

PRIME MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON'S REMARKS AT CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS AWARDS DINNER

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the eloquent remarks made by the Honorable P.J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica as he accepted the Charles Diggs Award for International Service from the Congressional Black Caucus as part of our Annual Legislative Conference Awards Dinner on Saturday September 24, 2005. His acceptance speech reached beyond words of gratitude, to encompass a stirring statement of the basis for the commonality of people throughout the African Diaspora. Prime Minister Patterson inspired us with his words to promote enlightenment, encouragement, unity and brotherhood.

In his address he reminded us of the shared histories and experiences of Blacks in the Americas and across the globe. He showed how those who survived the Middle Passage were indeed part of a larger family of shared experience. Prime Minister Patterson illustrated the common experiences of poverty, neglect and misrepresentation that affected the social status of Africa and its descendants of the Diaspora alike. His message showed that the neglectful actions of federal, state, and local governments following Hurricane Katrina were a microcosm of the global experience of blacks everywhere in the world. He gave us hope that through this shared history, we have a common foundation from which we as one people regardless of nation, or geographic location can stand on to fight injustice around the world, especially since those of African descent suffer most from the injustices.

Mr. Patterson also reminded and encouraged us as public officials and as citizens of the world to continue the fight for what we vowed to do, fight for justice on the local, national and international levels. He reminded us in the African American community that we are not alone in our struggle for justice and equality. We are part of a global struggle to bring empowerment to those who are poor and oppressed around the world and that we must take courage from our faith that what is right will prevail. We all have to engage all our energies and intellects in the struggle to build the national and global framework where marginalized groups, industrialized countries, and developing nations alike have an equal voice in the determination of how best we protect and share the resources of not only our country and others alike, but our planet as well.

Prime Minister P.J. Patterson and his words of hope and optimism were a breath of fresh air to his audience during such despondent and confusing times. He gives direction where there is seemingly none, and he makes sense out of a seemingly senseless world. Thank you, Mr. Patterson for your words of encouragement and hope, and for exhibiting much courage and strength during a time when the world needs leaders with such characteristics. The citizens of Jamaica are truly blessed to have a leader like you, to guide them successfully into the future and we are as a people are fortunate to have you as part of our African family.

I submit the transcript of Prime Minister Patterson's acceptance speech given on Saturday September 24, 2005 to the Congressional Black Caucus' Annual Legislative Conference Awards Dinner to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Over a period of two centuries, some fifteen million young Africans were crowded into slave ships, propelled by the winds that sweep the Atlantic at this time of year.

Family victims of the pernicious system of slavery were separated forever according to the dictates of the plantocracy in the Caribbean, North, Central and South America.

So, no matter in what country we now reside, we are indeed one big family, one people. We are all descendants of those who survived the Middle Passage.

Once again, I express the deepest sympathy of the government and people of Jamaica to everyone who lost a relative or friend and to all who suffered the traumatic experiences and material losses of Hurricane Katrina.

It is appropriate to underscore our special empathy with our kith and kin, who by all accounts, suffered the greatest loss from these catastrophes.

I cannot overlook the disdain manifest to the plight of the poor in Louisiana and the weakness in the early response to the devastation, so arrogantly described as a Third World situation.

No one can dispute the fact that the African American influence on the culture and vibrancy of New Orleans is the most pervasive, has giving heart and soul to this unique city.

HONOURED

Tonight, I am honoured to receive this high and special award of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

I do so with a sense of humility, yet gratified that my efforts have received the recognition of such a distinguished organization.

I do so on behalf of my colleagues who serve with me in the Caribbean and, as incumbent Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, a Group which embraces every sovereign nation on the Mother Continent of Africa.

Many decades ago, Marcus Mosiah Garvey implored us to redress the inequities of our history and change irreversibly the cruel imbalance that our people have suffered in the economic arena and social development, at both the global and domestic levels.

We are yet to complete that mandate.

The uphill climb we face, likening us once to children of Sisyphus, must not deter us.

