

of making sure that your brain could continue to focus on other things, that message to keep them and their spirits up. They devised a tap code. It was a 5-by-5 metric of A, B, C, D, E and the next line of F, G, H, I, J. They left out the K because that would not make it a 5-by-5-foot box.

His courage, his integrity, his leadership and loyalty to his fellow prisoners—his love of country—cemented faith wherever present. His valor in the face of the impossible ensured that he returned with honor.

Lieutenant Commander Robert Harper Shumaker—now Admiral Shumaker—holds a near and dear place in my heart. He happens to be my uncle. When my wife and I had our first daughter, we decided to name her Harper after one of the most incredible people we know.

Mr. Speaker, my daughter gave me very clear instructions before I came here, and that was to let everyone know how much we love this American hero. In my office, I keep two pictures: one of the day he was shot down, and the other of the day he was reunited with his family. They were reminders to me not of the darkness and cruelty of war but of the power of faith and the strength of a brotherhood and the honor that no one could take away.

On the 50th anniversary of one of the darkest hours endured by an American aviator, let the record show that we stand and applaud this most revered American patriot.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU'S INVITATION TO SPEAK TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the scheduled March 3 invitation by Speaker BOEHNER to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to speak to a joint session of Congress is wrong on many levels.

It is a deliberate attempt by the Israeli Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House to undercut an effort at a diplomatic solution to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power. This is calculated to occur at a very sensitive stage in talks to reach a potential agreement to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions. Undercutting that diplomatic option is wrong for the United States. It undermines our efforts to smooth choppy waters at a time when we are deeply concerned with ISIS, Hezbollah, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria. The potential of being able to work with Iran beyond the nuclear weapons issue is important for trying to manage many of the world's most explosive problems.

It is impossible to fully comprehend the next steps if we undercut this diplomatic effort. Why give Iran an excuse to blame the United States for a failure of negotiations and play to their hardliners, who don't want any agreement

that would contain their efforts to build nuclear weapons?

There are no other good alternatives. Some of the people most eager to ultimately use military force against Iran are the same people who were so enthusiastic about going to war with Iraq. The fallout of the war with Iran would likely be as bad or worse at a time of upheaval in this troubled region.

There are other critical issues besides the negotiations with Iran. It is outrageous to think that Israel or any country would use Congress as a prop for their highly contested domestic elections. This proposed speech would be right in the middle of a short and heated Israeli election. It is unseemly and counterproductive. One has only to look at Netanyahu's television commercials from his last election—and how he used his appearance before Congress—to see where this is going.

Finally, there is the issue of respect for the Office of the President and the responsibility to conduct foreign policy. I can't imagine what the reaction would have been if Speaker NANCY PELOSI had offered French President Sarkozy an opportunity to lecture Republicans and George Bush about our disastrous policy in Iraq. Republicans would have been apoplectic.

This is not good for Israel either. It is creating a backlash at home for Netanyahu. It is creating heartburn for some of the strongest supporters of Israel in Congress, and it is straining the relationship between the administration and the Government of Israel. This drama is coming at a time when the majority of Israelis think their country is headed in the wrong direction, when Netanyahu does not have the majority support of his countrymen, when the election is quite close, with a significant number of undecided voters; and polls tell us a majority of Israelis think this speech is a bad idea.

It is unnecessary; it is unfortunate; and it is a bad precedent. Joint sessions involving heads of state and other world leaders should advance American interests and be a positive expression of our values and our opportunities, not a partisan or an ideological device. This proposed speech fails that test. The invitation should be withdrawn or rescheduled, or the Israeli Prime Minister, himself, should reconsider. I, for one, have no intention of being part of dignifying this blatant political act with my presence, because it is not good for Congress; it is not good for Israel; and it is not good for the United States.

REDEDICATING OURSELVES TO OUR NATION'S UNFINISHED WORK

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, 7 score and 12 years ago, another gentleman from Illinois went to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to dedicate the 4-month-old, still unfinished Union cemetery at

the site of one of the bloodiest battles in American history. There he would give one of our Nation's defining speeches. Amazingly, President Lincoln's address was not even the main event of that day. Edward Everett, the former president of Harvard, was the event's main speaker, spending 2 hours lecturing about ancient Greece and how that society honored their fallen soldiers.

