

December 5, 2001

ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY AND
ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2001

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, at the international Relations Committee meeting of November 28, 2001, which considered the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, I asked a question of my colleagues who were vociferously supporting this misdirected piece of legislation: "Can anyone explain how the people in question who now have the land in question in Zimbabwe got title to the land?"

My query was met with a deafening silence. Those who knew did not want to admit the truth and those who didn't know should have known—that the land was stolen from its indigenous peoples through the British South Africa Company and any "titles" to it were illegal and invalid. Whatever the reason for their silence, the answer to this question is the unspoken but real reason for why the United States Congress is now concentrating its time and resources on squeezing an economically-devastated African state under the hypocritical guise of providing a "transition to democracy."

Zimbabwe is Africa's second-longest stable democracy. It is multi-party. It had elections last year where the opposition, Movement for Democratic Change, won over 50 seats in the parliament. It has an opposition press which vigorously criticizes the government and governing party. It has an independent judiciary which issues decisions contrary to the wishes of the governing party. Zimbabwe is not without troubles, but neither is the United States. I have not heard anyone proposing a United States Democracy Act following last year's Presidential electoral debacle. And if a foreign country were to pass legislation calling for a United States Democracy Act which provided funding for United States opposition parties under the fig leaf of "Voter Education," this body and this country would not stand for it.

There are many de jure and de facto one-party states in the world which are the recipients of support of the United States government. They are not the subject of Congressional legislative sanctions. To any honest observer, Zimbabwe's sin is that it has taken the position to right a wrong, whose resolution has been too long overdue—to return its land to its people. The Zimbabwean government has said that a situation where 2 percent of the population owns 85 percent of the best land is untenable. Those who presently own more than one farm will no longer be able to do so.

When we get right down to it, this legislation is nothing more than a formal declaration of United States complicity in a program to maintain white-skin privilege. We can call it an "incentives" bill, but that does not change its essential "sanctions" nature. It is racist and against the interests of the masses of Zimbabweans. In the long-run the Zimbabwe Democracy Act will work against the United States having a mutually beneficial relationship with Africa.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NEED FOR REESTABLISHING THE
OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AS-
SESSMENT

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, complex issues are facing Congress, many in the realm of science and technology. Current events are challenging our traditional understanding of medicine, engineering, science, environment, and telecommunications. Mail decontamination is just one issue where Congress needs better science advice.

Thousands of people have been affected by anthrax in our mail—millions more by the uncertainty and fear it has caused. Congress still has not received mail, severing a vital link to our constituents. Part of the reason for this delay is that there is no precedent for killing anthrax spores.

If the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) existed today, we could expect to have already received information about rapid ways to decontaminate our mail. During its 23 years of existence, OTA provided Congress with well-respected, impartial analysis and advice, including valuable reports on terrorism, national security, and communication. If OTA existed today, they would have already completed reports useful to us in making decisions about the current war on terrorism.

Congress needs better scientific information. We need unbiased analysis and advice on the impact and use of technologies. We need to understand how technology can be used to hurt us and how we can use it to strengthen and defend our nation.

When OTA's funding was eliminated due to government downsizing in 1995, Congress lost a valuable and unique resource. Please join me, along with 55 of my colleagues, in co-sponsoring H.R. 2148, bipartisan legislation to reestablish the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA).

TERRORISM RISK PROTECTION
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 29, 2001

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3210, the Terrorism Risk Protection Act.

In the last two months, the Financial Services Committee, on which I serve, has held two hearings plus a roundtable on the state of the insurance industry after the September 11 terrorist attack. From these meetings, a consensus on several facts emerged. First, the lack of available terrorism reinsurance may cause significant disruption in the primary commercial insurance markets.

Second, without assurances that commercial firms can receive terrorism coverage,

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lenders (such as banks or other institutional investors) will not underwrite new loans for construction projects necessary to grow our economy.

Finally, and most importantly, is the fact that prompt congressional action on this issue is essential, since most reinsurance contracts will be renewed on January 1. Absent some form of terrorism coverage, the economic effects to our country will be devastating.

On November 7, a proposed bipartisan solution to this problem was reported by the House Financial Services Committee (H.R. 3210) by a voice vote. Our committee reported legislation that provided immediate assistance in the case of a terrorist disaster; it spread the risk across the industry, helping the industry to essentially act as its own reinsurer; it spread the costs out over time, to minimize the impact of an event in any given year; and it provided limited liability relief to protect insurers and taxpayers against litigation in the event of an attack.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was considered under regular order—the deliberative congressional process—as all legislation should. Our committee held hearings and markups; we took testimony from all interested parties; we vigorously debated all of the relevant issues; and we reported a well-thought out, well-designed, bipartisan product that met the needs of the marketplace.

Unfortunately, the majority leadership decided yesterday that their pre-September 11 agenda was more important than the deliberative legislative process and the will of the Financial Services Committee, which includes almost one-fifth of this House. At 2:30 p.m., yesterday afternoon, the majority leader introduced an entirely new product that did little to address the real needs of the insurance markets, but rather addressed the majority's desire to change long-standing and well established legal procedure in this country. Adding insult to injury, the majority party designed a rule that eviscerated the will of the Financial Services Committee by automatically making in order the leader's bill without allowing the full House the courtesy of a vote on our bipartisan product.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support disregard for the expertise of committees, the erosion of our legislative process, and abuse of minority rights. I can no longer support business as usual.

The real injustice in the majority's actions is the fact that we must pass responsible legislation to provide terrorism coverage for primary insurers and policyholders. I hope the other body quickly enacts legislation to address the real needs of the marketplace, while eliminating the extraneous provisions attached to the product we are considering today. Our country needs that legislation. I want to vote for that legislation. I look forward to soon being able to vote for a conference report that reflects the priorities of the Financial Services Committee and respects the processes of our institutions.