

Given the complexities of the resource trade, the shifting alliances involved in the war, the thorny issues of sovereignty, and—perhaps determinative—the clear preference of Security Council members to buck tough decisions to a later time, it is not surprising that the Panel concluded in November that:

exploitation of natural resources in the [DRC] cannot be viewed and dealt with in isolation . . . This is one part of the problem which is inextricably linked to other serious issues in the region.

However, in his presentation to the Security Council, the Panel's Chairman, Mahmoud Kaseem, also warned that "failure to follow up on the recommendations would send a message to traffickers and profiteers that they could continue their activities with impunity."

Few could quarrel with what the Panel advocates: "a resolution of the broader conflict in the [DRC] and the region" and a "rebuilding of the State institutions [which] will require a systematic and sustained approach stretching over many years, and with the full assistance and cooperation of the international community." And of course it is good news that yet another round of peace talks is underway today, and better news that, save for low-intensity conflicts, a cease-fire has largely held for nearly a year. But the report's bad news is what's at issue: that, at the present rate, it will take longer to stop the plundering phase of the war than its shooting phase.

Given the richness of the Congo's resources and its horrifying history since the late 1800s, there is little reason to hope the current era of misery will be either short or less deadly than prior ones. Belgium's exploitation of the Congo left 7–10 million dead and a record of viciousness that almost matches that of the drug-addled rebels who've turned Sierra Leone into a nation of amputees and war victims. Then, after the Congo's independence, Mobutu Sese Seko, the strongman who ruled it with full U.S. support for decades, became one of the world's richest men from the trade in resources that are his people's rightful patrimony. Now, in the years since the Congo descended into chaos and war, these same resources again have turned it into a battleground. As respected journalist Richard C. Hottelet put it:

One hundred years ago, novelist Joseph Conrad called what was then King Leopold II's private property the "Heart of Darkness" and its exploitation a horror. This vast land is now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and what is happening there eclipses Conrad. . . . The Congo, as big as the United States east of the Mississippi, with 50 million people, has become a carcass being chewed at by its elite and its neighbors. They have looted and sold its natural resources on a scale without precedent. This, with the direct or tacit complicity of pious governments and corporations around the world. . . . For Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, the Congo is too rich a cash cow to abandon. From the *Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 2001.

Given the Congo's current situation and decades of experience, the question before members of the international community today is straightforward: How long do we intend to wait to act? A small and anemic contingent of UN troops are there now, in a situation that echoes the one in Sierra Leone in the weeks before 500 UN peacekeepers were kidnapped there two years ago. The international community did little until it suffered that humiliation,

then hastened to sanction the diamonds rebels used to fund their brazen attacks. Is yet another crisis what the United Nations is waiting for? Can it instead act on the ample evidence of suffering and plunder before the situation takes another turn for the worse?

I share the fervent hopes of many concerned people at the United Nations and elsewhere that a comprehensive approach to ending the plunder of the Congo and securing a lasting peace will be found. But I strongly disagree with the United Nations' apparent conclusion that—if it can't do everything—it shouldn't do anything. The Congo's people, and others threatened by the problems that fester in its chaos, can't wait for an over-arching system of controls on every valuable resource this rich country produces. They can't afford another six months of expert investigation of problems that obviously exist, and grand solutions that will take even longer to devise than the Kimberley Process has spent on its system of controlling rough diamonds.

In truth, neither can we Americans. A December 2001 account by Washington Post investigative reporter Douglas Farah detailed the way Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and other radical Islamic groups are funding their terrorist attacks by trading conflict diamonds and other Congolese resources. Africans and Americans have learned together in recent months the hard lesson that averting our eyes is not the way to deal with a problem, however intractable.

Congo: The Next Focus.—The United Nations has tied itself in knots trying not to infringe upon any nation's sovereign rights. I understand its dilemma in trying to determine which nations are participating defensively and which are aggressors, but enough is enough, particularly when it comes to diamonds. I suspect what matters most to consumers is that diamonds' image differs from reality. To Americans in particular—who buy half of the world's diamond gems and jewelry, and 10 percent of its rough diamonds—the fact that a diamond might be funding war is what matters. Whose blood stains their token of love, whether it belongs to a Rwandan soldier or a Zimbabwean, probably isn't nearly as important.

When Kimberley Process nations, the diamond industry, and members of civil society complete the first phase of their efforts against conflict diamonds next week, I hope they will turn their energies to the DRC's forgotten war. Finding a way to close the Congo-sized loophole that threatens to undercut their good work on a global system, and that is leaving the Congolese people untouched by an approach that has proven constructive in other countries torn by wars over diamonds, is essential.