Everett later wrote:

I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in 2 hours as President Lincoln did in 2 minutes.

In the 2½ minutes Lincoln spoke, he did more than honor our fallen soldiers. In 272 eloquent words, he reminded us that we live in a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. He asked whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.

In his address, the President also issued a challenge to his contemporaries and to generations of Americans thereafter, saying:

It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

He concluded:

Our Nation shall have a new birth of freedom and that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this Earth.

In his address, I believe, President Lincoln was asking the question: What do we as Americans mean when we say all of us "are created equal"?

□ 1015

In the over 150 years since the Gettysburg Address, we have had our struggles, but we have also had our successes.

We have suffered the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, but we also experienced the redemption of *Brown v. Board of Education*. We allowed the women of this Nation to remain disenfranchised for more than a century, but we also passed the 19th Amendment, which affirmed women's right to vote.

We lived through the travesties of Jim Crow, but we also celebrated the passage of the Civil Rights Act. We watched Truman's executive action desegregate our military. We passed Don't Ask, Don't Tell—and repealed it—and DOMA, but we also have witnessed the legalization of same-sex marriage in 37 States and the District of Columbia.

All of these examples serve as reminders of the difficulties in ensuring equality for all, but they also demonstrate a nation that has responded to challenge and has been reborn. Each time, we have come a little closer to living up to the ideal that all of us are created equal.

To paraphrase Dr. King, the moral arc of our Nation may be long, but as history shows us, it bends towards justice, equality, and freedom.

In times of dissonance, inequality, and injustice, great leaders like Lincoln have reminded us of our Nation's true purpose: equality.

On Lincoln's birthday, let's rededicate ourselves to our Nation's unfinished work. Let's ensure that women get equal pay for equal work. Let's recognize all love as equal and extend marriage rights to all of our citizens once and for all. Let's strengthen the Voting Rights Act to guarantee that no one is disenfranchised and all Americans have access to this fundamental right.

Let's finish the work the Senate started and pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill. Let's pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act so that no American can be fired simply because of who they love or who they are. Let's allow our neighbors and friends who put in a full day's work, whether in the mailroom or the boardroom, to provide their families with a living wage.

Lincoln modestly believed that "no one would long remember" his address that day at Gettysburg, but we do remember and strive to honor all those who have sacrificed and struggled—and continue to struggle—for equality because we believe, as Dr. King spoke of on the steps of Lincoln's own sacred memorial, "that one day this Nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

WORLD IS SILENT AS SUDAN RENEWS GENOCIDAL ATTACKS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation inside Sudan. Regrettably, as the attention of the world has been pulled in many different directions, the people of Sudan have been forgotten.

For over a year and a half, the situation inside Sudan has been getting worse and worse. It happens quietly, out of the limelight, but the suffering of the Sudanese people is not silent. Their cries are deafening to those trying to help.

On July 22, 2004, the House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution 467 by a vote of 422-0. That resolution declared that the crimes of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in Darfur constituted genocide.

Over a decade later, the Sudanese government has renewed and increased its genocidal attacks in Darfur. As humanitarian agencies withdraw from the region, unable to carry out their missions in the face of unrelenting attacks, the civilian and displaced populations of Darfur are left without protection and without witnesses.

In the past weeks, the government-supported Janjaweed—now reincar-

nated as Bashir's Rapid Support Forces, or RSF—have intensified their scorched earth campaign of attacks, bombings, rape, displacement, and destruction.

According to the Satellite Sentinel Project and the Enough project, these forces are "better equipped, centrally commanded, and fully integrated into the state's security apparatus, with legal immunity from prosecution."

According to reports by United to End Genocide, since January 1, at least 20,000 innocent civilians have been forced to flee their homes in Darfur. President al-Bashir is bombing civilians, blocking the investigation of the reported mass rape of over 200 Darfuri women and, in the midst of the sharpest increase in violence in years, demanding the removal of U.N. peacekeepers.