To quote Maya Angelou: "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

BUILDING A JUST WORLD

It has been my passionate resolve throughout my public life to engage all my energies and my intellect in the struggle to build the global framework where industrialized countries and developing nations alike have an equal voice in the determination of how best we protect and share the resources of the only planet where human life exists;

That we recognize there can be no lasting peace so long as a few seek to perpetuate political and social dominance to the detriment of those who have been marginalized far too long.

Injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere.

Why should we continue to spend trillions of dollars and devote so much of our professional and technical skills to making armaments and weapons of mass destruction when people are dying of hunger, when lives are cut short by malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases?

Wherever we operate, in the political sphere, no matter what continent or island, let us recognize that the prevention of genocide, the successful fight against terrorism, the preservation of our global environment are imperatives.

ONE HUMAN RACE

I see my brothers and sisters in the CBC as stalwart partners in the struggle to promote economic self-reliance, democratic governance and social upliftment to fulfill the needs of our citizens.

Together we must continue to strive for unity of purpose and action among us. We seek together to fashion a single World which we can inhabit and where, irrespective of gender, age, religious creed, or colour, we can all live in harmony together, because we all belong to the human race.

I congratulate you for all you are doing to nurture our confidence in ourselves. I congratulate the Foundation for this evening's splendid and unforgettable ceremony.

In closing, let me quote from Genesis:

"Behold they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. [Genesis 11:6]."

May the Almighty continue to guide and bless us all.

SUPPORTING GOLD STAR MOTHERS DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 61, Supporting the Goals and Ideals of Gold Star Mothers Day. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important resolution, which honors the mothers of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

We often invoke the sacrifices of our nation's fallen in general. Seldom do we take the time to thank them and their families individually. In June and July of this year, I joined 21 other members from both sides of the aisle to read the names of each of our fallen on the house floor. I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize an thank the mothers of these individual heroes.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt once wrote to the mother of a fallen serviceman, "He stands in the unbroken line of Patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live, and grow and increase its blessings. Freedom lives, and through it he lives, in a way that humbles the undertakings of most men."

Organizations such as American Gold Star Mothers keep the memory of these heroes alive, as they help fellow mothers and family members of the fallen work through the grief of losing a loved one. They are also actively involved in their communities, visiting VA hospitals, helping veterans with claims to the Veterans Administration and volunteering at patriotic and memorial services throughout the year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the words of President Abraham Lincoln, who wrote to the mother of five fallen soldiers in the Civil War: "I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the

loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.”

We owe gold star mothers and their families a debt that can never be fully repaid. I hope all Americans will take this opportunity to recognize and thank America's Gold Star Mothers.

CONGRATULATING COMMISSIONER
NANCY WHITE

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Commissioner Nancy White, who is the recipient of the 2005 Alexander Macomb Woman of the Year Award from the March of Dimes.

Nancy White has dedicated her life to educating and improving her community. After Mrs. White received her Bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and her Master's degree from Wayne State University, she began her 22-year career in the Fraser Public School District. She served as a teacher, counselor, and coach.

In 1992, Mrs. White was elected by the people of Fraser and southern Clinton Township as their representative on the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. Since then, she has dedicated the last seven years to the County Board. Her strong leadership was recognized by her fellow board members and she was elected in January 2005 to serve a two-year term as chair of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. White is committed to efficient and responsive County government. She lives out this commitment by creating a Strategic Visioning Task Force, a forum for Mayors throughout the County and endeavoring to work on a bipartisan basis. She was the Co-Chair of a County-wide effort to defend the County's military installations in the recent BRAC process. She has traveled to the Middle East on a trade mission with other government and business leaders from Southeastern Michigan.

Mrs. White's excellent leadership skills are not only utilized on the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. She served as chair of the Macomb County Community Mental Health Board and co-chair of the Clinton Township American Red Cross Blood Drive.

In 2002, the community acknowledged Mrs. White's leadership and commitment. She was awarded The Woman of Distinction Award from the Girl Scouts of America for her many outstanding contributions as a mentor and community leader.

Mr. Speaker, I have been honored to work in collaboration with Mrs. White over a number of years and to see first hand her commitment and devotion to improving communities throughout Macomb County. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Commissioner Nancy M. White as she receives this distinguished award.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 45th Anniversary of the Republic of Cyprus. It was on October 1, 1960, that Cyprus became an independent republic after decades of British colonial rule.

