

American people's attention. I also want to specifically point out what they are not saying. There have been some pretty wild claims made by some African politicians and the army of lobbyists and PR firms that they have hired.

They warn that a boycott of diamonds could hurt some countries that depend on the legitimate trade, and they are right. But no one is calling for a boycott of diamonds, Mr. Speaker. I am not. My colleagues are not. Certainly, the ones who support the Clean Diamonds Act are not. Human rights activists are not.

With that said, any feeling human being knows that if this butchery continues, American consumers, who are the primary source of rebels' funds, will recoil in horror. I do not know what they might do; at a minimum, they probably will think twice before they buy a diamond.

That is the reality that the diamond industry, African countries and U.S. diplomats need to grapple with. They had a good start last summer, but that effort has evolved in meetings about when the next meetings might be and about what report on the situation they might write up before this year ends.

That is simply not enough, Mr. Speaker. That approach does nothing to help the 70 million people of these embattled nations. It does nothing to help, for example, this young lady here and people like her who have lost their hands and so many people that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and I have seen who have lost their ears and nose and feet, because of the horror of what we call blood diamonds. In this instance and in thousands of others, diamonds certainly are not a girl's best friend.

The legitimate diamond industry has been complicit in funding these atrocities for years and years.

Without its eagerness to launder rebel diamonds in violation not only of human decency but of U.N. sanctions and long-standing international trade law, the rebels in Sierra Leone could not have transformed themselves from a gang of 400 into a well-equipped force of 20,000.

Without the help of otherwise honorable diamond dealers, the rebels in Angola would not have earned nearly \$4 billion in recent years, money which has gone into buying land mines and attacking anyone who gets in the way of the diamond mining.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of terrible things that are going on in Africa and in desperately poor places. Usually, it is hard for us to figure out what we can do. The problems are usually so awesome and bedeviling and so enormous that we kind of throw up our hands. But this is not one of those cases.

There is something we can do sitting at home in America about diamond wars, because we buy two-thirds of all the diamonds in the world, and as this

industry's biggest consumer, Americans have enormous clout.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues and others who are listening to go to their local jewellers and tell them to do something to bring an end to these diamond wars and peace to Africa and do it without any further delay.

H.R. 918, THE CLEAN DIAMONDS ACT

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

Mr. WOLF of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this is a young girl whose arm was cut off that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) and I saw while we were in Sierra Leone.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) is exactly right, and I want to congratulate him for that. I also want to send a message to the lobbyists who have been hired by some of the powerful firms in this city and in this country, when you lobby for the diamond industry against the bill of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), you are, in essence, validating the cutting off of the arm of this young child.

Having practiced law in this town for a number of years, I will tell my colleagues the law firms that are being hired will some day be held accountable for what they are doing, because they have within them the ability to bring about the passage of Mr. HALL's legislation and keep the diamonds and the war and the killing to stop, not only in Sierra Leone, but in Angola and in the Congo.

I rise today with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), my colleague and good friend, to speak in support of this bill to address the trade in blood diamonds.

Millions have died in Africa because of the blood shed with regard to diamonds. Rebel groups, as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) said, in Sierra Leone, Angola, the Congo, where I just visited have committed horrible atrocities to gain control in and to profit from diamonds and the diamond mines, with regard to drugs, with regard to weapons and diamonds.

Last year, traveling with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), we went to Sierra Leone and saw the devastation. This is an individual whose picture a staff member from the office of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) took while there and other men and women who have their arms off. Some talked about their ears were off.

Others were asked do you want to short sleeve or a long sleeve. If they said a short sleeve, their arm was cut off here; a long sleeve, it was cut off there.

In Sierra Leone, an estimated 75,000 have died because of the rebel campaign. Diamonds are fueling this issue in the Congo and Sierra Leone and in Angola.

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In the Congo where I visited, the same effect is taking place. These diamond wars are notorious for the atrocities and aggressors committed against innocent victims. In all three countries, the civilian population has been the victims of the war crimes.

So I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), and I see the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the chairman, who was there who has done such a great job on this issue, who have led the way on how the Congress in this country and hopefully this administration treats Charles Taylor who is, in essence, a war criminal in Liberia who is funding the efforts.

I will just say that passage of this bill will stop the killing, stop the maiming.

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 by 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-woman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. TOOMEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-woman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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 whoever 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 hope the Senate speedily confirms this appointment. It is important that we put someone in place to grapple with the difficult and tenuous issues we face in this region. But it is heartening and encouraging to see the progress that has been made under the past administration and the hopefulness of the future. Combining our resources, combining our strength, combining our character and our ability to persuade is our mission now.

So as we toast a cheer to Ireland and we celebrate a holiday in our Catholic faith, Saint Patrick's Day, and our remembrance of Ireland and the many immigrants that came to this country based on the potato famine or for other reasons, we are really encouraged today as we see many of Irish descent returning to their roots and their homeland because there is jobs, opportunity and strength.

Finally, if we could figure out the peace part of that equation and bring stability to the region, peace to our people and happiness for all, we will truly not only extend the blessings of our country but hopefully solve some of the world's problems.