

(Mr. BILIRAKIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEBT RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to address the issue of debt relief for Africa, particularly as we are on the cusp of considering the fiscal year 2002 foreign operations appropriations bill.

There are many reasons why debt relief is important and critical to the United States. I believe we not only have a moral obligation but an economic impetus to ensure that we share a world that is economically prosperous, educated and healthy. As we have seen in recent years, health and financial problems are not constrained by regional boundaries. That is why I, and many of my colleagues, worked to increase funding in the foreign operations bill for HIV/AIDS and infectious disease programs, debt relief, basic education, child survival, and micro-enterprise programs, among others.

Although details have not been provided, I am pleased to note that President Bush is thinking about innovative ways to address the issue of poverty and debt relief. It was reported he intends to push the World Bank to extend more grants instead of loans to developing countries as a way to reduce their debt burden. I believe this effort is a step in the right direction. However, it demands we remain committed in word and deed to ensuring that additional resources are provided to assist in any effort to provide debt relief to countries most in need.

Mr. Speaker, I am a strong advocate for providing resources to developing countries so that the residents will be afforded the same opportunities that we have here in America. Unfortunately, despite our efforts to provide development assistance and debt relief, many countries are crushed under the weight of debt burdens, a burden that profoundly affects the everyday health care and education needs of millions of families and children.

It is heartbreaking to know that approximately seven million children die each year as a result of the debt crisis. Further, more than 2.5 million children died in the year 2000 because debt repayments have diverted money away from investment in basic lifesaving health care. According to a recent report released by Oxfam International entitled "G-8: Failing the World's Children," poor countries are saving \$1 billion a year for schools and education, but 16 of the countries that get debt relief still spend more on debt than on health care for their citizens.

The report further emphasizes the role debt burdens have played in exacerbating the education crisis in developing countries, particularly in sub-Sa-

haran Africa. Of the 22 countries who have received debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative, over half will spend more on debt than on primary education; and two-thirds will spend more servicing their debt than they spend on basic health care.

The report also highlighted the problem in Tanzania, where high school fees are preventing primary aged students from attending school. Although the country would like to get rid of the school fees and provide free universal primary education, they are hindered by their debt.

That is why I am pleased to be here to show my support and emphasize the change that can take place if my colleagues in Congress support the effort of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) to implement reforms to reverse this devastating trend. Her bill, H.R. 1642, Debt Cancellation for the New Millennium Act, urges the President to work within the international financial and multilateral institutions to modify the HIPC initiative.

Specifically, the bill will work to ensure that the amount of debt relief provided by the IMF and World Bank under the initiative cancels 100 of the HIPC's debt burden, and to ensure that the provision of relief cannot be conditioned on a country's implementation of a structural adjustment or stabilization program of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility of the IMF, which has had a history of further siphoning away funds from investments in health care and education.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being afforded this opportunity to speak on this very important issue. I look forward to seeing this bill move through the House so that the positive changes can be made. As such, I urge my colleagues to support the economic livelihood and social well-being of our world's families and children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HUNTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LAUNCH OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE "ATLANTIS"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, soon after I was appointed the only freshman member of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics of the Committee on Science, I determined to tour the Kennedy Space Center and witness the launch of a manned mission to space.

Just before dawn on Thursday, July 12, I fulfilled that goal and was left not only with a profound sense of appreciation for those who make our space program work, but also with an enhanced sense of pride in being an American.

We arrived at Cape Canaveral at midnight in the company of 9-year veteran NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin. On the way to the launch site, our group of seven Members of Congress and their staffs was confronted with the sight of the Shuttle *Atlantis*, just one mile away. The shuttle and booster rockets stood straight up, steaming in the darkness, illuminated by billion-watt searchlights.

With its 18 million pounds of hardware, fuel, and payload, the bright white craft stood, as Astronaut Edward Lu told me that evening, "creaking and steaming like an animal waiting to leap into space."

Moments later, shortly after 1 a.m., an attack helicopter appeared, Mr. Speaker, flying low, search lights and guns sweeping the road between the astronauts' residence building and the 1 A launch site.

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After the gunship completed its reconnaissance, the bus carrying the five brave astronauts of STS-104 sped past our group. With all the enthusiasm of schoolchildren seeing Santa at the Macy's Parade, seven Members of Congress frantically waved as the bus conveying the crew sped past on its way to the launch tower.

From the launch area, we traveled to the Apollo Center where the viewing stands were already filled with family members and friends of the crew, anxiously milling about in nervous conversation. We took our seats.

With the 4:30 a.m. announcement that we were "go for launch" booming over the public address system, the clock began to run.

At 5 minutes to launch, the "Star Spangled Banner" blared out of the speakers at the viewing stand, and all those in attendance solemnly rose to their feet.

Mr. Speaker, the phrase "the rockets' red glare" froze in those morning hours in my mind as I listened to our