

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF JUANITA
"SHEBA" VELASCO

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize my constituent, Juanita "Sheba" Velasco, on receiving the World Experiences Foundation's 2017 Global Citizen Award in Indigenous Diplomacy. Ms. Velasco, originally a weaver from the highlands of Guatemala, maintains a strong passion for Mayan education and promoting indigenous diplomacy.

Over the course of her life, Ms. Velasco has worked in several museums, culture centers, schools, and universities around the world sharing her knowledge of the Mayan culture. In fact in 2016, Ms. Velasco was appointed the International Ambassador for peace and tourism by the Guatemalan government.

Most recently, Ms. Velasco conducted a goodwill tour in Oklahoma, in which she spoke at universities, schools, and churches in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Her tour ended with a farewell reception at the University of Central Oklahoma hosted by President Don Betz.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Ms. Velasco for receiving the Global Citizen Award in Indigenous Diplomacy and for her dedication to Mayan culture. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

HOLY SEE ARTICLES

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues several articles that I have written over the years regarding the Holy See. As a Member of the Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, these pieces serve to outline and inform discussions that our Committee will cover in the 115th Congress.

REFLECTING ON POPE BENEDICT'S PAPACY

(By Francis Rooney)

The decision by Pope Benedict XVI to retire February 28 is a remarkable act of humility and selflessness, and should be seen as a fitting closure on a papacy that was quietly significant. When Joseph Ratzinger was elected in the 2005 conclave, many pundits viewed him as a temporary officeholder. Yet, Benedict XVI fulfilled the legacy he set out for himself when choosing the name of the World War I Pope. For nearly eight years, Benedict was a firm advocate of dialog with friend and foe. He bravely offered to the world a gift cherished by the Catholic faith—the union of faith and reason. In this capacity, the Pope was a bridge builder, and lived

up to his Latin title Pontifex Maximus. Much maligned, Benedict put the Church in the perilous but necessary position between extremist religious fundamentalism and extremist secular materialism.

As United States Ambassador to the Holy See (2005–2008), I met the Pope on several occasions to discuss the symmetry of values between the Holy See (colloquially referred to as the Vatican) and the United States. In those private meetings and his annual addresses to the diplomatic corps, Pope Benedict XVI exuded a humility that reflected the solemnity of his office. Elected to succeed the charismatic Blessed John Paul II, he is to be commended for continuing the Holy See's active role in promoting human dignity for all individuals. A great scholar, Benedict reminds us that religious values have an important role to play in the public square.

In the span of eight years, Benedict visited 24 nations and the Palestinian Territories. He is the oldest Pope to travel outside of Europe. In each pastoral visit, his diplomacy was understated and subtle, principally the act of Christian love. His influence on Catholics, and also "people of good will", is a testament to soft power. For example, the Pope's letter to Iranian president Ahmadinejad was decisive in resolving the disputed kidnapping of British sailors in 2007. In his trips to Cuba and Lebanon in 2012, Benedict asserted that politics is subordinate to moral considerations.

Two trips epitomize the theme of Benedict's papacy—Regensburg in 2006 and London in 2010. In the former, the erudite professor was quickly denounced by much of the international media for a criticism against a corruption of Islam that is intolerant and rejects human agency. The complex lecture inspired violent reprisals by some misinformed and radicalized Muslims around the world. Months later a Saudi prince visited the Holy See to foster and reciprocate the Pope's forthright dialog.

Four years later, Pope Benedict traveled to London despite vocal opposition from a small group of anti-Catholic critics. Displaying tremendous poise, Benedict graciously spoke in Westminster Hall. Learning from Regensburg the need for clarity and concision more than academic merit, Benedict shared his view that "the world of reason and the world of faith—the world of secular rationality and the world of religious belief—need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of our civilization." It was a high point for the Catholic Church, and a statement that religion and spirituality are not incompatible with modern life.

The decision to retire is an act of humility. Benedict has left an indelible mark on the Catholic Church, preserved his theme of bonding faith and reason, and even maintained integrity amidst a much-touted scandal over his trusted butler. The Servant of the Servants of God, a phrase introduced by Pope Saint Gregory I near the end of the sixth century, leaves office in an act of selflessness.

Soon after Benedict resigns, a papal conclave will be called in Rome. The College of Cardinals will meet in the Sistine Chapel and elect a new Pope. As decreed by Pope John Paul II, Cardinals more than 80 years old cannot vote. As of right now, 118 Cardinals are eligible to vote.

A PAPAL BULL FOR FOGGY BOTTOM

(By Francis Rooney and Dan Mahaffee)

Met by crowds inspired by both adoration (for the Pope) and indignation (towards their government), the visit of Pope Francis to Brazil provides valuable insights for how the United States can better approach its Latin American neighbors.

The pronouncements of Pope Francis, a Pope of many firsts (first Jesuit, first from the Western Hemisphere), reflect a new Catholic evangelization based around human rights, social justice, and basic dignity. His austere lifestyle, stretching back to his days as a Jesuit priest in Buenos Aires, reflect his desire to refocus the Catholic Church towards its social mission of providing both physical and spiritual nourishment to the masses.

