

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

USE OF RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR IS WRONG

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, a recently released report has revealed yet more evidence of heinous human rights abuses committed by Burma's ruling military regime. The report by the Karen Women's Organization entitled "Shattering Silence" documents rapes of ethnic women by the regime's soldiers. If the allegations contained in the report are correct, the stories illustrate how Burma's regime uses rape to undercut resistance to its rule by attacking innocent and defenseless civilians.

I am especially horrified with evidence that over half of the rapes were committed by military officers, and 40 percent were gang-rapes. Reads one example: "While she was living in her village she was captured as the porter to carry shells for the SPDC. At daytime she was forced to carry heavy things and at night she was raped . . . She was raped every night by one to five persons. If she refused or asked them to not rape her, then they slapped her or beat her or closed her mouth . . . At that time they jumped on her body with their boots. While she was being raped at night she heard women shouting from other places. And so she knew there were many women suffering like her."

Furthermore, the report found that in 28 percent of the cases, the women were brutally killed and often mutilated after being raped by officers.

This is not the first time we have heard of the regime's use of rape as a weapon of war. This report supports previous evidence documented by the Shan Women's Action Network, Refugees International, and the Bureau of Democracy, Rights, and Labor at the State Department.

The use of rape as a weapon of war was wrong in Bosnia, and it is wrong in Burma. Burma's regime must be held to account, and their climate of impunity must end.

RECOGNIZING THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the constituents in my district who, through years of service, have made the Foster Grandparents Program a tremendous success in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

The Foster Grandparent Program is a pairing of low income elderly over the age of 60 with special needs children. There are currently over 140 men and women who volun-

teer 20 hours per week, 52 weeks per year, giving love, guidance, tutelage, and the wisdom of their years of experience to children from infants to eighteen years of age at numerous locations throughout Montgomery County.

The Foster Grandparent Program brings countless benefits to the senior citizens and to the children with whom they interact. This program allows the volunteers to remain active and involved in their communities, as they are needed and valued by everyone with whom they interact. The children the senior citizens work with are developmentally delayed, physically handicapped, homeless, abused, neglected, teen parents, delinquent, learning disabled, or born to mothers addicted to drugs. Through this pairing, the children increase their academic skills, enhance their self-esteem and learn to cope with their disabilities and special problems. Thus, through the program, they gain the knowledge that they are special and cared for as we all attempt to make the world a safer, less violent place to live.

The Foster Grandparent Program is a very successful and worthwhile program that puts the time and talents of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania's senior citizens to work benefiting special needs children. The program is 32 years old and, for 28 years, it has been sponsored by Montgomery County Family Services. Nationally, the Foster Grandparent Program is 39 years old with 350 Foster Grandparent Programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Many of the people that have volunteered their time for the Foster Grandparent Program in my district have done so for several years. Mary Refino has participated in the program for 24 years; Elizabeth Baccke for 16 years; Dot Scandone for 15 years; Ann Dippolito for 11 years; Dolores Fogel, Rosa Lee Randall, Juanita Gray and Eldora Smith for 10 years; and Mary Banks, Betty Glover, Louise Watson and Ann Maire Williams for 5 years. It is the continuing dedication and commitment by these individuals that allows the Foster Grandparent Program to be such a success and help so many people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues join me today in recognizing the Foster Grandparent Program and all of their volunteers in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and across our nation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE SPEECH

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of my colleagues to the wisdom of a child.

One of my constituents, an 11-year-old girl from Post Falls, Idaho, named Dori Thomp-

son, recently delivered a simple but compelling speech about the Pledge of Allegiance, about American values, and about the source of the freedoms we enjoy.

I'd like to share it with you now:

Our nation's Pledge of Allegiance is 31 words. "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all." Are all those words important? I have been saying those words ever since I was in preschool and wanted to know what those words meant, where those words came from, and why our courts want to take "under God" away.

In 1892 our country was planning for the 400th anniversary of America's discovery. Two men, Francis Bellamy and James Upham, were interested in education and the planning of Columbus Day celebrations. To this day it is still not known which of the two men actually wrote the pledge, but it was published in "The Youth's Companion" September 8, 1892.

One month later more than 12 million school children said those words for the first time in schools around the nation. The pledge went through several changes over the years and the last change happened in 1954. Dwight D. Eisenhower added the words "under God" to confirm the belief that America's heritage and future were built upon faith in God. He thought that school children should dedicate our nation to God each day.

Now what do these 31 words mean? This is what I think:

I promise to be loyal to and love our symbol of freedom, our flag. It means each one of us is free; free because hundreds of thousands of soldiers have died for us so that we can have that right. I promise to be loyal to and love our government because it is for and has been chosen by the American people. Our nation exists because of God and was founded by our faith in Him, the Lord who is life, light, justice, truth, and love. Our nation cannot be divided under Him and we all have the right to our freedom and should be treated fairly, each and every one of us.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said the Pledge is unconstitutional because of the words "under God." Our country and values were made under the belief of God. So much of the world does not believe in God anymore. The world wants him taken out of everything. The Bible is not taught in public schools and therefore the world is not completely educated. Since these judges say that "under God" is unconstitutional, why do they start the day by saying "God save the United States and this honorable court?"

The Pledge of Allegiance should not be changed because some people are offended by it. It is part of our national heritage. I am a Christian and I understand the meaning of all those wonderful 31 words.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't have put it better myself.

Dori attends Classical Christian Academy in Post Falls. She is the kind of young person who gives me hope and faith in America's future. Mr. Speaker, I hope you find her words and her example as inspirational as I do.

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