

# FUTURE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to continue to speak out on the critical issue of women in Afghanistan and their plight during these perilous times. As Democratic Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I have made it a priority to address the House each week to provide a voice to the women who have been silent far too long. It is also my intention to continue to raise awareness about the current state and the future state of women and children in Afghanistan.

Today marks the conclusion of the Bonn negotiations for a post-Taliban government in Afghanistan. A new interim administrator will be in place by December 22. While few women were involved in the current negotiations, I am happy to learn that women will take part in the rebuilding of their country. The new administration will include five deputy prime ministers and 23 other members for negotiation. Of the five deputy prime ministers, one is a woman. Women are also expected to occupy up to five other ministerial portfolios. One minister is to be established solely for women and children. I am happy to report that there is progress being made.

Under the proposed agreement, a special commission will be appointed within a month to organize the calling of an emergency legislature or traditional constituent assembly of provisional leaders and notables. It should be called within 6 months and would have the right to revise the new interim executive and create other bodies that would serve for up to 2 years.

The commission is also to ensure that due attention is paid to the presence in the governing body of a significant number of women. The proposed agreement foresees the drafting of a new constitution to be ratified by another legislature, with elections to take place at the end of that 2-year period.

As women strive both inside the country and outside to contribute towards shaping a meaningful future, we must demonstrate our resolve to help those Afghanistan leaders be involved in all political and economic negotiations from the outset. It is extremely important that there are not just a few women used as tokens but as real partners and equal partners. Women need to be involved in every aspect of that country's fabric.

As I have said before, Afghan women must be ensured of their basic human rights once more such as access to safe drinking water and sufficient food; to receive decent health and maternal care; and, foremost, to again move freely in their society without being subject to harassment and abuse.

Above all, they must be allowed to practice their religious beliefs as Islamic women without retribution.

It will be important to see that women are involved in the emergency *laya jerga* since it appears that this is a real place where power and authority will be exercised.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this report this evening.

□ 1745

## HATE CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to offer my thoughts on the importance of passing in this body hate crimes legislation, but also to ask this House to prioritize its work. Inasmuch as we can spend an enormous amount of time on some very valid initiatives, I do believe that hate crimes legislation, the passage of hate crimes legislation that has been offered in two previous congressional sessions, is long overdue and it is not being passed.

I heard a colleague of mine just earlier today talk about the climate in which we live. All of us have stood up against terrorism and have given to the President the authority to ferret out terrorism and to bring to justice those who perpetrated the unspeakable crime on September 11, 2001. But, likewise, we have spoken against the indictment of the Islamic faith and all Muslims. We realize that Muslims are not the crux of our problem inasmuch as the virtues of their faith talk about peace and justice.

I would say that we experienced over the past weekend some terrible tragedies, terrible loss of life in the Mideast. It does us no good as well to speak hate against either the Israelis or the PLO. In fact, it is most important that we look to speak to the issues of peace and reconciliation and bringing people together.

Our first step to acknowledge to the world that we will not harbor hate is to pass our own hate crimes legislation so that we can say to the world we argue and fight against hate in this Nation, and we will stand against hate in the world. We cannot cry in a one-sided manner. We must cry for all of those who lose their life.

So, as we talk about the passage of hate crimes legislation, let us be reminded that we have those brothers and sisters within our boundaries who feel that they have been discriminated against because of their faith. We may have brothers and sisters around the world who feel that these tragedies that have occurred, that we have somewhat not understood their crisis and that we do not look to seek peace. I would argue that we can find peace here in this Nation and a recognition and reconciliation of our opposition to

hate by passing the hate crimes legislation, and we can do so by speaking to all parties who would come to the table of peace to design peace in the Mideast and to design peace in Afghanistan.

The hate crimes legislation that is so needed in this country would address the question of Leonard Clark, a 13-year-old African American teenager who was riding his bicycle one day in Chicago when he was accosted and brutally beaten by three white teenagers. The perpetrators have been charged with attempted murder, aggravated battery and hate crimes under the Illinois State law. However, the irony in this case is that one of the key witnesses to the beating remains missing. A Federal hate crimes law would have allowed for the full involvement of the FBI in this case, thereby increasing the chances of capture and justice.

In my own congressional district in Houston in 1995, Fred Mangione, a homosexual, was stabbed to death, and his companion was brutally assaulted. The two men who were charged with Mangione's murder claimed to be members of the German Peace Corps, which has been characterized in media reports as a neo-Nazi organization based in California. At the time, this crime did not meet the State of Texas threshold for trial as a capital offense because the murder did not occur during the commission of a rape or robbery. Justice failed us during that time frame.

I am very gratified to say that since that time and since the brutal beating and killing and dismemberment of James Byrd, Jr., we have passed the James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Act in Texas. It was passed by Republicans and Democrats and signed by a Republican Governor.

So I speak tonight not in one voice. I speak to all of my colleagues, and I am gratified that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has offered legislation and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) continues to bring us together so that we can speak in one voice.

But even as we speak, we are still facing attacks on our own American citizens and those within our boundaries, such as the statistics of 1995, 2,212 attacks on lesbians and gay men were documented, an 8 percent increase over the previous year. There have also been numerous attacks on people of various backgrounds, whether they have been Jews or Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans or anyone that has been different in our community. The hate crimes prevention act will protect these groups from targeted attacks because they are members of these groups. They likewise would protect women and others on the grounds of difference.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues today in simply saying we can fight hatred with our own changed hearts, but as well we can provide changed laws for America and pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2001 or 2002.