

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAVID
EVANS

HON. DEBORAH L. HALVORSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2009

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of David Evans of Joliet, Illinois. Mr. Evans passed away in his home on Wednesday, March 25, 2009. His legacy will continue to flourish in those he left behind: his wife of twenty-five years, Rosie, five children, twenty-three grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Mr. Evans was a community leader in Joliet for decades. He devoted over thirty years to public office, including service on the Will County Board and the Joliet School District 86 Board. His record illustrates a sincere dedication to education and advocacy for children's issues in the community. Mr. Evans was also instrumental in promoting positive change in the community—and stated that one of his proudest moments was the naming of an elementary school in Joliet after African-American actress and Joliet native Lynne Thigpen.

In addition to his involvement in local government, Mr. Evans was also active in numerous community organizations. He founded Joliet Must Vote, co-founded Black Pride Inc., was the vice president of the Unity Community Development Corp., and served as chairman of the Will County Head Start Program. In 2004, he coordinated a Get-Out-the-Vote operation for then-Senator Barack Obama.

The sudden passing of Dave Evans has truly shaken the community. His passion for the Joliet community will live on in the many lives he touched. He is not only recognized for his community activism, but for his life as a husband, father, mentor, advocate, and friend. It is with great pride that I honor the life of Mr. David Evans.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2009

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an article written by Donald Conkey, a constituent of the Sixth Congressional District of Georgia, regarding the National Day of Prayer. Mr. Conkey's article reads:

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Donald S. Conkey

This column on next week's Metro Atlanta Prayer Breakfast on Tuesday and the National Day of Prayer on Thursday was inspired by an e-mail, from Sally Field, that reminded me of just how much America's Founding Father's depended upon prayer to their "Creator, the Supreme Judge of the world" to support their efforts in creating a nation where liberty could be restored after nearly three thousand years of despotic and tyrannical rule that had enslaved mankind worldwide—and become a beacon of liberty to the world.

The Founders belief in, and their use of prayer, as clearly expressed in the Declaration of Independence, plus all their writings, should be a powerful example for those

Americans who fear the nation's current economic challenges and the massive directional changes being made by our nations new administration.

America's National Day of Prayer has a long history. A resolution by the first Continental Congress in 1775 indicated it was "a time for prayer in forming a new nation." President John Adams declared May 9, 1798 "a day of solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer," asking citizens of all faiths to pray "that our country may be protected from all the dangers which threaten it." In 1952 President Truman signed a national day of prayer proclamation and in 1988 President Reagan established the first Thursday of May as America's annual National Day of Prayer.

It is gratifying to know that I am not alone in believing in the power of prayer, or that God listens to and answers prayer (personal revelation), or that He answered the Founders prayers (collective revelation), not once but many times when they pleaded with Him, their Supreme Judge of the World, to establish and restore freedom to a world then enslaved by despots and tyrants. And to be able to join with other believers, of many faiths and cultures, in pleading with the Lord in prayer for "the protection of divine Providence" in a National Day of Prayer next week reinforces my beliefs and hopes that we whom He has entrusted to protect those everlasting principles of liberty given us by the Founders is reassuring.

The timing of next weeks prayer days may be providential: they are coming during the first 100 days of the new administrations efforts to bring about massive change of direction to the country, both internally and externally, and they follow last week's inspiring "call to arms" for Americans of every faith, culture, race and nationality to rally to the defense of their liberties in the form of "Tea Party" protestors. Their "Tea Bag" could well become America's new symbolic "Liberty Bell." These "Tea Party" protestors represent that third of the nation who still believe America is great and that God inspired and raised up the Founders to restore liberty to mankind with a new nation, a nation "choice above all other nations." This third also understands America will not continue to be a powerful and free nation if it continues to allow that secular third, those who reject God and want to remove Him from all aspects of American culture and dominate American politics, as they are doing today.

This third also understands that it is they who must work to educate (our schools have failed to teach these principles) that middle third who know not what America stands for or that their future liberties and freedoms are directly connected to the restoration of those principles upon which America was founded, with God's help. And they also understand they are involved in an ideological war, a war of ideas and thoughts that if lost could cost them that way of life they cherish so greatly.

And they, as did the Founders 230 years ago, inspired by Paul's admonition to the Ephesians of old, must put on "the whole armour of God, that they may stand against the wiles of the devil," including their "breastplate of righteousness," and their "shield of faith wherewith they may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" as they battle the enemies of liberty and freedom that want to destroy this nation, and what it stands for, and make it a nation like unto all other nations, as in United Nations.

And lastly they fully understand they must unite with others of differing faiths with a unity of purpose, in defense of their liberties, as did the Founders who restored those freedoms, and put on their "helmet of

salvation, and the sword of the spirit . . . praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (freedom lovers) like them."

