

needs to be a complete withdrawal of these services in order for there to be a free election . . .” Under strong U.S. and United Nations pressure, Syria did remove its troops and a free and fair election was held.

The pressures on Iraqi voters were enormous. In the streets were 168,000 heavily armed American soldiers, 250,000 Iraqi troops and perhaps 100,000 Iraqi police. The survival value of the blue stain on the index finger was apparent to all, as was the voter’s name at the polling place. They could be insurance against being picked up on suspicion of being insurgents and then languishing in Abu Graib. Or they could be protection from the armed Kurdish and Shiite militias roaming the cities in search of dissident Sunnis.

In addition, leaders of the various tribal groups urged their minions to vote their slates, in order to attain local power for the coming struggle, widely expected once the occupying Americans depart. And anyway, who will count the votes?

The United States as the occupier of Iraq has the power to make elected Iraqis carry out U.S. political decisions. We decided the time and place for elections, vetoed some candidates, approved others and guided the writing of the constitution. The U.S. Ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad—termed “The Viceroy” around the world—virtually runs Iraq from his fortified embassy with its staff of 5,000 and room for an active CIA.

Here is the real situation: Iraq has a puppet government set up to keep order and to carry out American policies. This is the logical and inevitable result of military conquest. Any election held under such conditions—under the gun—cannot be called free and fair. The Iraqis are simply choosing which of their number will enforce U.S. will and help to crush the inevitable resistance to foreign occupation.

The Iraqis are not really governing themselves and we should not pretend that they are. Authentic Iraqi democracy with free and fair elections can develop only after complete U.S. withdrawal.

PRIORITIES FOR UPCOMING MEETING BETWEEN U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE AND FOREIGN MINISTERS OF CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my wishes for the upcoming meeting to be attended by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and foreign ministers of Caribbean countries in the Bahamas later on this month and to enter into the RECORD a Carib News story reiterating concerns about what priorities should be covered in the meeting to build a stronger U.S.-Caribbean alliance.

Secretary Rice is scheduled to meet with the foreign ministers of Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Antigua, Jamaica, Belize, Suriname, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent and Barbados March 21–22. This meeting is a prime opportunity for Secretary Rice to pledge U.S. support in the areas of economic and social development. Specifically, meeting participants should focus on crime, disaster preparedness, drug trafficking and immigration. The recently held democratic elections in Haiti of former Presi-

dent René Préval to once again lead the nation will also be an issue needing urgent attention.

As reporter Tony Best explains in the Carib News story, Democrats on the Hill, myself included, insist that Secretary Rice should utilize this opportunity to show Caribbean nations that their development is important and that the United States is a partner in economic and social advancement in Caribbean countries. These nations are in dire need of assistance erecting strong economic and social infrastructures that bear opportunities to their citizens. For example in Haiti, 8 out of 10 Haitians live in abject poverty. Unemployment exceeds 70 percent while the country has a 10 percent HIV infection rate in the city and 4 percent in rural areas. More must be done for these countries.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you’ll join me conveying to Secretary Rice the urgency of economic and social issues in the Caribbean and that she be mindful of the plight of Caribbean citizens during her upcoming meeting.

[From the Carib News, Feb. 28, 2006]

DEMOCRATS ON CAPITOL HILL: U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE SHOULD SHOW CARIBBEAN NATIONS THAT THEIR DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT

(By Tony Best)

“A partner in economic and social development in Caribbean nations.” That’s the message, which some Democrats on Capitol Hill in Washington are hoping U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, would convey to Caricom foreign ministers when they meet in the Bahamas later this month.

And the message shouldn’t be just in word, lip service, if you will, but in concrete measures, which can help the Caribbean.

So said U.S. Congressman Eliot Engel, a New York Democrat who represents thousands of Caribbean immigrants in the Bronx and Westchester County. He is the ranking Democrat on the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the House of Representatives.

“I think she needs to tell the Caribbean foreign ministers that the United States wants to be a partner, a close working partner and to have a close working relationships with the nations which are our close neighbors,” was the way he put it to the Nation after addressing the 27th Congressional Breakfast of the Jewish Community Relations Council, JCRC, at the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan.

“It is one thing for us as a nation to pursue goals all over the world, Iraq and wherever,” he added. “But it is quite another thing for us to say that we need to concentrate on what we do back home. I think we can do both, but I don’t think we should neglect the people who are geographically closest to us,” meaning inhabitants of Caribbean nations. Rice is scheduled to meet with the foreign ministers of Barbados, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Antigua, Jamaica, Belize, Suriname, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent and Belize on March 21–22. Economic and social question as well as security issues in the “broadest sense, and not simply matters about fighting terrorism” should top the agenda, say diplomatic and other highly placed sources in Washington. Immigration, Haiti, drug trafficking and crime, HIV/AIDS and disaster preparedness and reconstruction are expected to dominate the meeting’s agenda.

Congressman Charles Rangel, who like Engel, addressed the Congressional Breakfast, had previously said in a Carib News interview that the Bush Administration should work with Caribbean nations to develop an effective strategy that would help

the various countries improve their economic performance and boost their infrastructure.

“These are sovereign states with a long tradition of respect for the rule of law and adherence to principles of parliamentary democracy,” he said. “We should treat them with the respect they deserve. They aren’t colonial territories that can be pushed around or ignored to suit our every whim. Many in the Administration didn’t like their position on Iraq and even went so far as to threaten them. It’s time that the Bush White House recognize that the Caribbean countries, including those in Caricom, are among our closest neighbors and remain our strong allies. We must treat them as friends and not try to punish them if they disagree with us from time to time.”

In his address to the breakfast, which was attended by scores of Jewish community leaders, senior diplomatic and consular officials from the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, Asia, Israel and other nations, Rangel spoke about the need to respect the U.S. constitution and the rights to privacy “of our people.” While emphasizing America’s commitment to Israel, which was “well-known,” the Representative of Harlem and surrounding communities in Manhattan said that the sons and daughters of Americans who were being killed in Iraq were not the children of members of Congress, corporate America or people in the White House.

Engel said that the upcoming meeting in the Bahamas was important for both the U.S. and the Caricom because it would give Rice a chance to convey a “sense of involvement and engagement of the United States with the Caribbean” countries.

“It’s one thing to pay lip-service to it,” added the Bronx Democrat. “It’s another to really act. They are many pressing issues, not only immigration, which must be considered. The economy of the Caribbean is one such issue.”

HONORING JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 357, a resolution honoring former United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. As the first female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, this remarkable woman presided over some of the most important cases of our time, and her accomplishments became a stepping stone for all womankind.

Justice O’Connor has strong roots to the city of El Paso, Texas, which I represent. She attended Radford School, and graduated at the age of 16 from Austin High School. Her achievements in graduating with honors from Stanford University and earning a law degree from the Stanford School of Law in only two years, have encouraged numerous aspiring students to reach their greatest potential.

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor once again provided a breakthrough when she became the majority leader for the Arizona State Legislature, the first woman in the Nation to do so.

Rising from the rejection of law firm employment based on her gender, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor is now known as one of the most important women in U.S. legal history.