

and agree to H. Res. 643, which recognizes September 11, as a day of remembrance, extending sympathies to those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, and their families, honoring the heroic actions of our Nation's first responders and Armed Forces, and reaffirming the commitment to defending the people of the United States of America against any and all future challenges.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

CALLING ON THE U.N. TO CONSIDER TAIWAN'S U.N. APPLICATION

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2007

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my support for Taiwan and its application for admittance to the United Nations. It is vital that Congress and the Administration support our friend and ally by giving it the respect and dignity it deserves with a seat in the U.N. General Assembly.

It is unfortunate that the Secretary General of the United Nations chose to reject without consideration Taiwan's application for membership on July 23, 2007. His unfortunate statement "The position of the United Nations is that the People's Republic of China represents the whole of China as the sole and legitimate representative government of China," does not reflect the reality in the Taiwan Straits. For nearly 60 years there have been, two different and distinct governments in the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. By admitting Taiwan as a member of the United Nations, there would be no change to the present reality at play in the Taiwan Straits.

China's claims to an internationally recognized norm of "One China" do not ring true when one reviews the status quo. The Chinese authorities' only actions regarding relations with Taipei are to intimidate and embarrass. China uses military and diplomatic threats to oppose Taiwan's independence and belittle those who make attempts to bring the issue forward. At the same time it insists Taiwan is part of China, and yet does nothing to assist the people of Taiwan in obtaining help for health, wealth or happiness.

The Secretary General's argument that the 1971 Resolution 2758 admitting China to the U.N. means the government in Beijing represents the interests of Taiwan as well is flimsy, at best. Resolution 2758 recognized the legitimacy of the People's Republic of China as China's rightful representative, however, there is no authority granted to the People's Republic of China over the people of Taiwan. This does nothing to change the fact that the government in Beijing has no authority over the 23 million people of Taiwan and that the government of Taiwan has had no authority over the people of the People's Republic of China.

The United Nations should not dismiss Taiwan's status simply as a matter that has been previously resolved by Resolution 2758. Taiwan's accession to the General Assembly will not change the current state of affairs in the Taiwan Strait. China makes no effort to control or impose its will upon Taiwan's politics or policies. Taiwan conducts elections, enters

into trade agreements and conducts business in the international community on its own.

Taiwan's admission into the U.N. will have important public health ramifications as well. A seat in the United Nations would help Taiwan secure a place in the World Health Organization. Such a development will reduce the likelihood that diseases such as avian flu could spread through Taiwan's busy ports.

Furthermore, the idea of having dual U.N. representation of a ["unified"] country is not unprecedented. When a conflict such as the one facing Taiwan and China exists, it is in the interest of the international community to follow past precedent. I hope the Secretary General, the President and my colleagues will recall that East and West Germany were given two seats in the General Assembly, Belarus and Ukraine were given seats even as part of the Soviet Union and North and South Korea are each represented in the General Assembly.

I hope this body and the Administration will stand firm and support U.N. membership for Taiwan.

HONORING PRESIDENT SIRLEAF OF LIBERIA

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce an article written by George Gedda entitled "Light in Liberia" published in World View. This article is about President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who assumed the office of presidency in Liberia on January 2006 after a democratic election in a country which in recent years suffered under the dictatorial rule of Charles Taylor. First Lady Bush and Secretary of State Rice attended her inaugural ceremony on January 16, 2006.

President Sirleaf is the first African woman to be elected president in Liberia. She is on a mission to lift her people from the dark political legacy of ex-presidents, Charles Taylor and Samuel Doe when fraud, corruption, human rights abuses, and ethnic conflict were rampant. From 1989 to 1996, a civil war in Liberia claimed the lives of more than 200,000 Liberians and displaced a million other people in refugee camps in neighboring countries. President Sirleaf herself endured torture as a military prisoner of Doe's rebel forces. During Taylor and Doe's administration over a 25 year period, the per capita income in Liberia dropped from \$1000 to \$120 according to the World Bank.

President Sirleaf's leadership brings hope to Liberia. Seven months after her presidency, the lights came on in Liberia for the first time in 14 years on July 26, 2006 and water was turned on in some areas of the country. During her first year in office, school enrollment increased by 40%. Additionally, service to 350 health facilities in Liberia was reported restored. President Sirleaf is also taking a stance against corruption and increased transparency in her country by requiring all senior level government officials to publicly declare their assets.

I praise President Sirleaf for these accomplishments and for her determination in steering her country towards the right direction.

One of the biggest challenges that Liberia faces is addressing its national debt which, without relief, will continue to consume an inordinate amount of resources and cripple development in the country. The United States is providing support to Liberia. Just earlier this year, Secretary Rice announced the cancellation of Liberia's \$391 million U.S. debt.

President Sirleaf's tenacity and contribution is inspiring, and I applaud her for her leadership.

