

they all tell me the same thing—the United States doesn't have a sufficiently coordinated export strategy for Africa while our global competitors do. The U.S. system of export promotion and finance is a poorly coordinated patchwork of more than a dozen government agencies that American businesses find too difficult to navigate and does not provide focused or aggressive support.

That is why earlier this year, Senators BOOZMAN, COONS, CARDIN, LANDRIEU, KIRK, BROWN, LEAHY and I introduced the Increasing American Jobs through Greater Exports to Africa Act of 2013. It is a straightforward and commonsense piece of legislation. At its simplest, this bill is about creating jobs—American jobs. It would require a coordinated government strategy to help increase United States exports to Africa.

Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of that strategy would be vested in a single position—no more agencies tripping over themselves, no more competing priorities, no more wasting time. It is supported by the Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, the Corporate Council on Africa, and the National Small Business Association.

President Obama understands the urgency of this issue. Every day we delay, China, India, and others fill the void created by a lack of American commercial leadership on the continent. The President understands that every \$1 billion in American exports supports over 5,000 jobs here at home, which is why he has advanced his National Export Initiative. Our legislation would build on this effort and seek to expand U.S. exports to Africa by 200 percent in real dollar value over the next 10 years.

Mr. President, yesterday on the cusp of President Obama's trip to Africa, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed this legislation. The timing could not be better. It is good for the American economy by helping U.S. businesses create jobs here at home by tapping into a burgeoning overseas market hungry for our products. It is good for U.S. foreign policy by keeping America in a position to maintain our global leadership in a shifting geopolitical landscape. And it is good for the people of the African continent by making superior American products and business practices more competitive and financially accessible.

I urge my colleagues to sign on to support this critical effort. While we wait, the Chinese are acting and America is falling further and further behind in Africa.

TREATMENT OF GRAMEEN BANK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to once again voice publicly my concern with actions the Government of Bangladesh has taken and is poised to take with respect to Grameen Bank and the Grameen family of companies.

Grameen Bank has for decades been the pride of Bangladesh and the envy of the world. The brainchild of Professor Muhammad Yunus, the Bank pioneered a concept of lending that helped the very poor help themselves. Uniquely, the Bank was owned and governed by those very borrowers, giving them both an opportunity to succeed individually and a stake in the success of others.

For this, both the Bank and Professor Yunus have been recognized across the globe with awards and honors. Both were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. The United States has recognized Professor Yunus with its two highest civilian honors—the Presidential Medal of Freedom and, most recently just this April, with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Sadly, since 2010, instead of showcasing Grameen's efforts to lift countless Bangladeshis out of poverty, the Government of Bangladesh has instead engaged in what seems to amount to nothing more than carrying out a political vendetta against Grameen and Professor Yunus. This has resulted in Professor Yunus' forced removal from his position as Managing Director and changes to the governance of the Bank. I and many of my colleagues in the House and Senate, as well as the Obama administration, have repeatedly raised concerns at all levels of the Bangladesh Government over these moves.

We now understand that in the face of our continued objections and those from a wide swath of the international community, the Government of Bangladesh plans to hold a meeting on July 2 at which it is reported that they will finalize plans to take control of Grameen Bank.

Such a troubling move could jeopardize the stability of the Bank and put millions of borrowers, mostly women, who depend on it at risk of sliding back into poverty. It would likely gut the self-government that has been such a critical part of the great success of the Grameen experiment.

The Government of Bangladesh should think twice before taking such action.

Today, the U.S. Government took action against Bangladesh over another issue that has caused great concern—safety of the garment industry in Bangladesh. In response to several high profile garment factory accidents, the administration announced today that it will suspend Bangladesh's trade privileges with the United States.

I am certain this is not the image of Bangladesh that Prime Minister Hasina wants the world to see. In the last few years, Bangladesh has made great strides to rube poverty and to develop a vibrant civil society. The country has been contributed significantly to important international peace-keeping missions around the world.

It is a shame that the government's campaign against Grameen and its slow response to critical labor safety issues overshadow such achievements.

I urge the Government of Bangladesh to end this campaign against Grameen Bank and the Grameen family companies. The United States and, truly, the world are watching.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, the Senate unanimously adopted a resolution honoring the 50th Anniversary of Congressman JOHN LEWIS's leadership of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

In the early 1960s, America's promise of equality at the ballot box went unfulfilled for African Americans. Literacy tests, poll taxes, and sometimes, angry mobs stood in the way of many African Americans trying to register to vote and cast ballots.

The members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—or SNICK as it was called at the time—were inspired by and dedicated to America's promise of equality and democracy for all citizens, regardless of the color of their skin.

These high school and college-aged students led sit-ins. They educated communities about the right to vote. They conducted voter registration drives.

And many of these students marched for civil rights and voting rights with Congressman LEWIS and 600 others in Selma, AL on Sunday, March 7, 1965.

As television cameras rolled and the Nation looked on in horror, these non-violent marchers were chased down by State troopers, beaten, and bruised so badly by police batons that the day was coined "Bloody Sunday."

A few days after "Bloody Sunday," President Johnson addressed the Nation and called on the House and the Senate to pass the Voting Rights Act.

Shortly thereafter, in a moment of bipartisan courage, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, guaranteeing that the fundamental right to vote would never again be canceled out by clever schemes devised to keep African Americans from voting.

Last week, the Senate honored these heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. On Tuesday, five Supreme Court Justices gutted a key provision of the law for which all of these heroes fought and some of them bled and died.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v Holder* strikes down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, which established the formula for those jurisdictions that are covered by the Act's preclearance provisions in Section 5.

This has the effect of gutting Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Section 5 required jurisdictions in all or part of 16 States with a history of discrimination to get approval from the Department of Justice or a Federal court before making any changes to congressional districts or voting procedures.

Tuesday was not the first time that the Supreme Court ruled on a challenge to the Voting Rights Act.