Next week, as we pray individually, as families, and in larger gatherings as with Fields Metro Atlanta Prayer Breakfast, we should, remembering the counsel of ages past, and "offer a prayer to preserve our nation's liberties" and "that our country may be protected from all the dangers that threaten it."

Be assured, all righteous prayers offered "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence" will be heard, especially from those willing to "mutually pledge" to stand with others and take a stand, and work to defend their liberties as did the Founding Fathers stand to create them—230 years ago.

RECOGNIZING THE DURBAN II
COUNTERCONFERENCE SPONSORED BY AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS AND THE JEWISH WEEK

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, last week we witnessed the deplorable spectacle of a United Nations conference purporting to address the troubling issue of racism, hijacked by nations with a deplorable record on human rights and turned into an all-out attack on Israel. I am proud that the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, The Jewish Week and other leading organizations in New York City organized a counter-conference that really discussed the continued problems of racism, racial discrimination, genocide, xenophobia, gender discrimination and religious intolerance.

I was pleased to have been asked to address the conference's opening day. Set forth below are my remarks:

"I want to thank Robert Weinberg, Marc Landis, the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists and Jewish Week for giving me the opportunity to address you this morning.

Eight years ago at Durban I, we witnessed a spectacle of anti-semitism the like of which has not been seen since World War II. There are many places you might expect to see anti-semitism—a ku klan rally, a pogrom, a neo-Nazi gathering. A UN-sponsored World Conference on Racism would not have immediately jumped to my mind—until the grotesque carnival of hatred we witnessed 8 years ago.

Of course, the UN had passed the illogical and hateful Zionism is Racism resolution in 1975—but they revoked that resolution in 1991 by a vote of 111 to 25, 10 years before the conference.

And yet, the warning signs were present.

At the pre-Conference it became clear that the full conference would be dominated by chants of 'Zionism equals racism,' accusations that Israel is an apartheid state and other outrageous slanders. Israel and the United States walked out—as they should have done.

The real irony is that anti-semitism, a form of racism, should be so prevalent at a conference that was supposed to combat racism.

The hate literature distributed during the NGO conference included caricatures of Jews with hooked noses, surrounded by money, and Israelis wearing Nazi emblems.

At the government conference, states such as Syria and Iran objected to the inclusion of Anti-Semitism or the Holocaust in the final report. They argued that any reference to the Holocaust would be 'favoritism.'

Anti-semitism is like the canary in the coal mine. It has always come before a hatred that spreads through many sectors of society.

At the first conference Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister sent a statement in which he asserted: 'antisemitism goes far beyond hatred of Jews. It has arisen where Jews have never lived, and survives where only Jewish cemeteries remain. And while Jews may be the first to suffer from its influence, they have rarely been the last.'

Instead of learning from history, Durban I and II seek to deny what happened, and then to twist its lessons beyond all recognition. Talking about an actual example of racism isn't favoritism, it's reality. Pretending it didn't happen or isn't important just encourages racists. After all, Hitler learned a great lesson from the Turkish attacks on the Armenians—'who remembers the Armenians?' he asked as he prepared plans for the final solution.

If we forget the Holocaust, or hesitate to bring it up, it emboldens the murderers. That's why I have been sponsoring a bill—the Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Education Assistance Act to make sure our young people learn about the Holocaust and what happened when hatred and intolerance was allowed free reign.

I also authored and passed that Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, which opened up long-sealed US government records from World War II, so that all of us would know what our government knew about the Holocaust and the Nazis who scrambled to hide their past in the aftermath of the war. Eight million documents were unclassified as a result. The newly unsealed records have been fascinating—they showed that we knew a lot about Nazi collaborators who had murdered Jews, and even include a report from Hitler's psychiatrist.

Six months after Durban I, as the world struggled to comprehend the terrorist attack on New York on 9/11, which occurred just two days after Durban I's closing ceremonies, Deputy Minister Melchior gave a speech in which he juxtaposed the two events, and struggled to make sense of the senseless. He said: 'In an irony of epic proportions, this Conference against Racism itself hosted the most racist speeches and proposals to be heard in an international forum since the second World War. While doing nothing to help the millions of slaves, of impoverished and oppressed, this Conference became the mouthpiece for a new and venal form of antisemitism.'

The United Nations can do great work, but Israel often gets scapegoated by its many enemies. But as much as the UN can do wrong, it's important to remember that it can also do right. Just last year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international equivalent of the bill of rights. It was the crowning achievement of Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the committee responsible for drafting it. It was written in the aftermath of World War II, as the world struggled to lift itself out of the ashes and deal with Hitler's devastation. The world understood what could happen when a truly

evil man who controlled a vast store of weapons was able to give free reign to his desire to conquer and destroy. They believed a body that defended human rights would surely prevent such evil from rising up in the future.

