

And while there have been a few highly publicized prosecutions of corrupt officials, many more are allowed to retire or are simply reassigned.

I wonder whether criminal prosecution is selective and whether such terminations are themselves reflections of such corruption.

Again, actions speak louder than words.

I understand that the Clinton administration and other regional governments are discussing the concept of a regional approach to drug cooperation certification, to replace the current process.

I have serious doubts about replacing the current system with regional certification, since the almost certain result would be that Mexico and others would be given a pass rather than being held accountable for their actions. Simply stated, it would make certification a meaningless process of averaging an array of mediocre and poor performances.

Furthermore, before considering Mexico as a member of such a regional group, we should consider Mexico's participation in current regional counter-narcotics efforts. It is hardly encouraging.

For example, the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force located in Key West, FL, is one such organization. It includes representatives from all of the United States armed services, as well as law enforcement agencies, and an equal contribution from our British and Dutch allies.

I urge my colleagues to visit the Task Force and hear their frustrations regarding Mexico. Again, while Mexico says it is using every asset to prevent the transshipment of drugs into the United States, the officials there will tell you this is just not so.

They cite example after example of the detection and tracking of drug-carrying ships and planes.

But when it comes to handing off these targets to the Mexican authorities, there is either no response or such a limited and late response, the traffickers often escape and disappear into Mexico.

When we make informal suggestions that Mexico send its representatives to the multi-national task force to correct this problem, the response is that they are willing to discuss it. But, they have been discussing it for several years now.

Mr. President, for these reasons I strongly support the resolution to decertify Mexico. It is time to judge Mexico on its actions rather than empty promises.●

THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO AFRICA: AN IMPORTANT STEP FOR U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS

● Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the President's current trip to Africa and the importance of Africa to United States national interests. I highly applaud the Presi-

dent's decision to go to Africa. The President's trip to Ghana, Botswana, South Africa, Uganda, Senegal and Rwanda comes on the heels of visits to the region last year by both the First Lady and the Secretary of State. This marks only the second time that an American President has undertaken an official trip to sub-Saharan Africa, and the first visit to any of the countries on the President's itinerary. As we have seen by the warm reception that the President has enjoyed so far, this first visit in 20 years by an American President carries considerable symbolic significance for the 650 million people in Africa. For the 270 million people of America, the President's visit will help further strengthen U.S.-Africa relations and promote important national interests.

President Clinton's trip highlights a very different Africa from the one President Carter saw during the first Presidential visit in 1978. At that time, Washington largely viewed Africa as merely another battleground for U.S.-Soviet Cold War competition. Today, in many parts of the region nations are working to reform politically and economically. More elections have occurred at all levels of government in the last five years than in the last two decades. The traditional image of African states controlled by dictatorial strongmen is giving way to multiparty political systems with an increasing appreciation for democratic institutions and processes. And economically, many African countries have rejected the failed policies of central planning in favor of privatization of state assets and the creation of free markets.

Mr. President, the image that we often see of Africa in the media largely is one of famine, instability, and ethnic conflict. The purpose of the President's trip is to refocus the international spotlight to include the emerging economic and political renaissance that is occurring in some countries. I applaud President Clinton's recognition of the importance of including Rwanda in his itinerary. In contrast to the relatively positive outlook for the other countries on the President's itinerary, the outlook for Rwanda is not so clear and bright. Rwanda is still reeling from the aftershocks of the brutal 1994 genocide that resulted in the deaths of upwards of 800,000 men, women and children. For the last two years, more than 120,000 accused genocidaires have waited in prison for a trial. The country remains under insurgent attack by the 1994 genocidaires who are now based in neighboring Congo.

Rwanda is still waiting for justice. Rwanda—and the rest of Central Africa—will not be able to move forward until there is justice for the victims of genocide. Justice is the critical factor that will either allow that country to move forward, or see it fall backwards into bloodshed. I support the President's proposed Great Lakes Justice Initiative to assist the states of the region to strengthen judicial systems and

the rule of law. I also urge the Administration to continue its efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the International War Crimes Tribunal for Rwanda. The Tribunal was established over three years ago to bring to justice leaders of the 1994 genocide. To date, however, only 35 persons have been indicted and the Tribunal has yet to hand down its first sentence. By contrast, the Yugoslav Tribunal already has cases in the appeal stage. The Tribunal's effective and efficient functioning will be key to allowing the Rwandan justice system the political and legal flexibility it needs to deal with the 120,000 men in prison.

Mr. President, Rwanda is not the only troubled African nation. Some nations, such as Liberia, the Central African Republic, and Angola, are at critical crossroads and will make decisions that will have a significant impact on their political and economic futures. Others, such as Nigeria, Sudan and Cameroon, have resisted the tide of political openness and economic reform that is sweeping through their neighbors and have remained repressive. As the President continues current efforts in Africa and undertakes new initiatives, it is critical that the United States strongly and clearly encourages those countries at the crossroads to choose the right road. At the same time, we should be unambiguous in our non-acceptance of those countries that continue to choose political repression and failed economic policies.

One of the most critical tests that United States foreign policy currently faces in Africa is the Democratic Republic of Congo. An enormous country the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River, the Congo is strategically located in the heart of Africa. Bordered by nine different countries, it is at once a Southern and Central African state. Blessed with natural and human resources, this country for the last thirty years has been cursed with poor leadership and financial ruin. The term kleptocracy was coined for the despotic rule of former President Mobutu Sese Seko which saw billions of dollars of foreign assistance misappropriated and the national coffers drained.