I am very fortunate and privileged to represent Astoria, Queens—one of the largest and most vibrant communities of Greek and Cypriot Americans in this country. Among my greatest pleasures as a Member of Congress are participating in the life of this community and the wonderful and vital Cypriot friends that I have come to know.

As a full-fledged member of the European Union, Cyprus is playing a vital role in European affairs while also strengthening relations with the United States. On July 25, the United States and the Republic of Cyprus signed a reciprocal Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Ship Boarding Agreement, which is aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Cyprus was the first EU member to sign this agreement. Earlier this month Cyprus became a signatory to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Finally, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Cyprus offered both its condolences and assistance to the victims of this horrible disaster.

I am saddened that the commemoration of Cyprus' Independence Day this year, as in the past, is clouded by the fact that Cyprus continues to be illegally occupied by the Turkish military forces, in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, and to this day continues to maintain an estimated 35,000 heavily armed troops. However, I remain hopeful that an end to this division will be achieved.

Cyprus and the United States have a great deal in common. We share a deep and abiding commitment to democracy, human rights, free markets, and the ideal and practice of equal justice under the law. Despite the hardships and trauma caused by the ongoing Turkish occupation, Cyprus has registered remarkable economic growth, and the people living in the Government-controlled areas enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living. Sadly, the people living in the occupied area continue to be mired in poverty.

I am encouraged that since the Turkish occupation regime partially lifted restrictions on freedom of movement across the artificial line of division created by Turkey's military occupation, hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have crossed the U.N. ceasefire line to visit their homes and properties or areas of their own country that were inaccessible to them for nearly 30 years. The peaceful and cooperative spirit in the person-to-person, family-to-family interactions between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots bodes well for the successful reunification of Cyprus.

In the times we are facing, it is clear that divisions among people create harmful, destructive environments. We must find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem. The relation-

ship between Cyprus and the United States is strong and enduring, and we stand together celebrating democracy and freedom.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY COLA PROTECTION ACT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, before I was elected to the House of Representatives, I made a promise to thousands of seniors in South Dakota that, if they would send me to Washington, I would fight for them, stand by them, and make their voice heard. To help keep that promise by protecting the retirement income of nearly 100,000 South Dakotans from rising health care costs, the "Social Security COLA Protection Act" was the first piece of legislation I introduced upon my arrival.

Today, I am reintroducing the "Social Security COLA Protection Act" because the situation facing seniors in South Dakota and around the country is just as dire today as it was a year ago.

For retirees who depend on Social Security benefits to live, the only defense against increasing prices for food, clothing and energy is an annual cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA. However, rising Medicare premiums are diminishing the purchasing power of this yearly increase in benefits.

Over the last 5 years, monthly Medicare Part B premiums have nearly doubled. On September 16th, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that Medicare beneficiaries will pay an additional 13 percent out of their Social Security checks in 2006. This marks the third consecutive rise of more than 10 percent and exceeds the 12 percent increase Medicare's trustees predicted in March. Every dollar that goes toward rising Medicare premiums is one less South Dakota's seniors can use to pay for groceries or utility bills.

We're not wealthy in South Dakota. Retirees in South Dakota clip coupons. They put off buying the things they need. They live modestly because that is what they must do to get by. It is no exaggeration to say that retirees in South Dakota need every penny of their COLA. Not just so they can maintain a basic standard of living—but so they can live with dignity.

My legislation protects retirees by ensuring that no more than 25 percent of their COLA can be absorbed by the increase in Medicare premiums. Next year, it would protect 100,000 South Dakotans who otherwise would see their scarce dollars taken from food, clothing and other essential purchases. For those who depend on Social Security to pay their bills, this legislation will help them save enough to buy new clothes, extra medicine or just a plane ticket to visit the grandchildren.

Last Congress, my legislation had the support of 116 members of the House and of prominent advocacy groups for seniors such as the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Alliance for Retired Americans and Families USA. I hope that Congress will take up and pass this legislation quickly, because the need for it is real and immediate.