The message he sent to tens of thousands of Brazilians and pilgrims from all over the world was one that sought to balance the pressures of rapid growth in both economic and geopolitical heft with the abject poverty in which many reside. Not far from gleaming high rises and the sandy stretches of Copacabana, he spoke to the favelas where many feel that the economic boom of the past decade has left them behind.

While his message was to those gathered in Rio, it resonates in Caracas, La Paz, Managua, Quito, and beyond. For those steering U.S. policy in the region, it hopefully resonates there as well.

Similar to the Catholic Church, United States foreign policy has been inconsistent and episodic concerning Latin America. Distracted by the continued turmoil in the Middle East and the complexities of the "pivot" towards Asia, we have only furthered a belief that U.S. policy towards Latin America remains unchanged since the days of the Cold War. As the joke often goes, "there are only two real differences in U.S. Latin America policy: whether it is based in the 1960's or the 1980's."

Without understanding the broader dynamics of the region we will continue to view the region solely through the lenses of counter-narcotic operations, illegal immigration, and competition with China. Just as the Pope has taken the message of the Catholic Church directly to the people of Latin America, we must also show how the interests of the United States align with those of the people of Latin America.

While the anti-American leaders in the region certainly have mastered the use of the democratic process, albeit at times under suspicious circumstances, and deploy vigorous anti-American rhetoric, the coalitions they muster are not inspired by a "struggle against the yanqui, the enemy of mankind." Instead, as all politics are local, these anti-American leaders are leveraging a public eager for greater economic and social equality and opportunity.

Despite the poor performance of these leaders (ask any Venezuelan about their access to basic staples such as cooking oil and toilet paper), the U.S. lacks a counter narrative to those espousing socialist or Bolivarian ideologies.

Just as the Pope said that "no one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world," U.S. policy must better reflect how we can assist the people of Latin America and better encourage partnerships based on equitable growth and shared interests. While we have strong ties with the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

globalized elites of these nations, we must also reach out to those left behind.

Again, the church provides the model in the various social and educational missions conducted by Jesuits, Franciscans, and countless other religious orders. These are the type of programs that provide real benefits to Latin Americans, and they can improve both perceptions of the United States and regional stability.

The United States can focus on aid programs that encourage bottom-up development and reduce the corruption inherent in top-down projects. We can provide assistance to promote better policing and social services, in many ways supporting the spread of innovative indigenous programs that ensure social welfare.

We can nurture investment in the people instead of capital assets, and pursue projects that support open and fair economic competition, and equal and transparent enforcement of the law. Through improved access to U.S. markets, we can empower small business owners and entrepreneurs and show that the benefits of economic growth can be equitably distributed. Finally, we can demonstrate through deeds, not words, how the U.S. investments in the region stand in stark contrast to the exploitative, mercantilist approach of China's state-owned industries.

In listening to the Pope's message, we can build our own 21st century approach towards a region that can no longer afford to neglect.

HOLY SEE DIPLOMACY IN THE MODERN ERA (By Francis Rooney)

In the increasingly secular environment of the developed western world, driven by rapid information exchange and an unprecedented degree of inter-personal connectivity, one might consider the role the Holy See might play in the affairs of states and international relations as a quaint anachronism, a vestige of a distant past, and seek to consign the Holy See to obscurity. However, to do so would ignore the ageless foundation upon which Holy See diplomacy is based, and its relevance to humanity in the 21st century just as in the past. It would also fail to account for the unique role the Holy See plays now, lacking a territorial agenda, in the cultural and religion-inspired conflicts in our world today.

In fact, many leaders at Vatican II urged elimination of the diplomatic role of the Holy See, arguing that the Church should exclusively devote itself theological and pastoral issues. In his papal letter of 24 June 1969, *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum*, Pope Paul VI articulated the rational for continued diplomatic engagement as a means of helping the community of nations "achieve the implementation of great human hopes, peace between nations, the domestic tranquility and progress of each country." These words call to mind the Preamble to our Constitution and the lofty goals of U.S. foreign policy of protecting human rights and dignity and spreading the essential freedoms around the world.

A leading Vatican diplomat, Cardinal Jean Louis Tauran, describes the diplomatic force of the Holy See more tangibly as a "moral authority" able to "contest systems or ideas that corrode the dignity of the person and thus threaten world peace."

As the only nation founded from its beginnings on the principle that man is endowed with inalienable rights, emanating from his being and not by the grant of some government, and the creators of the 1st Amendment's protection of the freedom of religion, often called "the first freedom" from which others derive, the United States is a natural partner to the Holy See and can leverage its own goals and policy objectives by continued alignment with it.

The Holy See is most effective when using its platform to denounce actions which undermine human dignity, inhibit freedom and oppress people. It has influence by moral persuasion, often called "soft power," which can accomplish results hegemonic authorities often cannot on their own. It is also effective in working quietly and bi-laterally on certain types of issues which relate to its human rights orientation, and in using the power of its global network of clergy and Catholic organizations to advance its agenda. In countries of high Catholic populations, there is even more potential to have an impact.