Foreign Relations Committee staff members who traveled to Congo last month saw a country in crisis. Critical infrastructure such as health and transportation are in disarray. There is no justice system to speak of. Human rights conditions are, in the words of one international human rights worker, catastrophic. The Congolese President, Laurent Kabila, a guerilla opposed to the former government for most of his adult life, has no relevant experience governing a country. The same is true for most of his cabinet. Perhaps the only positive news to report is that the security situation is relatively calmer for the moment than it has been in recent years. As discouraging a picture as this might be, recent Central African history has shown that

Congo's future disposition will have a significant impact on its neighbors with potential consequences for much of Africa—and United States national interests.

Mr. President, some might wonder whether the United States has any interests in Africa. Since the end of the Cold War, there are those who have argued that the United States should cut back on its engagements abroad. In regards to Africa, they argue that we should focus on regions of greater geopolitical and economic importance. Let me state clearly my belief that without a doubt the United States needs to be actively engaged in Africa.

Why? Because just as we support democracy, free trade and human rights in the rest of the world, so too should we continue to support these goals in Africa. Moreover, the United States has strong economic interests in Africa. U.S. exports to Africa last year totaled \$6.2 billion, more than total U.S. exports to all of the states of the former Soviet Union combined. Since 1994, U.S. trade with sub-Saharan Africa has grown on average at 16.9% annually, outpacing growth in global trade in 1995 and 1996. Through our engagement with Africa we support and encourage partners who cherish the same values that we do. By encouraging political and economic stability we contribute to the preservation of our own nation's continued prosperity and security.

Mr. President, some among us may be disillusioned into believing that our interests in Africa are purely humanitarian, that Africa doesn't hold any strategic value for the United States. When I hear statements to this effect, I have to wonder whether they are living in the same world as the rest of us. As we have seen with the recent Asian financial crisis, global drug trade, and even the El Niño weather phenomenon, Americans today are more interconnected, if not interdependent, with the rest of the world than at any previous time in our nation's history. At this unique point in time as the sole superpower with the ability virtually to reach around the globe, the rest of the world has an equally unprecedented ability to touch us back. In such a global environment it is vital to our nation's security that we exercise vigilance in the conduct of our foreign relations.

Mr. President, even if we could stick our head in the sand, the rest of our body would be exposed to all of the negative consequences that a neglected Africa would incur. Imagine the effects of a large region of the world ignored and not encouraged to develop effective health systems, where new exotic diseases are not checked but given free reign to develop and old ones can develop drug resistance. The Asian bird flu would be nothing compared to what we might see. Imagine nations with minimal resources but great needs not supported to effectively maintain their natural environment, and compelled to

compromise rainforests and natural ecosystems vital to our planet's well-being. If we think El Niño is bad, just wait until we meet his big brother.

Mr. President, we wouldn't allow this to occur in any other part of the world, and we certainly can not afford to allow this to happen in Africa. Protecting American interests in Africa is no simple task. The subtleties and complexities that confront us in the 48 nations of sub-Saharan Africa require diplomatic skill and finesse. How does Rwanda move to democracy whilst Hutus vastly outnumber Tutsis, and distrust and violence on both sides goes back generations? How do ethnic communities in Kenya share power in such a way that the rights of the minority are protected? How does the Congo move towards democratic governance and financial responsibility after a generation of misgovernment and kleptocracy?

There are no easy solutions to any of these questions, but the answers must be found if Africa is to advance politically and economically—and U.S. national interests are to be protected—into the next century.●

TRIBUTE TO SHANNON WRIGHT

● Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise today to remember and honor a young Arkansas school teacher who made the ultimate sacrifice for one of her students.

Children often think of their teachers as heroes. And there is no better word than "hero" to describe a courageous woman named Shannon Wright, a thirty-two year old English teacher at Westside Middle School. Shannon died in the tragic schoolyard shooting Tuesday along with four students. In the hail of gunfire, she gave her life in order to protect an eleven-year old girl, Emma Pittman. Emma says she believes Mrs. Wright saw the bullets coming and shielded her from being hit. Shannon was shot twice while she tried to protect the young girl from injury.

In the words of Emma Pittman's mother, "I feel she needs a hero award for saving our child. I want her family to know how grateful we are because she didn't think of herself—she thought of the children."

While Shannon will forever be remembered as a hero, it will be extremely difficult to ease the pain her death has brought. Shannon Wright was not only a teacher, she was a mother, a daughter, and a wife. She left behind her husband of twelve years, Mitchell, and her 2½ year old son Zane. Her life was devoted to serving others, and she was deeply loved by her family and her many friends. The loss of Shannon Wright will be mourned not only by those whose lives she touched everyday, but by the entire Jonesboro community, the state of Arkansas, and people throughout our nation.

This horrible act of violence has caused incredible pain for the people of

Northeast Arkansas. We grieve not only for Shannon Wright, but for the four girls who were killed, Natalie Brooks, Paige Herring, Stephanie Johnson, and Brittheny Varner. It's impossible to understand why such a tragedy occurred, especially in a schoolyard. While it seems that nothing good could ever come from something so terrible, Shannon Wright's death taught her students and the rest of us an incredibly important lesson about the power of selfless action. Shannon Wright's selfless action saved a young girl's life.

Shannon Wright will always be remembered as a hero who gave her life to protect the children.●

ORDER FOR STAR PRINT—SENATE REPORT 105-170

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that Senate Report No. 105-170 be star printed with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 105-38

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on March 27, 1998, by the President of the United States: Treaty with Venezuela on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Treaty Document No. 105-38.

I further ask unanimous consent that the treaty be considered as having been read the first time; that it be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations in order to be printed; and that the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The message of the President is as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Caracas on October 12, 1997. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties