

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE). Members are reminded to refrain from characterizing Senate action.

ABUSES SUFFERED BY AFGHAN
WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, once again we have come to denounce the ongoing abuse of Afghan women, and we will not stop coming here each week to highlight the atrocities of this attack on the very fundamental human rights of women and children, especially their girls. I want to ensure that the plight of Afghan women and girls is not forgotten, and in order to do so, we must continue to bring attention to their status.

The women of this House have constantly taken a stand for Afghan women, and some of the very sensitive men as well. Tonight I am joined by one of my colleagues who has been extremely sensitive and passionate about the Afghan women and their plight and the atrocities that they have had to withstand. But it is the resolve of the entire Congress that will help return civil society to Afghan women and children.

Women and children in Afghanistan have been the primary victims of the Taliban regime. Before the Taliban took control, women were leaders in public life and politics. For example, in Kabul, over 70 percent of teachers were women. Forty percent of the doctors and the vast majority of the health care workers were women. In addition, over half of the university students were women. In fact, in 1977, women made up over 15 percent of Afghanistan's highest legislative branch. Now, that is more than the 14 percent of women that serve here in the U.S. Congress today.

When the Taliban came to power, they banned women from working, prohibited women and girls from attending school, and forbade women from leaving their homes without being accompanied by a close male relative. Women have been brutally beaten, publicly flogged and killed for violating the Taliban decrees, decrees no doubt that the Taliban imposed and no one else.

Let me cite some of the horrific examples of the heinous acts of the Taliban. A woman who defied Taliban orders by running a home school for girls was killed in front of her family and friends. A woman caught trying to flee Afghanistan with a man not related to her was stoned to death for adultery. An elderly woman was bru-

tally beaten with a metal cable until her leg was broken because her ankle was accidentally shown from underneath her burqa. Women have died of curable ailments because male doctors are not allowed to treat them. The two women who were accused of prostitution were publicly hung.

Mr. Speaker, these acts are unconscionable and inhumane and members of the Women's Caucus here in the House, of which I serve as co-chair, have taken on this project, along with my dear friend and colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE). Together, we are working to make sure that the women throughout this Nation and around this world help to empower Afghan women. We will continue to take action until we end this horrendous gender apartheid.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I am joined by this friend of mine who has been diligent in working to bring attention, to shed light, and has been most passionate about the plight of Afghan women. The gentleman from California is no stranger to this issue, as he is no stranger to the many issues surrounding women in this House. He has a bill that he has introduced, and I am one of the original cosponsors, which is the Radio Free Afghanistan Act. He is here tonight to share with me this hour to talk about the women of Afghanistan.

I now would like to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California, and I very much appreciate all the effort she has put into calling attention to the plight of these victims.

The gentlewoman is right to say that women were leaders in Afghanistan. I think many people today, when they look at the situation there, they do not understand how that culture was hijacked, how the Afghan culture was hijacked by the Taliban and the consequences to that society. When we think about the fact that, as the gentlewoman correctly pointed out, the majority of the people in the work force were women, we should ask why that was. It was because so many men had lost their lives in the battles when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. So women were typically the heads of household.

Because women had played a role in Afghan society, women had the right to vote. Women were in the work force, as the gentlewoman said. They were such a large percentage of the professionals, I think 40 percent of the doctors. So many university students were women, over half the student body.

Imagine for a society like that what a shock it was, since these were the majority of the people who were heads of household, bringing home a paycheck to feed children in an economy that was already in trouble, the day that edict came down that said women

could no longer work in the work force. This was a death knell for many families. Starvation followed. People were subjected to unbelievable deprivation.

One of the things we wanted to do with Radio Free Afghanistan, and we have been working for some time to try to get some other voice into that society other than Radio Taliban. Radio Taliban comes on at night and tells people only what the government wants them to hear, and comes up with these proclamations, one after another, about what is to be interpreted as illegal under Taliban law. And as that list grows, so many of these restrictions are on women, I just thought I would share some of the restrictions that the Taliban have placed on society.

Women are not to laugh loudly; that is against the law. Women are not to ride in taxis or play sports or enter a sports center or ride bicycles or motorcycles or gather for festive occasions or play cards. Riding public buses with men is against the law. Appearing on the balconies of their home is against the law. When they are in the home, they are to paint the windows so that no one can see in.

But far more serious than these dictates are the costs paid in human lives for those women brave and bold enough to defy these laws and to go into homes and try to home school a new generation of young Afghan girls so that they will have the ability to read and write, so that they will have the capacity in life, someday, hopefully, if this iron control that the Taliban has over society lets up, so that they will have hope.

□ 2145

Those brave women are often put to death.

I mentioned earlier the response by the Taliban official that soccer is a game enjoyed for years in Afghanistan. There was a question put by a representative of the European Union about soccer returning to Afghanistan. The response by the leader of the Taliban was, if the European Union will build us another stadium, then we can have soccer; but we need this stadium for our public executions. I think all of us have seen photographs of the women brought into the stadium, the Taliban men filling the bleachers, brought down and publicly executed for not following the rules of the Taliban.

Since women are not allowed to work to support themselves in Afghanistan, thousands of Afghan war widows have reluctantly become beggars in that society. Because male doctors may not examine women, women are banned from working, Afghan women have no access to health care.

One example, one day while filling a woman's tooth, Taliban police stormed the office of a male dentist and began whipping the women present because they were not accompanied by male

relatives. The dentist was jailed and his office was closed for 2 days.

To cope with the overwhelming stress living under Taliban control like this, large numbers of women are turning to drugs. From 1995 to the year 2000, there was a 75 percent increase in drug addicts with no health care to support their addiction, to get them off of drugs. It is not surprising that the suicide rate for women in Afghanistan has escalated. Many women choose to take their own lives rather than live the life that the Taliban dictate that they live.

One female Afghan refugee told a reporter, "Because of the Taliban, Afghanistan has become a jail for women. We do not have any human rights. We do not have the right to go outside and look after our children. We do not even have the right to go to the doctor. We always need permission." Those are the words of an Afghan woman.

The Taliban denial of women to have a job has created a flood of unemployment. These unemployed women face serious financial problems; and as a natural consequence, what happens to the children? The children suffer from hunger, from malnutrition and a chronic state of poverty. Most of them have lost their last recourse to income. They have sold most of their possessions to buy food. Those who could afford leaving the country, have already sold their assets to do so. Those who could not are making up the bulk of the beggars in Afghanistan today. Here we are with Afghanistan's brutal winter approaching.

A large number of these beggars are ex-teachers. A large number are ex-civil servants. This is the horror of what has been happening in Afghanistan. A false assumption by some is that Afghans in general back these practices. While the Taliban maybe by some was originally seen as a force for stability, and we have war-weary Afghans after years of fighting, they heard on Radio Taliban that a force for stability is coming. But that force for stability that those people thought might be stability soon wore out its welcome. Faced with a few years of this abuse, it is no surprise that Afghans now want to overthrow the Taliban.

In a recent poll conducted by Physicians for Human Rights, that poll found 90 percent of Afghan men and women rejected the Taliban's restrictions that exclude women from participating in education, employment, and other aspects of civilian life. 94 percent of women in the Taliban-controlled area said that the Taliban has made their lives much worse, and attributed their declining physical and mental health to Taliban policies.

Muslims at large do not support the Taliban's fanatical practices. Moderate Muslim governments oppose the Taliban's treatment of women and its

false interpretation of Islam. The Taliban is a repressive political regime whose aim is to monopolize power in Afghanistan; and to do that, it practices pure terror.

President Bush recognized this in his speech to the Joint Session of Congress which we heard here on the floor when he said, "The United States respects the people of Afghanistan, but we condemn the Taliban regime." The Taliban has demonstrated a blatant disregard for the well-being of Afghans, and by harboring terrorists, it has demonstrated a blatant disregard for human life, both within and outside the Afghanistan borders.

