

IN MEMORY OF DR. JOHN M.
SMITH

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a World War II Veteran and tremendous leader in rural healthcare, the late Dr. John M. Smith.

Dr. Smith was quite a pioneer in his time. He was one of the first graduates from Caney Creek College, now known as Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, Kentucky. After graduating from the University of Kentucky in 1942, he enlisted in the United States Navy and valiantly served as a first lieutenant aboard the U.S.S. *Weeden*, serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific campaigns. Smith was later selected as one of the first recipients of the Rural Kentucky Medical Scholarship Fund and graduated from the University of Louisville School of Medicine in 1949. After completing medical school, Dr. Smith decided to extend his service to our country by volunteering as a medical officer during the Korean War at the Louisville, Kentucky recruitment station.

In 1951, Dr. Smith began his mission to provide healthcare to the people of southeastern Kentucky, in a rural region plagued by high rates of health disparities and limited access to healthcare. He opened his first medical practice in Beattyville, Kentucky where he faithfully treated patients for eleven years. However, his passion for additional education in the medical field also led him to practice radiology at Morehead Hospital, Woodford County Hospital, and the Lexington Clinic for a little more than a decade. In 1974, he returned to Beattyville as a general practitioner where he dedicated nearly 40 years of quality healthcare for the people of Lee and surrounding counties until the age of 90.

He was involved in numerous civic activities, serving as a member of the Masonic Proctor Lodge 213, the Lee County Shrine Club, VFW Post 11296, and the Kentucky Medical Association. He served as the Medical Director of the Lee County Constant Care and Geri Young House, and a member of the Lee County Board of Health.

Dr. Smith leaves behind a devoted family: his loving wife, Patty of 54 years; seven children, 17 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. His son, William, has been one of my most trusted advisers, working on my team since 1995, and now serving as my Chief Clerk of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee. Will's extensive policy knowledge and legislative wisdom has been vital for our nation's economy and for projects supporting the good people of southern and eastern Kentucky. On behalf of my wife Cynthia and myself, I want to extend our deepest heartfelt sympathies to the entire Smith family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring a tireless leader in rural healthcare and a true patriot, the late Dr. John M. Smith.

THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS
MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I delivered the following remarks at a Wilson Center event focused on the future of religious minorities in the Middle East.

I'd like to begin by thanking my former colleague, Congresswoman Jane Harman, and the Wilson Center for hosting this discussion on such a timely issue. I have long been focused on international religious freedom—specifically on the plight of persecuted people of faith wherever they may be.

Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, 'In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.'

America has always been a friend to the oppressed, the persecuted, the forgotten. But sadly today, that allegiance is in question as religious freedom and human rights abuses around the globe increasingly go unaddressed and unanswered.

Looking to the Middle East there is often societal and communal violence and repression against religious communities which specifically targets religious minorities.

Too often the governments of these lands foster an atmosphere of intolerance or in some cases such as Iran, outright criminality as it relates to different faith traditions like the Baha'is.

Tragically, Since 1979, the Iranian government has killed more than 200 Baha'i leaders and dismissed over 10,000 from government and university jobs. Further, throughout the region, there is impunity surrounding acts of religiously targeted violence, onerous registration requirements for houses of worship, and a general climate of fear which isolates and too often drives out religious minorities.

These realities have been exasperated by the so-called Arab Spring—a Spring which has devolved into Winter for many of the most vulnerable in these societies—foremost among them the ancient Christian communities.

The future of religious minorities in the Middle East is of course the focus of our discussion today. I would argue that if the current trajectory holds true, the future of these communities—communities which are woven into the very fabric of the region—is uncertain at best.

In February I travelled to the Middle East—specifically to Lebanon and Egypt. One of the main purposes of the trip was to spend time with the Syrian Christian community—a community with ancient roots dating back to the 1st century. We read in the Bible about Paul on the road to Damascus.

According to the latest estimates the brutal civil war, which continues to rage, has taken nearly 93,000 lives.

With the Syrian crisis entering its third year, the eventual outcome, including how many will perish in or be displaced by the continued violence and who will step into the power vacuum, is far from certain. Moreover, what that will mean for the Christian community in Syria is largely unknown and, unfortunately, rarely addressed by Western media.

I wanted to hear firsthand from Syrian Christians about their concerns and to put this issue in the larger context of an imperiled Christian community in the broader Middle East, specifically in Egypt and Iraq.

