

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 Reformer's Political group. I extend my appreciation and congratulations to our colleague, the Honourable Senator Di Nino, for his assiduous performance as head of the Canadian delegation. I intend to have the Senate consider a number of aspects of the Washington Declaration, which each parliamentary delegation was mandated to do under the declaration.

I would like to add a special word of congratulations to Speaker Dennis Hastert, of the House of Representatives, to our Congressional American hosts and to Congressman 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. JOHNSON 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 parts 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 (Rollcall No. 363) and H. Res. 333 (Rollcall 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 the RECORD to reflect as such.

As a member of the Human Rights Caucus and a stern 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 unthinkable and this bill clearly states to Kim Jong-I and the North Korean government that the United States will not 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 compliment these actions than by praying 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 and 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 and reflect on the ongoing atrocities that they face on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, thank you again for allowing me to express my support for these two bills as I was unfortunately delayed on my way to Washington.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF A NATIONAL WEEKEND OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION FOR DARFUR

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 them in 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 the continued 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 Darfuri people, and applying pressure to the Sudanese government. America's religious communities have been instrumental in compelling the United States government to become involved.

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 would easily fall back into chaos. Indeed, U.N. humanitarian coordinator Manuel Aranda Da Silva 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 like 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

types of high-cost lenders, including for example, finance companies, title lenders and small loan companies.

These legislative provisions will give military personnel new warning disclosures and special protections against abusive collection practices and other improper lending practices by unethical lenders like Pioneer Financial that target vulnerable service members and charge unreasonably high rates and fees and sell them grossly overpriced credit insurance and who then refinance these predatory loans within the first 12 months if possible to generate more unjustifiable fees for the lender.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. Davis of Kentucky and other colleagues who took the lead in developing this legislation, and am proud to lend my support as it will help ensure our Armed Forces personnel will have essential new safeguards to stop abuses that Pioneer and some other unscrupulous high-cost lenders have engaged in.

THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, 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 people for their 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. Mr. Mandela, 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 known entertainer 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 the exodus of so many houses of worship that have in the name of faith and God made treaty with the devil.

Riverside Church 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 enter into the "kingdom of Heaven." Others have hidden behind the cloak of morality as they indulge themselves and the nation in the sin of homophobia that crucifies fellow human beings. There are those religious leaders and institutions that have announced unjust wars and carry the cross before armies that destroy the innocent and plunder the earth.

There are many Black church leaders who salivate in the midst of this new Christian inquisition for just thirty pieces of silver rewarded by the Caesar of faith-based oppression. All have made us understand how privileged we are that the (Reverend) James Forbes administers to our soul and can never be charged with patriotic treason.

Riverside Church has generously yielded its pulpit to many of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century. It has blessed and embraced all those, regardless of faith, who have come here in defiance of the tyranny of the State. Powerful voices have been heard in these walls, which speak out against injustice and bring truth and humanity to rebellious cause. This cathedral inspires change in a world that hungers for more than the food of the body; it hungers for leaders with voices of courage that will provide food and moral plenty for the soul. In this place, we once gather to honor truth.

After centuries of oppression and destruction, Africa, the greatest resource in the building of the empires of the world, has found no kindness from her conquerors. No one came to her with a Marshall Plan. She has found no generosity from the banks of her bleeders. Quite the contrary. Africa severely hemorrhages from the burden of the financial debt she carries. She cannot even repay the interest on the debt.

In many places, the continent suffocates from the pollution of decaying bodies that have died from violence. Americans and Europeans often view nuclear bombs, germ warfare, chemical weapons, poison gas and planes crashing to buildings as the only weapons of mass destruction. But for Africa, with 15 million of her people dead and millions more wounded, handguns, automatic rifles and land mines are added to the list. The great irony is that Africa does not have the capacity to mass-produce weapons. America and Europe, however, sell her all the arms required while vigorously fueling the conditions that create the demands for them.

For Africans, poverty, ignorance and illiteracy are also weapons of mass destruction. These realities, coupled with 27 million people infected with HIV/AIDS and 10 million children orphaned by the disease, ravage the population. And all of the sins attributable to Africa's pain, global indifference is the greatest offender.

But a maturing Africa is coming together in ways that are different than before. She is making choices that are African choices. The Africa on the horizon will have no tolerance for colonial status in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's economic slavery system, a system that, while admitting to its share of guilt, defined as "mistakes of the past", stays tragically addicted to the same sins of the present. Africa will no longer endure these indignities. She will know a decidedly different future. With this new determination, Africa affirms her spiritual, cultural and historical allegiance to her decedents in the four corners of the earth. She is telling citizens of the Diaspora that they are first and foremost citizens of the continent and saying to them, "Come, for by right of birth and of struggle and our common history, you are of us."

Most of this vision set in motion by the entrance of the Democratic Republic of South Africa into the arena of democratic nations. The African National Congress commits itself and the nation to the development, welfare, peace and dignity of the entire continent and other nations in the world who are in need. Its voice speaks for all to hear that this 21st century will be Africa's century.

Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela has stood here (at Riverside) before. From this Cathedral our nation was inspired when he spoke of his vision for the future of his South Africa. Through the guidance of his political genius and the compelling force of his moral authority he transformed his nation from a cruel oppressive state into one of the most advanced democracies humankind has ever known. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this achievement was Madiba and his comrades did this without the violence and racial upheaval the world anticipated. During the time of his presidency, he transformed his countrymen's mood for revenge into one whose desire to be a continuing search for national harmony rooted in truth and reconciliation.

Now in the autumn of his winter years he comes again to America at a time when our nation faces one of the most critical crossroads in its history. Would that our nation could be touched by his humanity and be guided by his moral vision!

(Harry Belafonte, the world famous actor, singer and human and civil rights advocate was introducing Nelson Mandela to a large audience at the Riverside Church during the South African Nobel Peace Prize winner's recent visit to New York City.)

JERRY HALE AND DAVE BRAGG

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, on the quiet afternoon of July 7, 2005 in Parker City, Indiana, Tim Hammer, who is paralyzed and wheelchair-bound, was crossing a set of railroad tracks on Franklin Street. Almost immediately after he began to cross the tracks, the traffic arms lowered to signal an approaching train. Hammer's wheelchair hit a rough spot and he was thrown to the ground. At the same time, Jerry Hale and Dave Bragg of Parker City were repairing an herbicide sprayer about fifty feet from the railroad crossing. Hale and Bragg saw Hammer lying on the tracks unable to move and the freight train approaching the crossing at approximately 55 miles per hour. In an instant, Hale and Bragg dropped their work and sprinted to the crossing where they pulled Hammer to safety just seconds before the train barreled through and crushed his empty wheelchair.

Hale and Bragg should be commended for their feats of courage and the nobility of purpose behind their actions. These men risked their lives in order to save the life of a stranger during his moment of need. Their actions on July 7th speak volumes about their good character and the high regard with which they hold human life.

After the incident, Hale and Bragg stated that they were uncomfortable with being called heroes and believed that they had been placed near the railroad crossing by the grace of God. Mr. Speaker, through the grace of