

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FAITH IN DIPLOMACY

HON. WAYNE T. GILCHREST

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. GILCHREST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to submit in the RECORD an opinion piece by Marshall Breger, a former alternate delegate of the U.S. to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and currently a professor of law at the Columbus School of Law, the Catholic University of America. In it, he discusses the importance of religion in negotiating peace through diplomacy.

FAITH IN DIPLOMACY

(By Marshall Breger)

Whatever one's view of the Oslo peace process, it is remarkable that the 1993 signing ceremony on the White House lawn did not include benedictions by rabbis, imams, or priests. In an America where religious leaders open sessions of Congress, pray for the success of our armies, and even sometimes pray for fair winds and bless the fleet at yachting regattas, this is passing strange.

The absence of religious content speaks volumes about the assumptions that drive conventional diplomatic wisdom in Washington. Foreign policy professionals instinctively recoil at the notion that religion can or should play an important role in foreign policy. They see it as a "private matter," according to Tom Farr, former director of the State Department's office of international religious freedom, "properly beyond the bounds of policy analysis and action."

Far too many American diplomats and think-tank gurus continue to dismiss or, at best, ignore religion as "a tool of statecraft." They talk about promoting "civil society" but forget that in regions as diverse as the Middle East and South Asia, the largest and most powerful actors in civil society are religious. They assume that a "moderate" Muslim is a less religious Muslim, and that an "Islamist" who believes that Islam should play a role in politics must be in his or her heart a bomb-throwing extremist. They treat religion as a distraction to diplomacy and a threat to global stability.

Academic theories of modernization teach that as societies modernize they irrevocably grow more secular. But the truth is otherwise. Sociologist Peter Berger contends that religious sensibility does not wither in the modern world. Even the State Department, long a bastion of secularist thinking, is beginning to get the picture. In a powerful book written after she left the State Department, former secretary Madeleine Albright effectively offered a mea culpa for ignoring religion while she was in office. And Karen Hughes, former undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, said that President Bush wanted her "to reach out and meet with religious leaders—because faith is such an important part of life for so many Americans and so many people across the world."

How should we incorporate religion in our foreign policy? First, we must study it. You can't understand West Bank settlers without understanding the "Greater Israel" theology

of Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook and his disciples. Nor can you follow Shia politics without an appreciation of the role of the ashura—the commemoration of the death of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson in the 680 battle of Karbala—as the transformative event in Shia martyrology, or the oft-misunderstood role of the mahdi—the "hidden Imam" expected to bring justice and final judgment to the world—in Shia eschatology. Or how the "puritanism" of 18th-century theologian Mohammed Ibn Abd-al Wahab has affected the Salafi understanding of the Quran.

Only by understanding religion can we mobilize it as a force for reconciliation and as an ally in the search for peaceful solutions. No one can deny the injurious role religious fervor has had in foreign affairs—just think of the Thirty Years' War and Osama bin Laden. Nonetheless, we know of many examples of how religion can assist in the process of making peace. Consider the Community of Sant'Edigio, which has midwived cease-fires in conflict zones like Mozambique. The Vatican mediated the Argentina-Chile dispute over the Beagle Channel, and evangelical Christians have helped place international religious freedom, AIDS, and global poverty on the major powers' foreign policy agendas. Jewish groups, for their part, have led the campaign to end the violence in Darfur.

In 2002, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders in the Middle East signed the Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land, committing themselves to the dignity of the individual, whatever his or her religion, and an end to bloodshed. That work is being carried on by groups like Mosaica and the Adam Institute and by other religious leaders such as Knesset member Rabbi Michael Melchior and Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, founder of the Islamic movement in Israel.

Religious leaders in Jerusalem have formed a Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land to promote not just interfaith dialogue, but also practical advances like access to and protection of holy sites; religious freedom; education for tolerance in mosques, synagogues, and churches; and support for a two-state solution that recognizes the dignity of both Israelis and Palestinians. This nascent enterprise includes religious leaders such as the Latin patriarch, chief rabbis, and Sheikh Taysir Al-Tamimi, head of the Sharia courts of Palestine.

These developments make clear that religious leaders can foster reconciliation in the Middle East and elsewhere. To succeed, any new peace initiative must encompass their efforts. Perhaps this time around we can avoid the religious deficit of so much previous American diplomacy.

Ari J. Livne, a senior at Lakeside School in Seattle, and Anisha Gulabani, a senior at Eastlake in Sammamish, Washington, were included in the list of 141 Presidential Scholars for 2008. Since its inception in 1964, the Presidential Scholars Program has honored more than 5,500 graduating high school seniors for academic excellence, artistic accomplishments, and civic contributions. In short, the young men and women named each year to the Presidential Scholars list represent the best and brightest young people in America—the leaders of tomorrow. Ari and Anisha are preparing themselves to lead this country into the future.