LIGHT IN LIBERIA

(By George Gedda)

How bad off was Liberia after back-to-back civil wars? This is what President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said she found after taking office in January 2006: "There was no electricity and no water. Schools and clinics had crumbled, and roads were impassable. Institutions of governance had completely collapsed, and corruption was rampant. Many youths have spent more time in war than in school. Average incomes had fallen 80 percent. Exports had collapsed. Over three-quarters of our people lived below the poverty line of one dollar per day."

In November 2005, Sirleaf became the first African woman to be elected president. It was a hopeful sign after a generation of catastrophic misrule and warfare in Liberia. She brought a genuine commitment to her people and, seemingly, the wherewithal to make a positive difference. Her resume included a Master's degree from Harvard and 10 years' work on development issues at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations.

She was a clear pick-me-up for Liberians following the era of Charles Taylor, responsible for many of the more than 200,000 deaths that occurred during the successive civil wars. Taylor fled Liberia in 2003 and, as of this past April, was awaiting trial before an international tribunal on charges of crimes against humanity for sponsoring a brutal rebellion in neighboring Sierra Leone. A 15,000-member UN peacekeeping force has been deployed in Liberia for four years. Its current mandate expires Sept. 30.

The combination of war and repression forced Sirleaf to spend parts of two decades outside of Liberia, including most of the 1980-90 rule of President Samuel Doe. In an interview with the Los Angeles Times, she recalled the terror-filled moments when Doe's forces detained her in the mid-1980s:

"I was taken to the military prison. In fact, as we were going, they told me they were going to take me to the beach and bury me alive. They started in that direction, changed their minds, put me through tortures, put matches to my hair. They said, 'We're going to burn your hair off,' but didn't do it. They would come as close as possible. It clearly was just meant to terrorize me." After her release, Sirleaf fled the country. In 1990, rebel forces tortured and murdered Doe, the same fate that befell his predecessor, President William Tolbert, in 1980.

Sirleaf is now trying to help lift Liberia out of that grim political legacy and show what responsible leadership can achieve. With First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in attendance at her inaugural on Jan. 16, 2006, Sirleaf told her countrymen: "We know that your vote was a vote for change, a vote for peace, security and stability, a vote for individual and national prosperity, a vote for healing and leadership. We have heard you loudly."

One of the brighter days of Sirleaf's tenure occurred on July 26, 2006, when the lights came on in Liberia for the first time in 14 years, albeit only in a small section of the capital. The lighting illuminates streets, hospitals and office buildings. But most Liberians still have to fend for themselves

after dark. Those with means use generators. Poorer folks rely on candles.

Another milestone occurred when water was turned on in some areas. "Our children danced in the streets. Some who only knew that water came out of a bucket realized that it could come out of a tap," Sirleaf recalled.

Seldom has any country sunk as far as Liberia did under Taylor and the predecessor regime of Samuel Doe. During that 25-year period, per-capita income dropped from \$1,000 to \$120, according to the World Bank. Donor countries have been generous with pledges of assistance to Sirleaf's government but slow to fulfill them. She says: "We need to shorten the road between commitments and cash."

Health and education have been among Sirleaf's priorities. Official figures show that during her first year in office, the government increased school enrollment by 40 percent and provided school furniture throughout the country. Also, service is reported to have been restored to 350 health facilities in the country.

In a speech on March 27 in Toronto, Sirleaf highlighted other advances: deactivation of 17,000 members of the old security forces, enrollment of more than 75,000 excombatants in reintegration programs, accommodating the return of over 100,000 people who had been forced from their homes during the war, balancing of the budget and increasing government revenues by 48 percent.

Women are occupying more high government posts than ever before. Sirleaf, 68 and a grandmother of six, also is doing battle against Liberia's culture of corruption, requiring all senior level government officials to publicly declare their assets.

She has repeatedly told her countrymen that the most reliable path to prosperity is relief from Liberia's huge international debt. The subject is discussed on radio talk shows, street corners, bars and even hospitals.

Except for the periods of civil strife, the United States has had exceptionally close ties with Liberia, both symbolic and otherwise, almost from the founding of the country by freed American slaves in the 1840s. The capital, Monrovia, was named for James Monroe, the fifth American president. Liberia uses the dollar as its currency and may be the only country besides the United States and Burma to shun the metric system. A Liberian major general named George T. Washington once served as the country's top military officer. When the United States entered World War II, Liberia quickly announced its support. Among African countries, Liberia has often been among the major recipients of U.S. assistance.

The United States has been eager to help Sirleaf succeed. Appearing at an international donor conference sponsored by the World Bank in February, Rice announced the cancellation of Liberia's \$391 million U.S. debt. Other countries eliminated an estimated \$300 million in bilateral debt. When Sirleaf returned home from the conference, Liberians cheered her successes as they lined the road on her 30-mile ride from the airport to the capital. The cancellations reduced Liberia's debt to \$3 billion, the largest share of which is \$1.6 billion owed to international lending institutions. There is also a \$1 billion commercial debt.

For technical reasons, Liberia does not yet qualify for relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative, a 1996 International Monetary Fund-World Bank program designed to assist poor countries with unmanageable debts.