The U.S. is right, therefore, to seek to overthrow the Taliban government. This will rid the world of an evil regime and will improve the livelihood of the Afghan people and will put a stop to the violations of women's rights which in Afghanistan today is a more dire situation for women than anywhere else on this planet.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) for organizing an ongoing effort to call attention to the plight of these women. My hope is that the world community becomes more involved and understands better why it is we have to make certain that this Taliban regime is replaced, and that the women of Afghanistan are again given a voice and basic human rights. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I am certain that we will continue this each week and will not stop until we see the improvements on women and children in Afghanistan.

We have been joined by another member of the women's caucus who has spoken out passionately about the women of Afghanistan, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want the gentleman to know that there are many women who appreciate his leadership on this issue and appreciate the gentleman coming to the floor and speaking out for the women in Afghanistan.

I also want to bring to the attention of my colleagues in Congress and others the leadership of the gentleman on the Voice of America, the voice for Afghanistan, to bring the truth to the people about what our country is trying to accomplish. The fact that we are also supplying humanitarian aid and that we are attacking terrorists, not Afghanistan and the people there, but the Taliban and the terrorists.

I would like the gentleman to explain his bill which I think is an extremely important one, which I support. Even though it is not the purpose of this Special Order, I think it is an important issue and one that should be highlighted.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for this opportunity to explain what we have in mind with respect to Radio Free Afghanistan.

Basically the people of Afghanistan, and through this region, have not had the opportunity to hear information that contradicts the ongoing propaganda from the government in a way which was intended to explain the lies and to explain to the people what was actually happening inside the country.

So the concept behind Radio Free Afghanistan is to do what was done with Radio Free Europe in Poland or Czechoslovakia. When we talk with leaders of Poland or the Czech Republic, they say that the hearts and minds of those people in those countries were turned by the opportunity to listen daily to a radio broadcast which explained what was actually happening inside their society. These broadcasts which were done by ex-pat Czechs and Poles, and so forth, was able to explain and put in context what they would be hearing from the Soviet broadcasts.

Over time we know, from those leaders that we have talked to, that this was the most effective single thing that changed the attitudes of the average person in Eastern Europe, so much so that we all recall what happened with the Berlin Wall. We recall what happened in Poland with the solidarity movement, and part of this was because they had access to information.

What we are trying to do with Radio Free Afghanistan is to explain to the people of Afghanistan what exactly the Taliban is telling them and why it is false. Why is that important? Because the broadcasts in Afghanistan say this: They say bin Laden is innocent of any attack on the World Trade Center bombing. The assertion is on their information system that there were 4,000 Jewish workers who were absent that day from work because the Israeli government had told them that they were going to bomb the World Trade Center. Of course that is not true because we know how many people lost their lives and how many Jewish employees lost their lives. It is a lie, but it is a lie that is repeated over and over and over again, not just on that radio station, but on newspapers in this part of the world.

So the opportunity to explain the facts are essential. The opportunity to remind people that the Taliban has hijacked that Afghan culture is essential, reminding people that women used to have the right to vote and used to have the right to work and to learn to read and write.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. If the gentleman will yield, I really do think that the gentleman's bill is so crucial now given the fact that the Taliban is telling the people that the humanitarian efforts that we, led by our President is doing for that region, the food is poisonous and what they are saying

now and putting out that type of propaganda, trying to influence and bring a type of stalemate or trying to keep the folks from knowing that the United States is in there to help them as opposed to hurting them.

It is very clear that we need to have that bill passed so that we can get radios into the people of Afghanistan, especially the women, so they can understand what the real issue is and not be blind-sided by the Taliban and their barbaric regime.

I know that the gentlewoman wants to speak on this issue, and I yield to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for organizing this Special Order tonight that really focuses on the plight of the women in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago I came to the House floor to condemn the Taliban's appalling treatment of women. I relayed the tragic story of a 16-year-old girl who was stoned to death for going out in public with a man who was not her family member; and for a woman, for the crime of teaching girls in her home, was also stoned to death in front of her husband, children and students.

