

time to look back on the history of the State of Israel and remember it accurately. In recent weeks there has been much attention paid to the announcement of new construction in East Jerusalem. Lost in the debate were some basic facts about settlements and the historical context that must be remembered.

Today I want to set the record straight and outline six key facts about settlements. No. 1, the construction under debate is not in Arab East Jerusalem, but in a Jewish neighborhood in northern Jerusalem. Not only has this area never been governed under Palestinian authority, but there has never been a question of to whom the land belongs. Under every possible two-state plan, including the plan produced by President Clinton at Camp David in 2000 and the scenario and the letter from President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon in 2004, this area would be part of Israel.

No. 2, Jerusalem is not a settlement. Jerusalem has been a Jewish majority since 1870. And every Israeli Government since 1967 has recognized Jerusalem as the sovereign capital of Israel, not part of the West Bank. To reduce Jerusalem to anything less undermines the very foundation of Israel.

No. 3, settlements are not an obstacle to peace. This is where remembering history is especially important. Twice Israel has given up land and removed settlers in an effort to make peace, and each time peace was rejected. In 1980, after its peace accord with Egypt, Israel removed settlements from the Sinai Peninsula, but peace was rejected. Again in 2005, settlers were forcibly removed from Gaza, but peace was rejected. Settlements can be dealt with in any future negotiations through land swaps and border adjustments. But the issue of settlements should never prevent the two sides from sitting down to negotiate.

No. 4. The 10-month moratorium on new construction in the West Bank issued by Prime Minister Netanyahu is unprecedented. Despite staunch domestic criticism and incredible political risk, Prime Minister Netanyahu announced a 10-month moratorium on new construction in the West Bank. The move was praised by the Obama administration. U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell called the move significant, stating that "for the first time ever an Israeli Government will stop all new construction in West Bank settlements." Yet the Palestinian Authority continues to refuse to resume peace negotiations.

In the past, settlement construction did not prevent negotiations. In fact, both Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas negotiated with Israel even while building in settlements continued.

No. 5, only Israelis and Palestinians together can create a lasting peace agreement. The U.S. must continue to play a central role in peace negotiations, but ultimately the conflict must

be resolved through direct talks between the two parties. Requiring preconditions for negotiations simply allows the parties to avoid direct dialogue and ultimately a resolution. Any rhetoric that prevents the parties from resuming negotiations must be tempered.

No. 6, this constant focus on settlements distracts us from the greater threat, a nuclear Iran. The most significant threat to Middle East security is Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons would surely spur nuclear proliferation throughout the Middle East, and even result in terrorist groups obtaining nuclear weapons. Our focus now must be on preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power, not on debates about Jerusalem's construction policies.

Yes, settlements must be addressed, and they will be addressed in any peace process negotiations. We know this because over the years numerous proposals to solve the settlement issue have been floated, and Israel has twice shown it's willing to take action, pulling its citizens out of Sinai and Gaza. But settlements cannot be an excuse not to negotiate. Settlements cannot be considered an impediment to peace. And settlements cannot distract us from the looming threat of a nuclear Iran.

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

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

#### HONORING DR. RODRIGO NOGUERA CALDERON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an admirable educator and scholar from Bogota, Colombia, Dr. Rodrigo Noguera Calderon. During his long and highly acclaimed professional career after receiving a doctorate in law with a specialization in socioeconomic sciences from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, he has been an exceptional jurist and academician.

His humanistic formation led him to defend from the outset the values and principles of western civilization, the defense of which is today manifested in the formation of professionals educated with the same principles.

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As a corollary of his humanistic formation, Dr. Noguera has been an ardent defender of democracy and of its liberties, and he has been a fighter against totalitarian and so-called

"populist" regimes which seek to destabilize democratic governments.

Dr. Noguera has also stood out for his unwavering and constant defense of the principles on which human rights are based and for the correct application of international norms that regulate them against those who, in the name of human rights, violate the very principles they say they seek to protect. To further this cause, Dr. Noguera established the Human Rights Institute in collaboration with academic institutions on three continents.

Regarding the United States of America, his positions and those of the Universidad Sergio Arboleda, which is the university founded in 1984 by his father, Rodrigo Noguera Laborde, and at which he has presided since 2003, have always been of friendship and in defense of the postulates and values of this great Nation.

The Universidad Sergio Arboleda was the main academic institution in Colombia that supported and assisted with the entire negotiation process of the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Colombia.

The Universidad Sergio Arboleda also maintains very close relationships, by means of specific shared programs and projects, with many American universities, such as Florida International University, Florida Atlantic University, Georgetown University, American University, and the New York University School of Law. The Universidad Sergio Arboleda was a leader in the creation of joint degree programs with American universities. It was also a leader in other innovative and groundbreaking agreements, which have benefited both the United States and Colombia.

The Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, of which I am honored to chair, will also enter into an agreement of collaboration with the Universidad Sergio Arboleda.

Dr. Noguera has held very prestigious public-sector positions by presidential appointment, including supervisor of corporations, national electoral council judge, and associate judge of the National Constitutional Court of Colombia. He was presently named by Colombian President Alvaro Uribe as a member of the Committee on Political Reform. He has received many important distinctions, including the Order of Democracy Simon Bolivar in the degree of Cruz Gran Caballero, which is one of the highest civilian honors of Colombia, granted by the Colombian House of Representatives.

For my late father, for my brothers, and for me and my wife, our friendship with Rodrigo Noguera and his wife, Zayda Barrero de Noguera, is an extraordinary honor.

#### H.R. 2927—THE BORDER TAX EQUITY ACT

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