Despite the good will of a newly liberated Europe, Eleanor Roosevelt had a long and difficult struggle to get the member nations to agree on one document. She had to persuade them to put aside their own narrow national interests and to agree to a strong affirmation of individual rights. It took her three years. When she was done, we had a document that affirmed that: 'it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.'

Instead of Eleanor Roosevelt, today we have a representative of Libya's Muammar Khadafi chairing the planning committee for Durban II. This planning committee includes such noted defenders of human rights as Iran and Cuba.

Human Rights Watch, a leading human rights NGO, pointed out the irony of Libya's position by sending a Palestinian, Ashraf Ahmed El-Hojouj, to testify before the committee. He was a medical intern who had been detained by Libya's government and accused of spreading AIDS, when he had been providing medical care. He and five Bulgarian nurses were held in dreadful conditions while the international community struggled to free them and avert a death sentence.

Madam Chair, he said. 'I don't know if you recognize me. I am the Palestinian medical intern who was scapegoated by your country, Libya, in the HIV case in the Benghazi hospital, together with five Bulgarian nurses.'

Starting in 1999, as you know, the five nurses and I were falsely arrested, prosecuted, imprisoned, brutally tortured, convicted, and sentenced to death. All of this, which lasted for nearly a decade, was for only one reason: because the Libyan government was looking to scapegoat foreigners.

Madam Chair, if that is not discrimination, then what is?

When I began drafting this speech, it was three days before the Conference opened, and it still wasn't clear which Western countries would be attending Durban II. The U.S., Israel, Italy, Germany, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Poland, Sweden and Holland have stated that they won't go.

Some other EU members have also indicated that they may walk out—particularly if language to 'never forget' the Holocaust is taken out. But what does it say that the conference will be opened with an address by the notorious Holocaust denier Mahmoud Ahmadinejad?

The Bush Administration had been an early opponent of Durban II and in December, the U.S. cast a symbolic vote against the UN's budget because it included funding for this conference.

The Obama Administration, in the spirit in which he was elected, made an effort to reach out and to try to make the conference's report better. They figured that if we weren't at the table, we could be sure that we would object to the final document. If we were at the table, we had a tiny chance of making it palatable.

Unfortunately, in a conference chaired by Libya, our odds of success were limited. And, it seems clear that our worst expectations

have been fulfilled. Human rights are being used as a weapon of political interests antithetical to human rights protection.

Was the Obama Administration right to participate in the pre-conference negotiations? Some would argue that it wasn't worth the time, the expense or the frustration. I've always believed that you're doomed to fail if you never try. You can always reject a bad bargain—but you'll never get what you want if you don't ask for it—and you can't ask for anything if you storm out at the beginning. So, I believe President Obama was right to try change the document in the lead up to this conference. And as it became clear that the United States could never endorse the final report, he was right to decide not to send a delegation to the actual conference.

I think most of the Western nations were more than a little embarrassed by Durban I, and that Europe's enthusiasm for this type of spectacle has been tempered by the explosion of terrorism that the entire world has experienced since Durban I. I am pleased the United States had the company of many other nations in boycotting Durban II.

Eleanor Roosevelt believed that our greatest asset is the conviction that our actions accord with justice and humanity. I am delighted to be here at the counter-conference, where justice and humanity can be the focus. There is so much work that could be done at a real conference on racism—exploring ways to bring justice in Darfur, looking at the discrimination against the Baha'i, exploring why the world has tolerated a return to clan rule in failed states like Somalia and parts of Pakistan, looking at ways to combat xenophobia and intolerance.

Once upon a time, we dreamed that the United Nations could be a forum to address those issues. Perhaps in time it could be—but not when states led by the worst abusers of human rights get to chair human rights panels, and not when narrow political interests are allowed to dominate. I hope, if there ever is a Durban III, it will be convened in an earnest effort to achieve equality."

Madam Speaker, I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing AAJLJ and Jewish Week's Durban II Counterconference.

HONORING RABBI SHOLOM STERN,
TALI DAHARI, KENNETH S. FINK,
DR. JACQUELINE H. SIMONS,
MRS. SUSAN SACHS AND THE
BRANDEIS SCHOOL

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2009

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of Rabbi Sholom Stern, Tali Dahari, Kenneth S. Fink, Dr. Jacqueline H. Simons, Mrs. Susan Sachs and the Brandeis School for their remarkable contributions to both education and community. The 79th Brandeis School Campaign Celebration will honor each of these dedicated and selfless individuals, commemorating their tireless work toward educating our youth. In helping students become well-informed and responsible community members and citizens, both the Brandeis School and these talented honorees are deserving of recognition.