□ 2200

Sadly, these terrible acts are real, and they continue under the Taliban regime.

But tonight I want to highlight who the Afghan women are and how we must support them when Afghanistan rebuilds. Afghan women are neither weak nor helpless. They are merely being imprisoned by an oppressive and brutal regime. Many of those women behind the burqas are strong, capable women who once played a major role in Afghan society.

Women's rights in Afghanistan have fluctuated greatly over the years. Women have bravely fought the forces of extremism at various points in the country's turbulent history. At one time, women comprised 70 percent of the school teachers, 50 percent of the civilian government workers, 40 percent of the doctors, and 50 percent of the students in universities. They were scientists and professors. They led corporations, nonprofit organizations, and were very active in their local communities.

Extremist forces in the early 1990s, some of the same groups that are being proposed as potential leaders of a new government in Afghanistan, began to curtail women's freedoms. But when the Taliban came to power in 1996, it banned women from all public life. Working itself became a crime. Today, women who were once diplomats and judges can be beaten for improper dress. Women who were once army generals can be shot for leaving their homes without a male escort, even to receive medical care. The Taliban con-

done rape as an effective means of punishing women and rewarding soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, one of these days, we do not know how long it will be, but it will happen, we will end the Taliban regime for its support of terrorism; and we will be in a position to help Afghan women forge a better future for themselves and their families. We must begin to discuss the future of women in Afghanistan. It is crucial that any coalition that is assembled to run Afghanistan fully restore the rights of women. We will not need to construct a new, novel idea of equality between men and women. Instead, we can help reconstruct an old and better way of life.

Afghan women are proven leaders among their people. They can once again rise as thoughtful, powerful community leaders. Women in Afghanistan were guaranteed equality in their constitution, which they helped write in 1964. Women represent the majority of the Afghan people. We need to ensure that their voices are heard and their impact is felt.

Eliminating the Taliban will not automatically end the struggle for women's rights in Afghanistan. There are no angels waiting in the wings to deliver Afghanistan from all the evils of its checkered past. When the U.S. liberates Afghanistan from the Taliban, we must use our moral authority to ensure that power does not fall into the hands of a new regime with extremist views on women's rights. Any regime will surely be better than the Taliban, but our standard must be much higher than that.

President Bush has done our country proud in our war on terrorism and against the Taliban. I urge him to be mindful of this issue and vocal about it as he begins to lay the diplomatic groundwork for a new Afghanistan.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. I thank the gentlewoman from New York. We know how strong she has been and how outspoken she has been on the issue of empowering Afghanistan's women. We want her to come each week as we come to this floor to talk about this plight, to ensure that not only the American women, but women around this world and across this Nation take part in helping us to fight until these women have gotten their rightful fundamental rights, human rights restored back to them.

We do know that millions of people in Afghanistan are experiencing the most desperate poverty imaginable. In addition to the Taliban's barbaric rule, the region is suffering under the most severe drought in decades and military incursions continue to displace hundreds of thousands of Afghans. Seventy-five percent of refugees are women and children; the conditions in which they fight to survive are horrific. According to some estimates, every 30 minutes a woman dies in childbirth and one in four children die before 5 years of age.

During these uncertain times, women and families need safe havens. We must do everything within our power to guarantee humanitarian efforts and aid benefits for the women and children of Afghanistan who are suffering in this region. A significant increase in food, shelter, education and health care services is necessary to ward off starvation, disease and death and to prevent further regional instability that breeds terrorism.

You might recall, Mr. Speaker, for the past 6 years, Afghan women and girls have pleaded with the world to free them from the grip of the brutal Taliban militia and have warned that the Taliban's threat to humanity would extend beyond the borders of Afghanistan. In the wake of September 11, we have come to see the realization of their warnings.

