service; improving democratic surveillance of election monitoring; codes of conduct for peacekeepers and international representatives; and gender issues.

I was pleased to be re-elected for a third time as a Senior Officer and Treasurer and as Leader of the Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Political group. I extend my appreciation to all of our colleagues for their support. I particularly want to single out my colleagues Mr. Alcee Hastings, who was re-elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Association, and who invited us to share an outstanding visit to George Washington's home on Mount Vernon on the Potomac. Our hosts also invited us to participate in the festivities on Capitol Hill for their July 4 celebration, together with over one million Americans. It was a memorable experience for all of us.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. JOHNSTON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, July 11, 2005, I was delayed in the Cincinnati Airport due to a mechanical failure of my plane, a plane swap, and a new plane having to be brought in for my flight from Cincinnati to Washington. There were no other flight options for me to arrive in Washington before the votes occurred on H. Con. Res. 168 (Roll Call No. 363) and H. Res. 333 (Roll Call No. 364). Had I been here to cast my votes, I would have voted "aye" on both H. Con. Res. 168 and H. Res. 333 and wish to express my regret as such.

As a member of the Human Rights Caucus and a firm believer that every human being has certain irrevocable rights, I stand in strong favor of both of these pieces of legislation. We cannot and should not stand by as gross human rights violations such as the kidnappings in Korea and the genocide in Darfur continue. I applaud my colleagues, Representative HENRY HYDE and Representative DONALD PAYNE, for introducing these bills and bringing them to the floor for our consideration.

Almost 3 years ago North Korean leader Kim Jong-I admitted that North Korea had ordered abductions of Japanese citizens and promised that it would never do so again. However, evidence has surfaced that the North Korean government has continued to order the abductions of numerous foreign citizens and has placed these captives, along with prisoners of war, in forced labor camps. To stand by and do nothing in response to these gross violations of human rights is unconscionable and this bill clearly states to Kim Jong-I and the North Korean government that the United States will no longer let this continue.

I am also pleased that we were able to debate H. Res. 333. I have been a huge supporter of our past funding for aid to Darfur and our condemnation of the genocide occurring there and can think of no better way to complement these actions than by prayer for and reflecting on this horrible situation. The better we personally understand this situation, the better we as a Congress will be able to respond to prevent situations such as these from occurring in the future. As a man of faith, I will stand with my family, my colleagues, and fellow citizens and pray for the people of Darfur to have the continued support of the international community.

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, July 11, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of Congressman Payne's resolution H. Res. 333—supporting the goals and ideals of a National Weekend of Prayer and Reflection for Darfur. The violence and ongoing humanitarian challenges that the people of Darfur continue to face necessitate that we keep in them our thoughts and prayers, and continue to ensure that the Darfur issue remains firmly within the purview of U.S. policymakers, until a final resolution is reached.

Communities of faith in the United States have always played a role in eliciting action on an array of historic moral questions. From the anti-slavery and civil rights movements in this country, to the campaign to end the terrible Ethiopian famines of the 1980's, the power of faith was brought to bear in an attempt to address an issue of human suffering.

The ongoing crisis in Darfur is one such issue, that warrants renewed engagement of the American religious community—especially when engagement from other sources has, in some instances, been lacking. The Darfur conflict has so far claimed as much as 400,000 lives, and displaced at least 2.4 million. The United States has to its credit taken the lead among world powers in addressing the conflict by providing humanitarian assistance to the Darfurian people, and applying pressure to the Sudanese government. America's religious communities have been instrumental in compelling the United States government to take action.

However, in recent months the Administration has been rather muted on the Darfur issue. Indeed, the Administration has backed away from classifying the actions of the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed militia as genocide, and U.S. and Sudanese officials have visited each other consistently in recent months. With the recent peace agreement between the Khartoum government and the oil-producing region of southern Sudan, as well as Sudanese cooperation on U.S. terrorism efforts, there is talk of the U.S. lifting sanctions on Sudan.

Such hospitable relations are very concerning, considering the fact that the situation in the Darfur is still dire. While the killings in aggregate have decreased, the cease-fire is extremely fragile. In the absence of the small African Union peacekeeping force, and the humanitarian assistance provided by the international community, Darfur will easily fall back into chaos. Indeed, U.N. humanitarian coordinator Jan Egeland said that the situation could deteriorate quickly if foreign assistance stops coming.

In addition, rape is still a widespread tactic utilized by government and its militia, as well as forced military recruitment of young people. According to officials from the United Nations High Committee on Refugees, areas outside peacekeeping observation remain very dangerous. As such, the United States must maintain its pressure on the Sudanese government, and clearly convey to them that any improvement in relations between our two countries is contingent on resolution of the Darfur crisis.

The religious community is well placed, and equipped with the moral authority, to compel the United States government not to decrease its engagement on the Darfur issue. It is my hope that communities of faith will reflect this coming weekend on the continuing crisis in Darfur—because only when we reflect, will we be emboldened to act. Again, I thank the Gentleman from New Jersey for this resolution, as our struggle for the people of Darfur is far from over.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS JR.
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD that on July 11th of this year, due to unavoidable circumstances, I was unable to be present. If I had been in attendance, I would have added the RECORD to reflect that I would have voted in the following manner on these bills:

On H. Con. Res. 168—Condemning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the abductions and continued captivity of citizens of the Republic of Korea and Japan as acts of terrorism and gross violations of human rights I would have voted "yea."

On H. Res. 333—Supporting the goals and ideals of a National Weekend of Prayer and Reflection for Darfur, Sudan I would have voted "yea."

MILITARY PERSONNEL FINANCIAL SERVICES PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, June 27, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support Title II of H.R. 458, the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act. Title II's provisions are especially important as they will help prevent high-cost military lenders from preying on the men and women who are serving in our Armed Forces.

This important measure provides needed protections for military borrowers from various...
thoughts on leadership and african development

hon. charles b. rangel
of new york
in the house of representatives

wednesday, july 12, 2005

mr. rangel. mr. speaker, the plight of africa has been the focus of much public discourse in recent months. the g–8 made commendable progress on the issue of african development in its summit, but there is still much to be done. on a recent trip to the united states, nelson mandela visited the riverside church in new york city to thank the american public for its support in helping south africa overcome apartheid, but also to remind us that africa still faced enormous challenges.

the riverside church where mr. mandela spoke has long been a leader within america’s faith community in bringing attention to various issues of social justice, even when the cause was not popular. the church was a major center of activism during the antiapartheid movement, and had hosted mr. mandela on his first visit to the united states after being released from prison in 1990.

while mr. mandela won his fight against apartheid in south africa, he is still waging a battle against the many problems that face the african continent. the beginning of the 21st century sees an africa affected by widespread poverty, the hiv/aids crisis, and crippling levels of debt and other challenges, through his mandela foundation, is fighting to address these critical issues.

on that note, i submit for the record a piece from the july 5th edition of the caribnews. the piece is by harry belafonte, the internationally renowned actor and activist, and was used to introduce mr. mandela at the riverside church event in may. the words of this introduction provide us ample food for thought as we continue the still unfinished crusade for african development.

riverside cathedral, a platform for truth

a search for africa’s development and the role of nelson mandela

this (riverside) cathedral has vigorously embraced its covenant with truth in the midst of so many houses of worship that have in the name of faith and god made treaty with the devil.

river side cathedral has given us reason to believe in speaking truth to power. many have claimed to be keepers of the flock. they have declared their right to pick who shall or shall not be “shepherd of heaven.” others have hidden behind the cloak of morality as they indulge themselves and the nation in the sin of homophobia that has sanctioned and(prev.)

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