Anwarul K. Chowdury, an advocate at the United Nations for the interests of the world's poorest countries, says Liberia should be entitled to HIPC benefits because

of its "recent tumultuous history and current postconflict reconstruction efforts."

The Campaign to Cancel Africa's Debt, an activist group, believes it is an outrage that Liberia is being asked to continue making payments on the "odious and illegitimate" debt accumulated by Sirleaf's authoritarian predecessors. "Liberia needs 100 percent debt cancellation without harmful conditions in order to invest in its economy, rebuild the nation's infrastructure and fund essential public social services," the campaign said in a recent report.

In her Toronto speech, Sirleaf said Liberia's total liability is equal to over 3,000 percent of the country's exports. She is urging wealthy countries to come up with a formula for a prompt easing of the debt burden.

Even with generous debt relief, progress would be slow in coming. As an example, Sirleaf points to the decay of the tourism infrastructure. "The roads, the hotels, the lights, the water, all of those things that tourists will require for their comfort are not there yet," she says. Also, she adds, there is no easy path for securing electricity for rural areas. Pains-taking studies will be required just to determine whether hydroelectric power is the most suitable option.

Sirleaf believes that Liberia could become an agricultural power, citing its abundant fertile soil and rainfalls. Liberia has been a principal world market supplier of latex, derived from rubber trees. The country also is believed well suited for rice, oil palm, pineapples, cassava, citrus, coffee and cocoa. Other potential revenue producers are gold, iron ore, timber and diamonds. And U.S. investors are showing interest. A one-day conference on private investment opportunities, held in conjunction with the donors conference in February, drew an overflow crowd of 400 registrants.

Exports of timber were banned during Taylor's government by the U.N. Security Council because revenues were being used to finance the war in Sierra Leone. The ban was lifted last year, opening the way for a potentially lucrative market for Liberia. A Security Council prohibition on diamond exports remains in place pending certification that the stones are not used to finance conflict—as they were under Taylor's rule.

Shortly before Sirleaf's visit to Washington, she welcomed China's president, Hu Jintao, to Monrovia. There was no official account of the outcome but a Liberian official said beforehand that plans called for the signing of commercial agreements involving rubber, timber and minerals. Further demonstrating China's interest in the resource-rich country is the presence of 500 Chinese peacekeepers in Liberia. Sirleaf says she's happy to receive assistance from China, so long as it doesn't increase her country's debt.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. SPINO

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2007

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the medical career of Dr. Pascal Daniel Spino of Greensburg, PA.

After 60 years of serving the citizens of Greensburg as a pediatrician, Dr. Spino is retiring from practice. The genuine concern and compassion Dr. Spino gave his patients on a daily basis is appreciated more than words

can say. The sincere love and care his patients received should serve as a model to all who practice medicine.

Dr. Spino has had a truly remarkable career. But he is a modest man who would not boast about his many accomplishments or awards. So let me mention just a few. Always having a big heart for the less fortunate, Dr. Spino founded the first Well Baby Clinic in Westmoreland County which serves indigent children from birth to 6 years of age. The clinic provides free exams and immunizations to the indigent children of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Dr. Spino has personally manned the clinic since it began in 1954.

In 1970, when a patient, Jacob, was suffering from biliary atresia (a rare condition in newborn infants in which the common bile duct between the liver and the small intestine is blocked or absent), the townspeople of Greensburg, PA, responded generously with donations to help with the high medical costs. This tradition has carried on and the "Joy of Jacob" fund is still active and successful in helping to treat children with birth defects.

Dr. Spino took notice of abused children with no place to go. He felt for them and decided to take action in 1972, by founding the RANCH, or Render Any Needy Child Help program. A program designed solely to provide medical care for abused children. Dr. Spino then went on to create a Level II Nursery at Westmoreland Regional Hospital for the care of infants and helped create a modern pediatric department at Westmoreland Regional Hospital with intensive care capabilities.

Dr. Spino has received a number of awards including: Man of the Year by the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review for his outstanding service to the community; the Pennsylvania Pediatrician of the Year in 1989 by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Academy of Pediatrics and was honored with "Doctor Spino Day," in Westmoreland County for his lifetime commitment to helping others. Over 4,000 people—1/4 of the City's residents were in attendance—despite a downpour of rain.

In my practice as a child psychologist, our paths have crossed several times over the years through our patients. I know first-hand the tremendous respect and affection patients and professionals alike have for Dr. Spino. I understand first-hand the joy of helping a child. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Spino's career, personal sacrifice and devotion to improving our health care system and helping others.

SUPPORT OUR FRIEND AND ALLY: TAIWAN

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2007

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise in solidarity with the Republic of China (Taiwan). For over 50 years, Taiwan has been a flourishing, independent and sovereign government in the developing world and Southeast Asia. Taiwan has developed a world-class democracy, serving as a model for countries in the region. The people of Taiwan inspire others in Southeast Asia and around the world who desire freedom and prosperity. America should stand with our friends who engage in peaceful democracy and Taiwan deserves our support.