Mr. Speaker, again I applaud the administration's commitment to \$320 million in humanitarian aid and support, a dramatic increase in the United States' efforts to provide long-term humanitarian assistance. More importantly, I stand in full support of providing direct funding to Afghan women-led organizations like the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, known as RAWA, to ensure that the primary beneficiaries are women and children. As we cannot forget the tragic events of September 11, we must not forget the Afghan women and girls and children, the first victims of the Taliban.

I want to engage again my colleagues on some of those things that the Afghan women have been very prominent in, like in 1924, they had the first women's magazine and published that about Afghan women. In 1964, women were appointed to the advisory constitutional drafting committee. In 1977, Afghan women participated in the drafting committee of the constitution of Afghanistan.

As you can see, women were very much into the whole fabric of Afghanistan, and as my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) was saying, and he certainly knows this history of the Afghan women, we must again fight to ensure and restore women in these pivotal positions, such as publishing magazines, advisory committees on the constitution, because we know that the constitution in 1923 guaranteed equal rights to all citizens of Afghanistan.

The Congressman from California knows this history better than I, but these were the absolute, entrenched women of Afghanistan doing these types of things that during those eras really a lot of women from other countries, including ours, did not have the ability to do.

So you might want to expound again on some of those things that I have outlined here.

Mr. ROYCE. Let me respond.

What is astounding here is the fact that, as the gentlewoman says, you had a culture in which women played such a pivotal role, especially in education, in the professions, in governance; and suddenly, because of the civil war, first the war to repel the Soviet invasion and then the country in turmoil, in despair, you had the Taliban appear on the scene that, through a ruthless effort, grabbed control, not only of the government, but grabbed control of the ability to communicate through radio to the people. What was unique about Afghanistan is that most people got their information from radio, 85 percent of the Afghan people.

Once the Taliban forces had seized the radio stations, the broadcasting stations, they were able to begin a disinformation campaign, a propaganda campaign, to direct the people with misinformation in order to try to have them follow the Taliban.

In 1997, I had suggested to the former Under Secretary for South Asia that we support in the United States a Radio Free Afghanistan at that time. Why? Because the Taliban were sweeping across the country and, with propaganda, the fact that they controlled the information system in much the way that Goebbels in Germany controlled the information system, they were propagandizing on a daily basis.

I said at the time, if we could get a Radio Free Afghanistan up in that society, we would be able to give people true information about what was actually happening, and probably it would head off this Taliban movement, because they thrive through the lies that they spread.

What we found was that once they got control of most of the country, of course they have never been able to take all of it, but once they got control of the lion's share of Afghanistan, they then, in addition to propagandizing, began to eliminate dissenters, began the process of rounding up and eliminating anyone who tried to disagree with them.

So how do you get information into a society like that? What you do, in my view, is recognize the fact television is already illegal, the Taliban passed a prohibition, it is a criminal act to own a television, so no one owns televisions any longer in the country. The thing you can do to reach these people, in my view, is a constant message on the air to tell them what has actually happened to them, why it has happened, who has done it to them, and why the United States is finally responding to Osama bin Laden. It took an attack on the United States to get us to finally act.

My hope is that we can commit ourselves, as the gentlewoman has correctly pointed out and as the gentlewoman from New York pointed out, not just to ending this cruel operation of al Qaeda and bin Laden, but also

making certain that some measure of justice is done here to eliminate that Taliban control and to take the country to a position that it once had with a constitution, with rights.

There is such a dangerous precedent for human rights and for the rights of women especially, in terms of what the Taliban has been able to do, it demands the international community stepping in and making certain that a constitution and the rule of law come back to that country.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. It is amazing you would say the international community, because what we are trying to do as members of the Women's Caucus is to engage women around the world, ambassadors of various countries, NGOs, nongovernmental organizations, women organizations, to help us in this plight.

We applaud RAWA, because RAWA is right there in Afghanistan trying to bring about the type of human rights, the type of democracy and to bring empowerment back to women. We know that is a plight in and of itself, because the Taliban is quickly trying to denounce anyone who tends to want to give freedom and democracy to the people who are so distraught and who are in the throes of their very barbaric actions.

