

comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?" you say. "What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy. I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine, and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guidebooks, and you must learn a whole new language, and you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

The pain of that will never, ever, ever go away because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss. But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to go to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

SUDAN: STOP USING FOOD AS A WEAPON OF MASS STARVATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, in about 6 weeks, the rainy season will begin in Sudan. Villagers will no longer be able to plant or harvest their crops. The roads will become impassible. It is the time of the year when people live off their harvests, their orchards, and the land. But there is no food in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile inside Sudan—not because of drought, not because locusts have destroyed the crops. No, Madam Speaker. This is a deliberate, man-made catastrophe created by Sudanese President Bashir.

For months, Khartoum has been launching rockets and dropping bombs on villages and fields throughout South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The people of the Nuba Mountains, primarily of black African descent, cannot work their fields for fear of being bombed. They hide in caves as bombers and helicopters fly overhead. Rockets bombard their villages. Sudanese soldiers march into their villages, killing, raping, setting fire to their homes, carrying out a "scorched earth" policy.

The people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile are already suffering from

malnutrition and a severe shortage of food. Thousands are fleeing south, crossing into the newly independent nation of South Sudan, setting up refugee camps along the northern borders. Mainly women and children, they arrive traumatized, exhausted, and malnourished.

President Bashir has denied humanitarian access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile for the delivery of desperately needed food aid. He wants no witnesses to his deliberate use of mass starvation as a weapon against his own people. And the clock is ticking, Madam Speaker, because the rainy season is coming soon, and then no one will be able to get food into these areas, but the bombs will continue to fall from the sky.

Take a look at these photographs. The first one is a remarkable satellite image of villages being bombed in South Sudan. You see the Antonov bomber flying north, back towards the Sudanese military airbase. You see the smoke plumes rising up from civilian villages. You see fields and orchards being bombed. These are not military targets, Madam Speaker. There's not even a truck or a pickup that might be used for military purposes. All you see are villages, huts, orchards, and fields. Antonovs don't do precision bombing, Madam Speaker; they just open up the back bay of the airplane and roll out barrels of explosives.

This is an image, Madam Speaker, of the indiscriminate bombing of civilians. This is a war crime. It took place on March 8. And here, Madam Speaker, are the targets of the bombs and rockets: children, Madam Speaker, hiding and starving in caves.

This photo was taken by John Prendergast, of the Enough Project, and George Clooney, who were in South Kordofan on March 8. They saw the planes and rockets striking villages. The satellite picture is from the Sentinel Project, set up by Mr. Clooney and DigitalGlobe, which has donated millions of dollars of imagery from its satellites in an effort to provide an early warning system for human security in this region of Sudan.

Last Friday, I stood on the steps of the Sudanese Embassy with George Clooney and my House colleagues, Congressman JOHN OLVER, JIM MORAN, and AL GREEN. We were all arrested protesting the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. We were joined by George's father and journalist, Nick Clooney; John Prendergast of the Enough Project; our former colleague Tom Andrews, now with United to End Genocide; Martin Luther King III; Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP; Nicole Lee, president of TransAfrica Forum; Faye Williams, chair of the National Congress of Black Women; Activist Dick Gregory; Rabbis David Saperstein and Steve Gutow; Fred Kramer, with the Jewish World Watch; and Ian Schwab, with American Jewish World Service.

We had a simple message: Let food and humanitarian aid reach the suffering people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Stop raping, killing, bombing, and starving innocent women, children, and men.

I commend the Obama administration for pressuring Khartoum to let food reach these desperate people, but more must be done. I urge the President to engage China at the very highest levels to also demand unfettered access for humanitarian aid.

Madam Speaker, the world must increase the pressure on President Bashir or watch another crime against humanity take place in Sudan. We must not be silent.

□ 1050

STOP MILITARY RAPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise again today to highlight the epidemic of rape and sexual assault in the military. This is the 17th time that I've stood here on the House floor to tell the story of a brave member of our military who has been raped or sexually assaulted by a fellow servicemember.

Today I will tell you the story of Elle Helmer, who served at the prestigious Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., at 8th and I from 2005 to 2006. The Marines who serve here in Washington are known throughout the military as the tip of the sword. They perform ceremonial roles and participate in the silent drill platoon. They are the *creme de la creme*.

You will notice that Elle's story follows the exact same pattern as the dozens of stories I've told before and probably the same pattern of the estimated 19,000 rapes and sexual assaults that occurred in the military in 2010. This is the pattern of the epidemic.

This is Elle's story: The harassment started as soon as she arrived in Washington. Lieutenant Helmer was told that she was selected to be the public affairs officer for the barracks based on her appearance. She was told that Command wanted a good-looking female officer to serve as a "poster child." In addition to her role in public affairs, Lieutenant Helmer was also notified by mail that she was made a sexual assault and response coordinator. No one told her what the role required, and the only thing she knew about the position was that she'd been appointed to do it.

In March of 2005, a captain continually commented on her appearance and began to harass her. He told Lieutenant Helmer that he picked her to be a Public Affairs Officer because she was the "prettiest." He made sexual advances and kept sending her social emails. She spurned his advances and complained to the Marine Barracks' equal opportunity officer, and provided

copies of the emails and details about the harassment. The Marine Corps did nothing.