Ari joined the list of Presidential Scholars in the Arts in 2008 because of his accomplishments in the visual, literary and performing arts, as well as for his scholarship, leadership and public service. Initially, more than 7,000 young people from across the Nation applied for a spot on this prestigious list before it was narrowed down to just Ari and 19 other young talents. Ari holds a 3.7 cumulative GPA and will take his place among some of Lakeside's most outstanding graduates—including Microsoft's Bill Gates and former Washington Governor Booth Gardner—when he enters the next step in his educational journey in the fall. After turning down a scholarship offer from Julliard, Ari decided on Yale in order to pursue both his academic interests and incredible musical gifts simultaneously.

Anisha will graduate this spring from Eastlake High School with a perfect 4.0 GPA. She fills her school day with every Advanced Placement course available to her. She is a co-captain on the debate team, a member of the National Honor Society, a member of Mu Alpha Theta—Lakeside's Mathematics Honor Society—and a member of the Children's Hospital Guild in Seattle. I am told that initially she wanted to become a medical doctor. However, after her sister's leg was amputated, she decided to focus on bio-medical engineering with a special focus on prosthetic limb design at Harvard University.

Ari and Anisha showcased incredible talent at their respective high schools and clearly deserved the honor of being a part of the 2008 Presidential Scholars Program. I hope they continue on their promising course and emerge as leaders in whatever field they choose.

PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible talents of two young people who reside in the Eighth District of Washington State. Both students represent the promise of America and lead their peers inside and out of the classroom.

TRIBUTE TO OTANA JAKPOR

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an extraordinary young woman from Riverside, California. Otana Jakpor may only be 14 years old and

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

a sophomore at Woodcrest Christian High School but she is already establishing herself as a promising scientist. Otana is the Region IX recipient of the 2007 President's Environmental Youth Award (PEYA) for a science project titled "Indoor Air Pollution: The Pulmonary Effects of Ozone-Generating Air Purifiers."

Young people from around the country are invited annually to participate in the PEYA program, which is aimed at encouraging individuals, school classes, summer camps, youth organizations and public interest groups to promote environmental awareness and encourage positive community involvement. One award is given for each of the Environmental Protection Agency's 10 regions. (EPA Region 9 includes California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii.) On April 17, 2008, President Bush presented the award to Otana at a White House Ceremony.

Ms. Jakpor decided to focus her project on indoor pollution after she read a Consumer Reports article titled "New Concerns about Ionizing Air Cleaners." The article reported that certain models of ionizing air cleaners emit high amounts of ozone, but it did not include any research data. Otana's findings indicated that indoor air purifiers, neck air purifiers and ionizers emit high amounts of ozone, one result was 15 times higher than the level of a State 3 smog alert.

Ms. Jakpor's findings were significant and on September 27, 2007, she presented them to the California Air Resources Board at a hearing on indoor air purifier pollution. The Board voted to adopt a regulation to limit ozone emissions from air purifiers to less than 0.050 parts per million, and now California is the first state in the nation to regulate ozone generators.

Recognition for her scientific achievements are not new to Otana, she has received the NAACP Los Angeles ACT-SO Competition Gold medal in Medicine; eight awards from the RIMS Inland Science and Engineering Fair for both her freshman and sophomore projects; and fourth place award in the Pharmacology/Toxicology Category in the Senior Division for her research on ozone at the California State Science Fair. She is a spokesperson for the American Lung Association and has appeared on the Discovery Channel.

Ms. Jakpor is first in her class at an excellent and competitive school and has a 4.33 Grade Point Average. It is an honor to recognize Otana for all her achievements at such a young age. I commend Ms. Jakpor for her hard work, commitment and outstanding educational achievements. I have no doubt she will continue to contribute to the science community and look forward to hearing about the incredible discoveries of Otana Jakpor in the years to come.

RECOGNITION FOR THE YOUGH COUGAR ROCKETRY TEAM

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. MURTHA. Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Yough Cougar Rocketry team from Yough High School in Herminie, Pennsylvania. The Cougar

Rocketry was the only team from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania chosen to participate in the 2008 NASA Student Launch Initiative and is one of only eighteen teams selected nationally. The team was also selected in 2007.

NASA describes the Student Launch Initiative as a program which "involves middle and high school students in designing, building and testing reusable rockets with associated scientific payloads." The program allows students to demonstrate their design's proof-of-concept and allows them to apply previously abstract concepts to hands-on work. Each team works to build a vehicle that is to reach an altitude of one mile above ground level. The finale of each team's work ends with a launch at Marshall Space Flight Center.