Together with other leaders of the work against conflict diamonds in the House of Representatives, I am drafting legislation that aims to support responsible action on this pressing problem. Unfortunately, this is not something the United States can do unilaterally. Nor is it an issue that should continue to be subsumed to the interests of some U.S. allies who are involved in the Congo's war. The precedent we set in the deadliest war of this decade should not merely serve the narrow interests of any one nation; it should support future work to put diamonds beyond the reach of thugs and terrorists.

I look forward to working with Congressional leaders, the Bush administration, the diamond

and jewelry industries, human rights and humanitarian organizations, and others to address this flaw in international efforts to combat conflict diamonds, and to ensure we reach our goal by ending this scourge.

Clean Diamond Trade Act.—In closing, I want to give our colleagues an update on H.R. 2722, the legislation we endorsed 408–6 last November. My hope and that of other sponsors was that the Senate would act quickly on this landmark legislation, both to push other countries to meet their Kimberley Process obligations and to serve as a pilot for this project so any flaws in this approach could be corrected through the legislation the Administration plans to introduce this year.

To my great dismay, that has not happened, and the extraordinary coalition of industry and activists that supported the Clean Diamond Trade Act has collapsed over differences in how Congress should proceed. I remain hopeful that the Senate sponsors of H.R. 2722's companion—which represents a compromise that I brokered between the human rights community and the diamond industry—will find a way through their differences with the Bush Administration and the House so that this bill can be enacted at the earliest opportunity.

I don't quarrel with our Senate partners' preference for stronger legislation; in fact, I share it, and want the record to be clear that their differences are honorable ones grounded in the bill's substance. This is not a partisan issue, as Congressmen WOLF, HOUGHTON and RANGEL and Senators DURBIN, DEWINE, FEINGOLD and GREGG's combined efforts demonstrate.

However, having worked steadily on this issue since I first met the victims of one war over conflict diamonds, and sponsored six different bills aimed at resolving it, I am convinced that there simply is no silver bullet capable of stopping this criminal trade. Giving our Customs agents weapons to battle it, giving activists tools to expose shortcomings in enforcement, finding ways to complement the law through development and diplomacy, and remaining vigilant until this scourge ends are the only real solution.

I hope this work can begin soon, with the United States at the forefront and supported by the international community and this Congress.

CELEBRATING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY GIRL SCOUTS

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my sincere congratulations to the Suffolk County Girl Scouts in celebration of their 90th Anniversary.

Over 35,000 girls participate in Girl Scouts in Suffolk County and it is the largest Girls Scout Council in New York State. In addition, the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County are the "largest youth serving agency" on Long Island.

The Girl Scouts are dedicated to helping girls reach their fullest potential. And one of the keys they do that is by having girls help other girls. Through peer leadership, mentoring and support, the Girl Scouts help our girls make the transition from child to adult.

The Girl Scouts of Suffolk County have designed a special patch that was unveiled yesterday, the six-month anniversary of September 11th, in memory of the horrific tragedy and Attack on America. The patch will be distributed across the nation; to earn it, each girl must participate in four activities that commemorate September 11th.

The Suffolk County Girl Scouts have pledged to perform 90,000 hours of community service benefiting Long Island this year. Their dedication to the community is to be commended.

I wish great success to the Girls Scouts as they embark on this great endeavor to make Suffolk County a better place.

COMMEMORATION OF ST.
PATRICK'S DAY

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the Irish community in celebration of St. Patrick's Day.

On March 17, 2002, people from around the world will come together to celebrate the life of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. During the fifth century, St. Patrick devoted his life to sharing the Christian faith with the native Irish people. As it has been for centuries, the entire Irish community will celebrate the day with music, parades, and family gatherings. When Irish soldiers serving in the English military held the first St. Patrick's Day parade on March 17, 1762, through the streets of New York City, they started a tradition that continues until the present day.

During the mid-1800s, millions of Irish immigrants came to America to seek new lives. Today, the United States is enriched not only by the contributions of these immigrants, but also by that of their sons, daughters, and grandchildren. Irish-Americans have made major contributions to all aspects of American society, including sports, medicine, religion, politics, and the arts.

Their innumerable contributions are why it is appropriate to honor the Irish community with a commemorative postage stamp honoring Irish American Heritage Month. This commemorative stamp would salute the accomplishments of all Irish-Americans and their invaluable contributions to the American way of life. From President John F. Kennedy to F. Scott Fitzgerald to the brave firefighters who gave their lives on September 11, 2001, Irish-Americans have strengthened and enhanced our Nation and it is only appropriate that those contributions be honored and celebrated by all Americans.