Coptic Christians and other minorities in Egypt have increasingly been marginalized

with the ascendancy of the Muslim Brotherhood. The recently drafted constitution, which made blasphemy a criminal offense, is highly problematic.

A February 5 Associated Press article reported, '[p]rovisions in the document allow for a far stricter implementation of Islamic Shariah law than in the past, raising opponents' fears that it could bring restrictions on many civil liberties and the rights of women and Christians.'

Increasingly these fears are being born out. Just last month, a young Christian teacher in Egypt was accused of insulting Islam while teaching a social studies class.

In a Christian Science Monitor article about this case and the trend more broadly, a local human rights activist reportedly said, 'All Coptic teachers are scared here now that any child who fights with them could accuse them of blasphemy and drag them to court.'

The issues I've just outlined must be viewed not simply as today's news but rather through the lens of history.

A phrase not often heard outside the majority Muslim world is 'First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people.' The 'Saturday people' are, of course, the Jews.

Except for Israel, their once vibrant communities in countries throughout the region are now decimated. In 1948 there were roughly 150,000 Jews in Iraq; today 4 remain. In Egypt, there were once as many as 80,000 Jews; now roughly 20 remain.

It appears a similar fate may await the ancient Christian community in these same lands.

Consider this observation by author and adjunct fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom, Lela Gilbert, who recently wrote in the Huffington Post: 'Between 1948 and 1970, between 80,000 and 100,000 Jews were expelled from Egypt—their properties and funds confiscated, their passports seized and destroyed.'

They left, stateless, with little more than the shirts on their backs to show for centuries of Egyptian citizenship. . . .

One of my last meetings in Egypt was with 86-year-old Carmen Weinstein, the president of the Jewish Community of Cairo (JCC). She was born and raised in Egypt and had lived her entire life there—a life set against the backdrop of a great Jewish emigration out of Egypt, namely the departure of thousands of Egyptian Jews from the 1940s—60s. She led a small community of mostly elderly Jewish women in Cairo, who with their sister community in Alexandria, represent Egypt's remaining Jews.

There are 12 synagogues left in Cairo. Some, along with a landmark synagogue in Alexandria, have been refurbished by the government of Egypt and/or US. Agency for International Development (USAID) and have received protection as cultural and religious landmarks—many have not. Further, the 900 year old Bassatine Jewish Cemetery is half overrun with squatters and sewage.

Ms. Weinstein sought to preserve these historic landmarks as well as the patrimony records of the Egyptian Jewish community.

Not long after my return to the US., Ms. Weinstein passed away and is now buried in the very cemetery she sought to protect. Meanwhile, with the fall of Hosni Mubarak, Coptic Christians, numbering roughly 8-10 million, are leaving in droves in the face of increased repression, persecution and violence.

A January 8 National Public Radio (NPR) story reported 'Coptic Christians will celebrate Christmas on Monday, and many will do so outside their native Egypt. Since the revolution there, their future in the country has looked uncertain and many are resettling in the United States.'

A May 15 New York Times piece with the headline, ‘Christians Uneasy in Morsi’s Egypt,’ reported that, ‘Since the ouster of Mr. Mubarak in February 2011, a growing number of Copts, including some of the most successful businessmen, have left Egypt or are preparing to do so, fearing persecution by an Islamist-controlled government as much as the stagnant economy that is smothering their industries.’

And yet our government continues to give increasingly scarce U.S. foreign assistance to the Egyptian government without a single string attached.

Just last month, weeks before an Egyptian court sentenced more than 40 pro-democracy NGO workers, several of whom are American, including Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood’s son, to jail, Secretary Kerry quietly waived the law that would have prevented the \$1.3 billion, BILLION, in U.S. taxpayer money from going to Egypt absent concrete steps toward true democracy and respect for basic human rights and religious freedom.

Similarly, Iraq’s Christian population has fallen from as many as 1.4 million in 2003 to roughly 500,000 today. Churches have been targeted, believers kidnapped for ransom and families threatened with violence if they stay.

In October 2010, Islamist extremists laid siege on Our Lady of Salvation Catholic Church in Baghdad, killing over 50 hostages and police, and wounding dozens more.

The head of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq reportedly told MidEast Christian News that the number of Christian church declined precipitously in the last decade. There are roughly 60 Christian churches in the entire country, down from more than 300 as recently as 2003.

