

If you are a lawyer downtown and the diamond industry comes to you and asks you to represent them to oppose the bill of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), think about it. Because, in essence, you are representing the people, the people that have been responsible for this.

The bill of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) is a responsible bill. It is a balanced bill. I think he is exactly right. We do not want to see a boycott against the diamond industry. We do not want to hurt the jewelers in this country. We do not want to hurt the legitimate diamond merchants in the world and some of the good places in Africa that are doing it.

So the passage of the bill of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), we can resolve this issue and stop the killing of people and the cutting off of arms.

CONFLICT DIAMONDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) for focusing our attention on this very important issue. They have been tireless in their efforts to raise awareness of conflict diamonds.

Over the last year, increasing attention has been given to the issue of conflict diamonds in Africa. The gross misuse of these resources in countries like Sierra Leone and Angola raise the stakes in Africa's all too many wars, making these conflicts more deadly by funding otherwise unaffordable weapons that are purchased overseas.

Yesterday, the Subcommittee on Africa, which I chair, held a hearing on the situation in West Africa, with particular emphasis on the destabilizing role of President Charles Taylor of Liberia and what has happened with conflict diamonds there.

The West African country of Liberia, I have to report, is in terrible shape. Over the past 4 years, President Charles Taylor has waged a continuous assault on the democratic dreams of the Liberian people. He rules by decree. He suppresses the press, including USAID-supported STAR radio, which he forced off the air. He sanctions, if not directs, the murder of political opponents.

As the subcommittee has profiled over the last several years, Charles Taylor is a menace to West Africa. One of our witnesses yesterday stated that, "Charles Taylor's role has been to mastermind carnage in Sierra Leone for the sole purpose of controlling its diamond mines from which he derives income to enrich himself and to buy arms and ammunition to continue his

control over Liberia and ultimately over the entire West African sub-region."

Now, Charles Taylor's accessories to this in Sierra Leone are a group that we call the Revolutionary United Front. Sometimes they are referred to as the RUF. A Panel of Experts report issued last December found unequivocal and overwhelming evidence that Liberia has been actively supporting the Revolutionary United Front at all levels in providing training, in providing weapons and related material, logistical support, a staging ground for tanks that they make and then a safe haven to retreat and to recoup, and has been aiding them in public relations activities.

President Charles Taylor, the report goes on, is actively involved in fueling the violence in Sierra Leone. Under-scoring his tight ties with the Revolutionary United Front, this report found that Taylor even uses personnel from the Front for his own personal security detail. This is the same Revolutionary United Front whose signature is forced amputations of men and women and children. I highly commend this report. It well documents the frightening syndicate of international crime and diamond smuggling that Taylor now stands at the center of to anyone concerned about West Africa's fate.

Acting on this report, the UN Security Council last week acted to impose diamond export and other sanctions on Charles Taylor. Sanctioning Charles Taylor was the right thing to do, but it was a mistake to give him 2 months to comply with UN demands that he stop aiding the Revolutionary United Front before the sanctions bite.

This man has a record. For him, peace agreements are tactical delays designed to lull opponents before he strikes again. This was the case with the Lome Accord to Sierra Leone. Taylor has worked a cease-fire between the Revolutionary United Front and the UN peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone. Why did he do that? So he could free up the Revolutionary United Front to attack Guinea, which is now under way.

So now Taylor is making a bid to stave off the diamond sanctions and the travel sanctions, but it is a feint. Instead of waiting 2 months, the Security Council should have imposed these sanctions now.

West African states, frankly, in this region that are being impacted by the terror that is emanating from his training camps are weak, and these states are getting weaker. If we do not act with vigor now, the region neighboring Liberia will become an irreversible humanitarian and environmental nightmare. In a few years, our ability to do anything constructive may well be gone. We need to bring a sense of urgency to our West Africa policy. We are not serious about Africa if we are not

serious about this crisis of what is going on here.

So let me just say that Charles Taylor's time is up. For the sake of tens of millions of West Africans, it is time to act forcefully against President Charles Taylor.

UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH IRELAND IMPORTANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, we are delighted President Bush has arrived in the Capitol complex, and he is here to celebrate Speaker HASTERT's Saint Patrick's Day luncheon here in our wonderful Nation's Capitol.

I want to take a moment, obviously, to celebrate this important day that is arriving in just 2 short days and to commend President Clinton for his work in Ireland, particularly to try and bring together peace in that region. Ireland is a beautiful country, and anyone who has visited there recognizes its emerald beauty, its hospitality, its friendliness and its importance to the United States.

But for too many years there has been strife, ethnic division, division created by religious beliefs that has gone on for far too long. President Clinton did his best to bring about a cease-fire, working with all parties to make a practical approach to peace, but the one thing that seems apparent to me more than anything else is our continued interest in economic ties with Ireland.

Wherever I have traveled and wherever I have met in the world's theater, one thing seems to be clear in their presentations to members of our congressional delegations; that if we bring jobs and opportunity, America's economic might and stick-to-it-iveness, what emerges from strife and fighting and decay and despair, what emerges from those difficult situations, are hope and opportunity, progress and peace.

When we recently went to the Middle East, King Abdullah, II, who is now the ruling leader of Jordan, rather than ask for military hardware and military might or more American funding, specifically asked could we introduce them to companies like Oracle and Microsoft and companies that may bring jobs and opportunity to Amman and places in Jordan. Because he gets it. He readily acknowledges that with work and opportunity and with income comes peace. People lay down their weapons in order to find jobs and prosper for themselves and their family.

In Northern Ireland, we have that same opportunity; and, yes, we have that same obligation. The President has announced his choice for Ambassador of the United States to Ireland. I