On January 6, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that 115 villages have either been abandoned or burned to the ground in North Darfur. Attackers have forced women, children, and the elderly to leave their villages with nothing to survive on, often looting everything belonging to civilians.

It is clear that the RSF and their masters in Khartoum are engaged in a campaign to strip the people of Darfur of everything they own, anything that might keep them alive, and condemn them to increasing poverty displacement, starvation, and death. And the world—including Congress and the U.N. Security Council—remains silent.

In the border states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, defenseless civilians in the Nuba Mountains face a relentless bombing campaign by the Sudanese Air Force and ground attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces. On January 20, a hospital in South Kordofan run by Doctors Without Borders was deliberately targeted by an aerial bombing campaign, depriving the local population of lifesaving care.

In the past few months, under the auspices of the African Union, countries from the region, as well as the United States and Europe, have sought to bring the Bashir regime and various rebel forces to the table in order to negotiate a cessation of hostilities and promote an inclusive national dialogue. This is a worthy effort with worthy goals, but while such talks meander, Khartoum continues its genocidal campaign to impose military solutions to the political crisis facing Sudan.

President Bashir has no political solution to Sudan's problems. As the people of Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile know only too well, displacement, starvation, and death are the only strategies being pursued by the government in real time and in real life.

It is unconscionable—it is shameful—that these horrors are taking place inside Sudan in complete silence. The lack of response by the United States, by the Europeans, by the nations of the

region only serves to provide Bashir with a green light to continue the killing.

Over 10 years ago, Congress called these very same actions acts of genocide and crimes against humanity. At the end of this month, I intend to reintroduce an updated version of my bipartisan bill, the Sudan Peace, Security, and Accountability Act, and demonstrate to the suffering people of Sudan—especially those in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile—that we hear their cries and that this House intends to take action.

I ask all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in this effort.

[From United to End Genocide, Dec. 9, 2014]

WILL 2015 BE THE WORST YEAR FOR SUDAN?

(By Daniel Sullivan)

Sudan's impunity and intransigence have taken a sharp turn for the worse. That's a pretty high bar considering the country's track record since the genocide in Darfur started more than a decade ago. But even measured against a long history of abuse, Sudan's recent actions led by President Omar al-Bashir are a particularly harsh slap in the face for the international community.

In recent weeks, the Government of Sudan has newly bombed civilians in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, blocked the investigation of a reported mass rape of over 200 Darfuri women, and, in the midst of the sharpest increase in violence and displacement in years, called for the removal of UN peacekeepers.

These new bold actions must be met with equally bold measures by the United States and the rest of the international community.

The facts are astounding. More than 430,000 people newly displaced in Darfur in 2014, the highest number since the height of the genocide. Over 2,000 bombs dropped in South Kordofan and Blue Nile since fighting began there in 2012. And new bombings in Darfur are in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolutions.

"Increased criminality" and "prevailing insecurity" cited in the latest report of the UN Secretary General on Darfur including fifty-five cases of violence, nearly half by government forces, in recorded by UN peacekeepers in the last 90 days. Serious allegations of mass rape that the UN Secretary General and highest UN peacekeeping officials have insisted must be investigated.

Yet, the Sudanese government is blatant in its denial. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, wanted on charges of genocide by the International Criminal Court, accused the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) of being a "security burden" and blamed foreigners for fabricating rape allegations to "confuse the improvement of the situation in Darfur".

To make matters worse, this is not just an escalation of the kind of posturing the Sudanese regime has practiced in the past. Bashir is also getting new support from Russia. In a recent visit, the Russian Foreign Minister announced plans for increased military support for the Sudanese regime and the Sudanese government said that Russia supports its position on removal of UNAMID.

The irony is that as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia is among those responsible for failing to support UNAMID.

On paper, the Council has given UNAMID a strong mandate, backed by the strongest authorizations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter including the use of force to protect civilians. But in reality, Sudan has been allowed to intimidate UNAMID and there has