Of course other, much smaller but no less vulnerable, religious minorities have also suffered greatly in Iraq. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in its recently release annual report found that, ‘Large percentages of the country’s smallest religious minorities—which include Chaldo-Assyrian and other Christians, Sabean Mandaeans, and Yezidis—have fled the country in recent years, threatening these communities’ continued existence in Iraq.’

And yet, last year, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report titled, ‘U.S. Assistance to Iraq’s Minority Groups in Response to Congressional Directive,’ which it had conducted at the request of several Members of Congress, including Congresswoman Anna Eshoo and myself after hearing from representatives of the Iraqi Diaspora community that despite targeted congressional funding intended to assist these religious communities, little tangible proof or impact was being seen on the ground.

Over multiple years, Congress directed the State Department and USAID to dedicate certain funds to help Iraq’s minority populations. But GAO found that these agencies couldn’t prove they spent the funds as Congress intended.

Perhaps this failure to follow a clear congressional directive was attributable in part to a refusal on the part of this administration, and frankly the previous administration, to acknowledge that minorities were being targeted, rather than merely victims of generalized violence in Iraq.

In short, over the span of a few decades, the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, has virtually been emptied of Jews. In my conversations with Syrian Christian refugees, Lebanese Christians and Coptic Christians in Egypt, a resounding theme emerged: a similar fate may await the ‘Sunday People.’

While it remains to be seen whether the historic exodus of Christians from the region

will prove to be as dramatic as what has already happened to the Jewish community, it is without question devastating, as it threatens to erase Christianity from its very roots.

Consider Iraq. With the exception of Israel, the Bible contains more references to the cities, regions and nations of ancient Iraq than any other country. The patriarch Abraham came from a city in Iraq called Ur. Isaac’s bride, Rebekah, came from northwest Iraq.

Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq, and his sons (the 12 tribes of Israel) were born in northwest Iraq. A remarkable spiritual revival as told in the book of Jonah occurred in Nineveh. The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq as did the account of Daniel in the Lion’s Den. Furthermore, many of Iraq’s Christians still speak Aramaic the language of Jesus.

In fact a February 2013 Smithsonian Magazine story noted [ajs Jesus died on the cross, he cried in Aramaic, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Further, in Egypt, some 2,000 years ago, Mary, Joseph and Jesus sought refuge in this land from the murderous aims of King Herod. Egypt’s Coptic community traces its origins to the apostle Mark.

If, as appears to be happening, the Middle East is effectively emptied of the Christian faith, this will have grave geopolitical implications and does not bode well for the prospects of pluralism and democracy in the region. These developments demand our attention as policymakers.

But rather than being met with urgency, vision or creativity, our government’s response, both Executive and Congressional, has been anemic and at times outright baffling especially to the communities most impacted by the changing Middle East landscape.

We would do well to recall the words of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, ‘We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.’

Prior to February, I was last in Egypt in June 2011 four months after Hosni Mubarak stepped down as president and turned over power to the military.

In the face of decades of human rights and religious freedom abuses under the Mubarak regime, successive U.S. administrations, including the Obama Administration, failed to advocate for those whose voices were being silenced. Many pro-democracy activists and religious minorities that I spoke with during that trip felt abandoned by the West. Their disillusionment with the U.S. and general trepidation about the rise of Islamists in the lead up to the elections was tempered by a palpable sense of anticipation, and in some cases, even hope about what the future might hold for the Egyptian people.

That hope has long since faded and fear has taken up residence.

In conversation after conversation Coptic Christians, reformers, secularist, women and others told me that the U.S. was perceived as the largest supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood-led government. Further, there was a widely held perception that the U.S. was either disengaged or simply uninterested in advocating for religious freedom and other basic human rights.

This is a perception informed by reality. Briefly turning from the Middle East for a moment consider the following:

Genocide persists in Darfur; the Sudan Special Envoy position has been vacant for 3 month; an internationally indicted war criminal, Sudanese president Bashir, travels the globe with impunity; meanwhile the administration actively worked to undermine congressional attempts to isolate Bashir by cutting off non-humanitarian aid to coun-

tries who host him, and then in April rewarded a notorious Sudanese government official, accused of torturing enemies and seeking to block U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur, with an invitation to Washington for high-level meetings.