The successful alignment of President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II's efforts to undermine communism in the 1980's is well known. As Premier Gorbachev said, "Everything that happened in Eastern Europe would have been impossible without the pope." In fact, the Russian KGB had identified the future pope as a strong anticommunist in 1971 and upon his election, the Communist Party of Poland called him "our enemy" against whom "all means are allowed" in opposing him.

There are many less obvious examples of important work on the part of the Holy See on conflict resolution and the stimulation of dialogue. Pope John XXII played a critical role in creating a window for conciliation during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, via a subtle, clandestine exchange of communications among the pope, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev, using the editor of the *Saturday Review*, Norman Cousins, as an intermediary. This effort culminated with the well-known papal message on Vatican Radio on 25 October 1962 and its publication on the front page of *Pravda* then next day.

The work of Myron Taylor at the Holy See during World War II, as President Roosevelt's personal representative, is well documented. In addition to the use of Vatican neutrality to maintain his routine visits to Pope Pius XII and to allow his assistant, Harold Tittmann, to remain in country throughout the war, the Holy See diplomatic pouch was used to send messages to the U.S. through Switzerland, all of which served to maintain a robust and valuable channel of information exchange throughout the war. The role the Holy See played soon thereafter in nudging newly elected (over strong U.S. opposition) Argentine President Juan Peron to send food to alleviate post war famine in Europe is not so well known.

Recently, while I was serving as ambassador, we engaged the Holy See to work to unify the Christian block in Lebanon prior to the 2006 war, so as to fortify the power sharing coalition of Druze, Hezbollah and Christian which had brought relative stability to the country for several years, and to bring the Holy See's influence to bear in Latin America as several leaders, Hugo Chavez, Rafael Correa and Evo Morales in particular, became increasingly hostile to U.S. interests. It was also during my time in Rome that Pope Benedict intervened to help a group of sailors from Britain who had strayed in to Iranian waters, at the request of Prime Minister Tony Blair.

It is worth noting that in June 2009 when Manuel Zelaya, having been removed after provoking a constitutional crisis, attempted to return to Honduras and contest the successor government of Roberto Micheletti, Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga played a significant, if not decisive role in keeping him out of the country.

While these examples of tactical diplomatic engagement are interesting, and demonstrate how effective the Holy See can be, the more sustaining and impactful recent expressions of the Holy See's exercise of its "soft power" come from Benedict XVI's

Regensburg speech and subsequent visits to the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany.

When the pope spoke at Regensburg, Germany, in September 2006 against the misuse of religion to incite violence and advance extremism and intolerance in the Islamic world, he used a poignant and controversial metaphor to make his point, and brought the attention of the entire world to bear on the question of how to temper the religious fervor of some interpretations of Islam with the reason and rationality of the modern world. Subsequent to this speech a group of 38 Muslim scholars has convened and explored avenues toward accomplishing this goal, seeking "a consonance between the truths of the Koranic revelation and the demands of human intelligence." While there is much to achieve in this regard, the position of the Holy See, as both global interlocutor and one of the three Abrahamic faiths, has a special role to play.

In a similar vein, the pope and clergy from around the world have discussed the risks to freedom and democracy from degradation of religion in modern society and its replacement with a material secularism. Pope Benedict XVI summarized the position in an address to the German parliament on 22 September 2011, "Politics must be striving for justice, and hence it has to establish the fundamental preconditions for peace . . . systems of laws have almost always been based on religion: decisions regarding what has to be lawful among men were taken with reference to the divinity." Whether the internal national politics of a country, or the external pursuit of relations among states, the thesis is that without the "moral compass" and values of human decency and respect for individual rights inspired and taught by religion, it is difficult to have justice and freedom for long. The 20th century examples of totalitarianism, in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia come to mind.

We will see how the new pope, Pope Francis, takes these principles forward just as Pope Benedict expressed them in a context different from his predecessors, but nonetheless they remain the same, fundamental principles. Popes have consistently applied these concepts through the years, John Paul II focused on Communism, Benedict XVI on radicalization secularism, John XXIII on nuclear war and Benedict XV and Pius XII on the evils of the two World Wars which dominated their papacies.

I am hopeful that this "new world" pope, appearing to be more conversational and less formal, will be able to broaden and deepen the message, and deploy the "soft power" of the Holy See more effectively than ever to challenge abhorrent and oppressive behaviors in the world. So far, his emphasis on the social mission of the Church squares well with a diplomacy based on the inalienable rights of man and the protection of human dignity for all.

HONORING KATHERINE (KITTY) MARY GEISSLER

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, communities thrive when hard work, dedication, and sacrifice are set by voluntary example. Katherine (Kitty) Mary Geissler has served her community with honor, and it's a pleasure to wish her well on her 104th birthday year.

Kitty was born in County Limerick, Ireland. She immigrated to the United States in 1930,