada. Howard's extraordinary vision and enthusiasm has made him an exemplary contributor to the healthcare community, and I congratulate him on this well deserved honor.

A graduate of both the University of Miami and the University of Houston College of Optometry, Dr. Braverman has exhibited an intense dedication to the profession of optometry at the local, state, and national levels, throughout his career. He is a past president of the Southern Council of Optometrists and the Florida and Broward County Optometric Associations. Additionally, he has served both as a member and as chair of the Florida State Board of Optometry. Howard's resume in the field of optometry is quite impressive: he has previously been named Broward County's and Florida's Optometrist of the Year in 1985, Florida's Optometrist of the Decade in 1991, and a member of the board of trustees of the AOA.

In addition to his noteworthy professional achievements, the South Florida community has greatly benefited from Howard's leadership due to his active participation in civic affairs. Well known for his devotion to volunteer work within the community, Dr. Braverman is also a past president of the local Rotary Club.

Mr. Speaker, through his unique vision and spirit, Dr. Howard Braverman has distinguished himself as an outstanding leader in the South Florida community. I wish to convey a heartfelt congratulations to Howard and his family on the occasion of his becoming the new president of the American Optometric Association, as well as many thanks for working to enrich the lives of those around him.