RACISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting as I had the opportunity to share with the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) on a very important legislative initiative, this conference that seeks reconciliation, a conference that seeks to ensure that everything we do in this country and this Congress is engaged, engaged, to be engaged.

I would be remiss if I did not take this time to join my colleagues, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) and as well the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON), to speak to a situation, a conference, a series of events that are going on in South Africa that I think have been sorely misrepresented and misinterpreted, that is, the historic World Conference on Racism, the first conference like this in the past 18 years.

Of course, the first conference was in 1979. The second conference was in 1983, where the focus was on apartheid in South Africa. Gratefully, that conference was successful. Those who have not yet visited South Africa can see a country, with the opportunity to visit it, that seeks reconciliation, a country that is diverse, that seeks every day to ensure that no matter what one's color is, there is a seat at the table of empowerment.

I was very proud to be a member of the United States delegation comprised of Members of Congress, particularly and, in addition, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), as well as members from the State Department.

What I was most disappointed in is that the country that is the greatest democracy that the world knows, the United States of America, founded in the Declaration of Independence, that declares that we all are created equal, that the best role for them would be to disengage and not to be engaged. That meant that they did not send, did not allow Secretary Colin Powell to be a part of this world conference.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe, having been intimately involved in the processes of this conference for a good number of days at the heart of the conference, that the leadership of the United States, the leadership of Secretary Powell, would have been immensely important in steering this conference to its rightful place in history. What is that place? The place of reconciliation.

After I returned to the United States, past the Udall Center, where the NIH funded research are leading the world in the path to a cure, I encourage my colleagues support these programs.