Madam Speaker, the members of the Yough Cougar Rocketry team, whom I would like to personally recognize, include Ms. Stephanie Abbott, Ms. Amy Bickerstaff, Ms. Alicia Bowser, Mr. Josh Sarosinski, and Ms. Ashley Wiley. Mr. Donald Gilbert, Jr. is the team's teacher and advisor and Mr. Eric Haberman is the team's mentor from Westinghouse Corporation. I commend them all for their tremendous work.

SUPPORTING FUNDING TO REDUCE THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, every minute a woman somewhere in the world dies of pregnancy-related causes. This staggering fact is not a failure of science but rather a failure of conscience. The United States possesses the medical knowledge necessary to drastically reduce the number of women killed during pregnancy each year. What we lack is a commitment by our Government to make certain that medical resources are readily available to women throughout the world.

The United States can and must do more. To demonstrate just how attainable this goal is, I would like to bring my colleagues' attention to an interesting and inspiring piece published in *The Washington Post* on Sunday, May 11, that highlights the efforts of two remarkable individuals to address maternal mortality rates in Haiti. Working closely with the Haitian government, Paul Farmer, Ophelia Dahl, and their nonprofit organization Partners in Health, have succeeded in reducing the maternal mortality rate in Haiti to less than half what it was a quarter-century ago. I hope that this piece will not only serve as a reminder of the tremendous opportunity we have to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of pregnant women all over the world.

KEEPING NEW MOTHERS ALIVE—IN HAITI AND RWANDA, REDUCING TRAGEDY IN CHILDBIRTH

(By Paul Farmer and Ophelia Dahl)

"Obscene" is still the word that comes to mind when we think of maternal mortality—and it has been almost 25 years since we first witnessed death in childbirth. In 1983, as students in one of central Haiti's fetid clinics, we prepared to celebrate a birth. Although we'd just met the young woman about to be-

come a mother, her desperate expression as she began to hemorrhage haunts us still. National statistics could have predicted the outcome: A 1985 survey pegged Haitian maternal mortality at 1,400 deaths per 100,000 live births. By comparison, maternal mortality in the United States last year was 14 deaths per 100,000 live births.

Worldwide, 500,000 women die in childbirth every year; more than 90 percent live in Africa or Asia, and almost all are poor by any standard. Obscene though it is, death during childbirth isn't the end of the story. In the world's poorest areas, many orphaned children wind up destitute and on the streets within a few years of their mothers' deaths, sometimes resorting to desperate or criminal measures for food, shelter, clothes or school fees.

One of the 12 Millennium Development Goals is to reduce maternal mortality 75 percent by the year 2015. But we are moving too slowly to meet this goal, the United Nations says.

Today, the maternal mortality rate in Haiti is less than half what it was a quarter-century ago. Across the broad swath of central Haiti where we work, we estimate the number to be well below 100 deaths per 100,000 live births—not good enough but a vast improvement, most of it occurring in the past decade. Change came largely for three reasons.

First, our nonprofit organization, Partners in Health, has worked closely with the Haitian Ministry of Health to strengthen public health infrastructure. We have rebuilt, equipped, staffed and stocked hospitals and clinics; trained nurse-midwives and other personnel, including more than a thousand community health workers; linked villages and health centers to district hospitals by modern telecommunications and ambulance service; and established modern surgical services for obstetrical emergencies.

Second, we have broken the rule that high-quality health services are a privilege rationed by ability to pay, not a right. The case was made first for affordable medicines. Now it is being made for emergency Caesarean sections—an essential tool to reduce maternal mortality. Faced with evidence that maternal mortality was greater where fees were higher, the district health commissioner for central Haiti announced last August that all prenatal care and emergency obstetrical services would henceforth be available free to all patients. He was later echoed by Haitian President René Préval.

Third, we have linked prenatal and obstetric care to an all-out effort to improve access to primary health care. The presence of functional, accessible public clinics and hospitals restores faith in the health system, motivates people to seek care before they are critically ill and allows for preventive interventions such as prenatal care and family planning. Consider Rwanda, another country where we work, which is rising rapidly from its ashes scarcely a dozen years after an appalling genocide. Rwandan maternal mortality rates in 1995, the year after the genocide, are unknown. But they are sure to have exceeded the 1,800 deaths per 100,000 live births reported that year in relatively peaceful Malawi. The situation has improved dramatically since then.

By helping to train and, importantly, pay community health workers, the Rwandan Ministry of Health is taking steps to link rural villages to health centers with the capacity to make routine labor safe. Rwanda is also seeking to make family planning available to citizens and to increase access to preventive and primary care through basic health insurance. Maternal mortality has dropped from more than 1,000 deaths per 100,000 live births between 1995 and 2000 to