The following year, the Marine Corps named Lieutenant Helmer to serve as the first female ceremonial parade flanking officer. Part of her responsibilities was to attend a pub crawl for St. Patrick's Day that had been endorsed by the colonel. When she objected to going, her superior, a major, told her it was a mandatory work event. The pub crawl involved a group of Marine officers identified in T-shirts going from bar to bar to bar on Capitol Hill, drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, all paid for by the Marine Corps. Lieutenant Helmer was required to drink shots at the same pace as the large male officers. On those occasions when she drank water to try to keep herself from becoming intoxicated, she was required by her boss to drink an extra shot as punishment.

As a result of the forced consumption of alcohol that night, Lieutenant Helmer became very intoxicated and left to find a cab to go home. Her superior, the major, followed her out and told her that she needed to come with him to his office to discuss a business matter.

When they reached his office, the major tried to kiss her. Lieutenant Helmer resisted, and the major grabbed her, knocking her over and hitting her head against the wall. She lost consciousness at that point.

When she awoke, she found herself lying on the floor in the major's office and was wearing his shorts. The major was found naked from the waist down, passed out on the floor nearby. After Lieutenant Helmer left the major's office, she reported it to her command that she had been raped. Her colonel discouraged her from asking for a rape kit examination, saying it would be "out of his hands." In spite of the colonel's objections, Lieutenant Helmer sought and obtained a rape kit and medical examination.

Despite the medical and circumstantial evidence of the rape, the Navy Criminal Investigative Services initially refused to investigate, claiming Lieutenant Helmer's inability to recall her rape precluded any investigation. After a delay that destroyed the crime scene, the NCIS eventually conducted a very brief investigation and concluded that nothing could be done in light of Lieutenant Helmer's lack of consciousness during the assault.

In addition, the Marine Corps "lost" Helmer's rape kit. Lieutenant Helmer complained to the major's superior. Although that Marine officer admitted the NCIS investigation was "woefully inadequate" and removed the major from his command position, he refused to press charges or take any further steps to punish the rapist. Instead, he told Lieutenant Helmer, "You're from Colorado. You're tough. You need to pick yourself up and dust yourself off." He then remarked, "I can't babysit you all the time."

Instead of the perpetrator being prosecuted, Lt. Helmer became the subject of investigation and prosecution. She was forced to leave the Marine Corps while her rapist remains a Marine in good standing. Elle, like so many victims I've heard from, report a culture of acceptance and a culture that blames victims. This must stop. We must pass H.R. 3435.

COMMENDING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S PROPOSALS REGARDING HIGHER EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker and to my colleagues here in the great Chamber of the people's House, the House of Representatives, I know of no other place in the world, only in America, that a man whose father was a devout Muslim from Kenya, Africa, who was married to a white woman from the great State of Kansas—and with all due respect to our birther friends, this man was born in the great State of Hawaii; this man is none other than Barrack Hussein Obama—could become our President, Madam Speaker, our President of all of the United States of America and its territories.

I want to share with my colleagues one of the most critical issues as advocated seriously by President Obama, and that is in the field of education.

I commend President Obama for his commitment to providing every child in America access to a complete and competitive education all the way from cradle to career.

In recent years, the United States has drastically fallen behind other countries when it comes to education. In the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment Report published in 2009, researchers ranked the performance of 15-year-olds internationally and found that the United States ranked 17th in reading, 24th in science, and 30th in math. To make America competitive once again, Madam Speaker, President Obama has introduced several key initiatives that focus on early childhood education, that reform and invest in K-12 education and restore America's leadership in higher education.

In his first major action of his Presidency, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which makes significant investments in education. The act included \$5 billion for early learning programs as well as programs for children with special needs. The President has also introduced accountability standards for Head Start to ensure that early childhood programs are continuing to deliver quality services. In addition, nine States have also received approximately \$500 million from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge fund to create systems of high quality early learning and development programs.

The President has also set a goal for the United States to have the highest

proportion of college graduates in the world by the year 2020. To reach this goal, the President focused on K-12 teaching and learning. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$77 billion to strengthen elementary and secondary education, including \$48.6 billion to stabilize State education budgets and to encourage States to ensure that all schools have highly qualified teachers, improve achievement in low-performing schools, and ensure college and career readiness.

The President also has invested to make sure that teachers are supported as professionals in the classroom, while also holding them more accountable. Effective teachers will be rewarded, and States will be encouraged to remove ineffective teachers from the classroom.

The President has also supported innovation in the classroom, such as the expansion of high quality charter schools, investments in the Race to the Top competition between States, and also providing flexibility for States who are looking for greater relief under the No Child Left Behind Act. The President also introduced the "Educate to Innovate" campaign, which is aimed to improve the participation and performance of America's students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

President Obama has also introduced measures to make college more affordable. Under the President's leadership, the maximum Pell Grant amount has been raised to \$5,500. The new "Pay As You Earn" proposal will also give about 1.5 million students the ability to cap their loan payments at 10 percent of their monthly income and allow debt forgiveness balance after 20 years of payments. The President's plan will enable an estimated 6 million students and recent college graduates to consolidate their loans and reduce their interest rates. Colleges and universities will also be rewarded based on their ability to offer relatively lower tuition costs and provide value to especially low-income students.

Madam Speaker, if we prepare America's children with a high quality education, we enable them to succeed in today's global economy. Furthermore, our ability to educate America's children will determine the economic competitiveness of our great Nation. And as our President has recently stated, no issue will have a bigger impact on the future performance of our economy than education.

Once again, Madam Speaker, I commend President Obama for his commitment to helping our children succeed from cradle to career. I thank him for his bold leadership and vision for the future of our children and our great Nation.

□ 1100

HONORING MONICA PEARSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) for 5 minutes.