In China, human rights issues are consistently relegated to the back-burner as seen in the recent summit.

This administration and the previous administration have ignored bipartisan Congressional calls to place Vietnam on the State Department’s list of the most egregious religious freedom violators, despite crackdowns on people of faith and an overall deteriorating human rights situation, preferring instead a policy defined simply by trade.

Consecutive administrations have been silent about the brutal gulags enslaving thousands in North Korea and can barely muster an objection when the Chinese government flouts its international obligations to North Korean refugees by deporting them to an almost certain death sentence.

The examples are too numerous to cite.

In 1998 I authored the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) which created a dedicated office at the State Department headed by an Ambassador-at-Large who was intended to serve as the primary advisor to the Secretary of State on matters of religious freedom.

It also created the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bipartisan advisory body distinct from the State Department which can make clear-eyed policy recommendations unfettered by other diplomatic or bureaucratic considerations.

The legislation created the ‘Countries of Particular Concern’ designation, reserved for those countries with the most severe systematic, ongoing and egregious violations.

A designation which has been grossly under-utilized—this administration has failed to even designate ANY CPC’s since 2011.

At the time of introduction, as is their institutional inclination, the State Department was adamantly opposed to the legislation and sought to undermine it at every turn.

Just last week, the National Security subcommittee of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a hearing which examined the government’s record on implementing IRFA, at which panelist Chris Seiple testified.

There was near unanimity that over the course of successive administrations, both Republican and Democrat, IRFA had not been implemented as Congress intended.

The IRE office is presently buried in the bureaucracy. The ambassador, a fine person, is marginalized. The issue itself America’s first freedom, is viewed as periphery.

Fast forward to 2011. I worked with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo to introduce bipartisan legislation to create a high-level special envoy charged with advocating on behalf of religious minorities in the Middle East and South Central Asia.

At the time of introduction, the IRE ambassador post had been vacant for two years, sending a clear message globally that this issue simply was not a priority.

The legislation overwhelmingly passed the House last Congress only to stall in the Senate. Then Senators Webb and Kerry blocked it from moving forward largely at the request of the State Department.

Congresswoman Eshoo and myself along with Senators Roy Blunt and Carl Levin have reintroduced the legislation this year.

The legislation mandates that the envoy would have a priority focus on Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan—countries where Christians, Bahá’ís, Ahmadiyya Muslims, Jews and more face incredible repression, persecution, violence and even death.

There is a historic precedent for effective special envoys advancing seemingly intractable issues. Consider former Sudan Special Envoy John Danforth. His laser beam focus on the peace process, high-level access to the White House and undivided attention to his mission was incredibly effective.

I don't pretend to think that a special envoy will single-handedly solve the problem, but it certainly can't hurt to have a high-level person within the State Department bureaucracy who is exclusively focused on the protection and preservation of these ancient communities.

This will send an important message to both our own foreign policy establishment and to suffering communities in the Middle East and elsewhere that religious freedom is a priority—that America will be a voice for the voiceless.

Let me conclude by sharing the quote of a Coptic priest who was recently interviewed about the blasphemy charges facing the young Coptic teacher I mentioned earlier.

He said, "Today, despite this repression, we can live. But tomorrow, what will we do? The coming days will be much worse."

This much is clear: absent strong, principled U.S. leadership on this fundamental human right, the future for religious minorities in the Middle East will indeed be much worse.

In a Constitution Day speech, President Ronald Reagan described the United States Constitution as "a covenant we have made not only with ourselves, but with all of mankind."

We have an obligation to keep that covenant for it is a covenant that transcends time and place—it is a covenant with the beleaguered Coptic Christian in Egypt, the imprisoned Baha'i in Iran, the fearful Chaldean nun in Iraq.

We would do well to remember that repressive governments the world over fear the words of the Constitution and the promise they hold as much as they fear the aspirations of their own people."

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF JANET BLAUFUSS

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Janet Blaufuss, a woman of vision. She passed from this life in May 2013, in Toledo, Ohio.

Janet was born in Minneapolis on July 6, 1941 to Mary Vonda and George Bernard Boutlinghouse. She graduated from the University of Illinois College of Nursing. During the 1960s, she worked in juvenile and psychiatric nursing, and was instrumental in establishing the first sheltered care homes in central Illinois. She served as president of the Illinois Association of Local Health Department Nursing Administrators.

