

July 29, 2005

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
VOTING RIGHTS ACT

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, not so long ago, 40 years ago, in many parts of the American South, it was almost impossible for people of color to register to vote. Just 40 years ago, people of color had to pay a poll tax and pass a so-called literacy test in some States in the South. There were black men and women who were professors in colleges and universities, black lawyers and black doctors who were told that they could not read or write well enough to register to vote. People were turned away from the courthouse when they attempted to register. Some were jailed.

Forty years ago, on March 7, 1965, about 600 black men and women, and a few young children attempted to peacefully march from Selma, Al., to Montgomery, to the State Capital, to dramatize to the world that people of color wanted to register to vote. And the world watched as we were met with night sticks, bull whips; we were trampled by horses and tear gassed.

Eight days after what became known as Bloody Sunday, President Johnson came to this very Chamber and spoke to a joint session of Congress. He started off that speech on March 15, 1965 by saying: "I speak tonight for the dignity of man and for the destiny of democracy." President Johnson went on to say: "At times, history and fate come together to shape a turning point in a man's unending search for freedom. So it was more than a century ago at Lexington and at Concord. So it was at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama."

And during that speech, 40 years ago, President Johnson condemned the violence in Selma, and called on Congress to enact the Voting Rights Act. Echoing the words of the civil rights movement, he closed his speech by saying "And we shall overcome."

Forty years ago, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, and on August 6, 1965, it was signed into law.

Because of the action of Congress and the leadership of a President and the courage of hundreds and thousands of our citizens, we have witnessed a nonviolent revolution in America, a resolution of values, a revolution of ideas. The passage of the Voting Rights Act helped expand our democracy and open up our democracy to let in millions of our citizens.

We still need to keep the voting rights act strong. The Voting Rights Act must be reauthorized. Not just reauthorized, it must be renewed and strengthened. The vote is the most powerful, nonviolent tool that our citizens have in a democratic society, and nothing, but nothing, should interfere with the right of every citizen to vote and have their vote count.

Mr. Speaker, the history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggling for the right to vote. Many people died trying to protect that right.

For millions like me, the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history; it is experience. The experience of minorities today tells

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

us that the struggle is not over and that the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act are still necessary.

I am proud to be the sponsor of H. Con. Res. 216, a resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, which I introduced with my colleagues from the Judiciary Committee, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CHABOT and Mr. NADLER. In that resolution, we pledge to "advance the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Act to protect the voting rights of all Americans."

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to protect the voting rights of all Americans.

Today we celebrate how far we have come. We celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain famously said that one of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives. This is certainly the case with respect to one of the most persistent slanders against the State of Israel: the contention that on June 8, 1967, the Israel Defense Forces intentionally attacked a U.S. Naval Intelligence vessel, the USS *Liberty*.

Fortunately that lie has been put to rest once and for all by the careful and exhaustive research of the Honorable A. Jay Cristol, a distinguished judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Florida. His careful research of the *Liberty* incident clearly demonstrates that this tragedy was the result of mistaken identity at the height of the Six Day War, when Israel's very survival was at stake.

This conclusion is in line with the conclusions of 10 official U.S. investigations—including five congressional investigations—that there was never any evidence that the attack was made with knowledge that the target was a U.S. ship. There is substantial evidence the attack was a tragic mistake caused by errors on the part of both the U.S. and Israel.

On June 8, 1967, at the height of the Six Day War, a U.S. Naval intelligence vessel, the USS *Liberty*, strayed into the waters 14 miles off the Sinai Peninsula, near El Arish. The Israel Defense Forces, having incorrectly identified it as an Egyptian vessel engaged in an attack of Israeli forces, attacked the *Liberty*, killing and wounding some of the crew.

As a U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry found, "Available evidence combines to indicate that the attack on LIBERTY on 8 June was in fact a case of mistaken identity."

No one with an open mind can read the evidence amassed by Judge Cristol and reach any other conclusion. Nonetheless, the conspiracy theories persist.

Conspiracy theories tend to have a life of their own. They can never be disproved. If there is no evidence supporting the conspiracy, then it is proof of a coverup. If there

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is evidence proving there was no conspiracy, that is also proof of a coverup. Either way, evidence disproving a conspiracy theory only proves to believers that the conspiracy really exists.

No one denies that this incident was a terrible tragedy, but some have sought to exploit a case of mistaken identity by insisting that the Israeli military knew that the *Liberty* was a U.S. naval vessel, and attacked it on purpose. Despite the complete absence of any credible evidence to support this outrageous claim, it continues to be repeated as if it were true.

Judge Cristol has done a tremendous service with his work. It is my hope that his book, "The Liberty Incident: The 1967 Attack on the U.S. Navy Spy Ship," which was the result of more than 14 years of research, will finally lay to rest this slander against one of our Nation's most reliable allies.

RECOGNIZING THE L.A. HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist temple and its members as they celebrate their Centennial Anniversary. The temple is located in downtown Los Angeles in my 34th Congressional District.

The Temple, which began in 1905 in Little Tokyo on Jackson Street and Central Avenue, was established due to the strong and faithful desire of the followers of the teachings of Buddha to have a place to congregate after emigrating from Japan. The Issei (first generation) pioneers brought with them their Japanese culture, traditions, customs, and their Buddhist religion.

In 1925, a new temple was built on the corner of First and Central streets. The Temple, fondly called "Nishi" by Buddhists in Southern California, is currently housed in a traditional Japanese-style temple building on First Street in the eastern sector of Little Tokyo. Nishi is one of sixty temples around the United States that make up the Buddhist Churches of America.

Since its inception, Nishi has continuously served its members and the Little Tokyo community. Even during World War II, when the Temple was used as an initial assembly site for many of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans who were evacuated from the west coast of the United States to internment camps, the Temple provided the evacuees a haven to safely store their belongings until after the war. Throughout their internment, Nishi ministers continued to administer to the faithful Buddhist members.

Today, the Temple offers Sunday services, as well as services for weddings, funerals, and family memorials. Nishi also provides a children's day care center, and community programs for youth and adults, such as sports and cultural activities.

The Centennial Anniversary Celebration commemorates the dedication and commitment of the Issei pioneer members that laid