America can boast a population of 44 million Irish-Americans and I am proud that my home State of Michigan has a thriving Irish-American community. In our State, many Irish-American organizations work each day to enrich our neighborhoods. These institutions provide invaluable public service, as well as a strong foundation for the community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I join the people of Ireland, all those of Irish ancestry around the world and our own Irish-American community in celebrating St. Patrick's Day.

IN RECOGNITION OF AKTINA
PRODUCTIONS, INC.

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to AKTINA Productions Inc. This year, AKTINA Productions Inc., which produces Greek-American radio and television programs, will be commemorating the 47th anniversary of the beginning of the battle for independence from British colonial rule waged by Cyprus. In memory of those Cypriots who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom, on March 17, 2002, AKTINA Productions will be hosting an anniversary event entitled "To the Immortals."

Founded in 1993, AKTINA Productions Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Cypriot and Greek culture. Known as the "voice of Cyprus" in America, it emphasizes cultural and educational development through radio and television as well as live performances, including concerts and dance shows.

In May of 1993, AKTINA Productions Inc. had the distinction of introducing the first ever bilingual Greek-American radio show, known as AKTINA FM. AKTINA FM is a live call-in Greek-American Radio Magazine which highlights Greek culture, heritage and tradition and focuses on national and international issues affecting Cyprus and Greece. AKTINA FM is presently heard by more than 500,000 listeners on the radio, and more than 7,000 on the Internet. Call-in segments often feature a wide range of diverse participants and subjects, including education, immigration, health, crime prevention and the arts.

AKTINA FM also facilitates a number of educational programs dedicated to children ranging in ages from 7–17 years. They also offer platforms for children from a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds to display their various talents in poetry, speech, composition and other areas. AKTINA FM also offers a monthly Student Essay Contest in which more than 100 public schools participate and almost all of the Greek-American day and afternoon schools of the Greek Archdiocese in the tri-state area participate. Nearly 60 children ages 7–15 years will take part in the "To the Immortals" anniversary event.

For its many contributions to the community, I ask that my colleagues join me in saluting AKTINA Productions Inc.

GIRL SCOUTS' 90TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the Girl Scouts of the USA in celebrating their 90th anniversary. Since the organization's inception in 1912, the Girl Scouts have taken on the mission of giving all girls the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually. For the last 90 years, Girl Scouts has empowered girls to become leaders, helping adults be positive role models and mentors for children, and helping

to build solid communities. We have experienced this in our own family and still remember fondly the visit with our daughter to founder Juliette Gordon Low's home in Savannah. Through Girl Scouting, girls acquire self-confidence and expertise, take on responsibility, and are encouraged to think creatively and act with integrity—the qualities that are essential in good citizens and great leaders.

Today, Girl Scouting has a membership of 3.8 million—2.7 girl members and over 900,000 adult members—making it the largest organization for girls in the world. Girl Scouting is available to all girls ages 5–17 through participation in more than 233,000 troops throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The Pines of Carolina Girl Scout Council, which serves girls in North Carolina's Fourth District, boasts a membership of more than 21,000 girls. As an organization, the Girl Scouts have recently rededicated themselves to ensuring that Girl Scouting is available to every girl in every community, reaching beyond racial, ethnic, socioeconomic or geographic boundaries.

The positive impact that Girl Scouting has on our communities cannot be overstated, and I am proud of the work of the Girl Scouts of the USA, particularly the work which benefits thousands of families in North Carolina. It is my pleasure to congratulate and commend this organization on its 90th anniversary.

HONORING MAYOR LUTHER JONES
OF CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my friend, a great man and Mayor Emeritus of Corpus Christi, TX, Mayor Luther Jones, who passed away last week after a very short hospitalization. He was a great man, a beloved friend, and a figure known far beyond Corpus Christi as a moral, lovable man who loved life, his home, and all the people in it.

To see the future, you must stand on the shoulders of a giant. Mayor Jones' political legacy, his legacy of good government, is easily the leadership he exhibited in 1983 when he forced all parties in disagreement about the election of city officials to sit together in the same room until the issue was resolved. His leadership at that moment in our history was pivotal to restructuring the city's election process.

In the highly charged emotions of the time, Mayor Jones saw around the curve of history, and through the sheer force of will, personality, and the righteousness of the cause, he persuaded all parties to find a compromise—modified single member-districts—which changed the face of Corpus Christi politics and offered minorities entry into city government.

As much as he will be remembered for delivering Corpus Christi into the late 20th century in terms of political participation, it is his personal legacy that made him a widely loved friend and leader.

While many in south Texas have extolled the mayor for his contributions to the Nation's military through his leadership at the Corpus Christi Army Depot and his support for education, particularly his successful effort to get