Janet then moved to Toledo to work for the Visiting Nurse Service. She worked for the agency for eleven years and was its executive director for the last four years. In 1978, Janet Blaufuss teamed with other leaders in the American hospice movement to found Hospice of Northwest Ohio. "She believed strongly in it because it allowed people to remain at home with more dignity and comfort" her son explained.

In 1989, Janet Blaufuss moved to North Carolina to become director of nursing for the

Iredell County Health Department. Fourteen years later, she returned to Toledo and family.

Janet Blaufuss invested her life in caring for people and taking care of others. Her legacy has lifted up countless others and their families in their time of need. We offer our condolences to her family, and hope they may draw strength from Janet Blaufuss' memory and the gift of her life.

RECOGNIZING NEUQUA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL, NAPERVILLE, IL- INOIS

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to congratulate students from Neuqua Valley High School, in Naperville, Illinois, for placing 2nd in the 10th annual national SIFMA Foundation Stock Market Game or "Capitol Hill Challenge." This marks the 3rd year in a row that students from Neuqua Valley High School have placed either 1st or 2nd, earning them a trip to Washington, D.C.

Under the guidance of Kevin Geers, this year's participating team members, Manas Gosavi, Fahad Khan, Manish Lakkamsani, Colin Pinto and Tyler Rund, produced a portfolio with a value of \$246,823.00, a return of over 138 percent.

During the 14-week competition, students invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in listed stocks, bonds, and mutual funds, with the objective of learning the value of investing and saving. The Capitol Hill Challenge allows students to enhance their understanding of the global economy, while simultaneously strengthening their knowledge of our government.

I am delighted to see students taking an interest in expanding their financial literacy and awareness of the capital markets. As a businessman who understands the value of financial planning, I know how rewarding it can be to discover what you can accomplish if you start with a plan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Neuqua Valley High School, not only on this remarkable feat, but also on their ongoing efforts to generate enthusiasm in the fields of economics and business. They truly embody their mission of "commitment to excellence."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Mr. Speaker, I was in my district participating in the groundbreaking of the downtown crossing of the Ohio River Bridges Project during the series of recorded votes leading up to final passage of H.R. 1797, the so-called Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. Had I been present I would have voted no on H.R. 1791 because this legislation would endanger the health of women and chip away at a woman's right to choose.

Consideration of H.R. 1797 and General Debate of H.R. 1947—Motion on Ordering the

Previous Question on the Rule: roll No. 248; "no";

Rule Providing for Consideration of H.R. 1797 and General Debate of H.R. 1947—H. Res. 266: roll No. 249; "no";

Passage of Suspension Bill—H.R. 1151: roll No. 250; "yes"; and

Final Passage—H.R. 1797: roll No. 251; "no."

RECOGNIZING RUSSEL EFIRD

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Russel Efird as he is honored with the Distinguished Service Award by the Fresno County Farm Bureau (FCFB) for his contributions to agriculture. His decades of service and dedication to the farming community are to be greatly commended.

Russel's passion for farming began at a young age when he would help on his parents' farm in Caruthers, California. The Efird family has run a successful farming operation for over 70 years. They are hard-working and understand what it takes to produce quality crops.

Russel joined the FCFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Program when he was a teenager. Russel has been a member of the FCFB for over 18 years, and has served in various leadership positions within the bureau which ultimately earned him a presidency from 2006–2008. As president of the Farm Bureau, Russel did a great job leading the organization. His focus was on immigration and water which are two issues that affect the agriculture industry daily. Russel's knowledge coupled with his love for agriculture, make him a great advocate for the farming community.

In addition to all of his work at the Farm Bureau, Russel has been a member of various boards including the Western Cotton Growers Association, Fresno County Fire Protection District Board of Directors, Laton Co-op Cotton Gin Board, and the Caruthers Unified School District. Additionally he was a graduate of the Ag Leadership Program's Class X.

Farming is a huge part of Russel's life, but family is most important. He has been married to his wife, Kathleen, for almost 40 years, and they have four grown children: Matthew, John, Adam, and Elizabeth.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Russel Efird for the contributions he has made to the Central Valley and the entire State of California. He serves as pillar in the community, and I thank him for his hard work and devotion to maintaining Fresno County's valuable agricultural strength.

CONGRATULATING DANIELLE L. SCOTT, THE RECIPIENT OF THE BEACON FOUNDATION, INC. SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join with