And so the bill, Radio Free Afghanistan, will really help to bring the type of information where the women, those others who are trying to do their level best to bring some sanity and some type of democracy back, will be more informed of what we are trying to do, what people around the world, this international community, is trying to do; and hopefully will help us to restore that type of democracy. Once that is done, I think we must ensure that women have a rightful place in any type of negotiations, any type of legislation.

Indeed, there should be types of elections where they are elected back into office and they get the education that they need so that they can be prominent in the whole fabric of that society.

We cannot stop once we restore the empowerment to women, and we will indeed continue that until we do that. But we must ensure that they continue to have their place and their seat at the table. In fact, we are asking here that Members of Congress include in all proposed legislation on the future of Afghanistan any language that assures the inclusion of women and women organizations in reconstruction of the country at every level of planning, decision-making and implementation.

□ 2215

We must do that. We have seen through the ages through the history of Afghanistan that women have played a very pivotal role. I think about in 1919 when Afghanistan women

got their right to vote. In fact, that was a year before we were given the right to vote. A progressive king encouraged women to take part in the political process.

This is what we are doing here in America. This is what we must do with the women there and must ensure that the constitution that has been passed in that country be restored or be done in terms of ensuring that women get their equal rights back. It was written in 1923. We must allow that to be the sole document that encourages women to know that they have an equal right as a citizen of Afghanistan, and that this constitution that was deemed written and adopted in 1923 will encourage women to know that they have a right, a fundamental right and, therefore, should be given the restoration of their democracy and their freedom.

Mr. ROYCE. If the gentlewoman would yield, I would just like to second your observation that a return to the constitution and the rule of law in this part of the world is absolutely essential along with the development of a broad-based inclusive government in Afghanistan. We have to commit ourselves to that.

We have had an opportunity to see the terror that can result when rule of law, when Democratic principles are subverted, and that terror has given rise to an ability of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda to use a network of terrorist training camps across that country.

Now, if there had been a Democratic regime or if there had been a broad-based government there, there is no way that these types of terrorist training camps could be used in order to wage war ultimately on the United States.

Terrorists have a difficult time when they are on the run. But when they have a state, as the Taliban in Afghanistan presented as a state, the opportunity for terrorists to come and train and plan and prepare and be financed and to rehearse and not just rehearse attacks but to use gas and chemicals. All of this was offered to bin Laden and al-Qaeda by the Taliban. This is why it is important to us in the United States in terms of our own lives. Not only should we care about the human beings in the rest of the world that live under this type of tyranny, and tonight we have talked a great deal about just how bereft people are in Afghanistan of any fundamental rights and how women are treated worse there than under any other regimes in the world, but we should also recognize that when the world community and when the United States ignores this type of evil, it eventually, I think, catches up with us as well.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I could not agree with the gentleman more. And this is why the

bill authorizes, the gentleman's bill that he will be bringing to this floor, authorizes the funds that will allow a new transmitter that will roughly have 12 hours a day of broadcasting so that they can and in their local language where the Afghan people can really get the true meaning of what we are trying to do, get the type of information that will help to empower them, to get the type of support and to know about the support that it is not only inside RAWA, but on the outside with the international community, then this will help hopefully to further and to make the task a bit easier for us.

But we must ensure that the legislation that the gentleman is pushing, and I am the original co-sponsor of that with him, that we bring this about because we can ill afford to allow the truth not to be told to the people, especially the women of Afghanistan.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, we will be bringing that bill before the Committee on International Relations. We will be passing it out on Thursday. But after that the gentlewoman and I will be working to bring it to the House floor as soon as possible because I believe that time is of the essence.

We want the people of Afghanistan to understand why the United States is involved in this military action against the Taliban and against bin Laden. We want them to understand so that they will be our allies in this effort. And my belief is that their response, once they hear the truth, will be the same as the response by the people of Poland, the people of the former Czechoslovakia, the people of Hungary when they had that opportunity to listen to those Radio Free Europe broadcasts and when the people went to the street and said enough. It is time for tyranny to end. It is time for us to have our freedom.

Well, it is time for the people of Afghanistan to have their freedom and it is the time for the women of Afghanistan to have their human rights back.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, that is the empowerment that we are trying to do.

As we looked on yesterday with Michael Jordan returning to basketball, I am reminded of the Afghan women who in 1961 had women basketball players win the national championship in Afghanistan. This just goes to show you that they were entrenched throughout that country and not only in education, not only in medicine, not only in application, as we have said, that they made up the largest legislative body than we do now presently in the U.S. Congress, but they were also in sports. So they had the freedom to move about.

We know that a lot of them traveled to Turkey to seek higher education. And so given all of this, 1996, the Taliban came in and they just disrupted the whole lifestyle of a group of

women and children. Of course, we will continue to denounce this. We will not allow this type of thing to happen, not only to women of Afghanistan but to women around this globe, around this world, we will not allow that to happen.

So with men like you, with other men in this body who are passionate as we are about the women of Afghanistan, they too will help us rise up and will fight and bring back the dignity and the democracy that they should and have enjoyed in Afghanistan.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I must again thank the gentlewoman for her efforts around the country to get the information out, the truth out about what has happened and this gross violation of the rights of women in Afghanistan. I do believe that there are more and more of our colleagues now who are committing themselves and saying we are not just going to try to attack al-Qaeda and then leave.

My belief is that unless we see this through and see the Taliban government catapulted out of power there, we risk having this cancer, that the al-Qaeda network and the Taliban expand beyond Afghanistan. I think for the hope of civilization, for the hope of the next generations, it is very important that this broad-based coalition that the President and that our Secretary of State Colin Powell have put together in order to wage this effort stay the course until we see that the Taliban rule is extinguished, and that we make certain that the international community plays a role in afterwards bringing peace and restoring fundamental rights and showing by example why the United States stands for principles of human rights, rule of law, the importance of liberty. We have to follow through.

I believe we did not do all that we should have done after the Soviet Union left Afghanistan. I believe that the United States at that time instead of adopting a strategy of benign neglect, which has basically been the strategy since the Soviet Union was defeated finally and pulled out of Afghanistan, allowed this outside group to develop this nucleus there and in this state of despair and anarchy that existed, they were allowed to grab control.

I think there is a lesson in this. We should have at the time made certain that people had access to information, not only inside Afghanistan about what was going on around the world. We should have been more attentive to what was happening. Well, now we know. There is no longer any excuse for anyone not to rally to this cause of bringing justice for the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman again.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so

much for being with me tonight. We do understand that we were encouraged to stay there once the Soviet Union had left, had really been defeated in their purpose, but we did not listen. I think the old adage of, "If you do not know your history, you are doomed to repeat it," I think at this juncture we will not do that. Once we have defeated the Taliban, we will stay there and restore democracy and give the people the type of lifestyle they want they want to know.

We have to recognize that the Taliban, Mr. Speaker, took control and that is when women who were leaders in public life and politics, leaders in every aspect of that country were then thrown aside, were not permitted to go out any more without having this burqa, really were denied the basic human rights that they enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, as I opened tonight I said that we will be here each week. Well, continue to come here each week to talk about the Taliban's barbaric ruling, how they have destroyed or think that they have destroyed the women of Afghanistan, but they have simply given us the opening and the opportunity by the attacks of September 11, we have not seen that, the atrocities in Afghanistan, and we will not stop until we can eradicate that.

Mr. Speaker, with that I will say that while the tragic events of September 11 were eye-openers for some, they presented windows of opportunity into the lives of the women and children of Afghanistan, and we will not rest until gender apartheid is nonexistent not only in Afghanistan but throughout the world.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ABERCROMBIE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MCKINNEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CAPPS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SOUDER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.