

This hearing is for show. But it is a dangerous hearing because it is about a real law and real people and real racial disparity and, yes, real discrimination against my district because we have been pulled out as no other jurisdiction has been.

I want to compliment those Members on the floor from the other side who were consistent with their own principles yesterday. There was a marijuana amendment on the floor yesterday, and the full details of it I don't have before me, but I recall it would allow prescription by Veterans Administration physicians for medical marijuana for certain wounded veterans because of the finding that it has a beneficial effect on some of their concerns, especially nausea and other kinds of conditions they bring back with them.

The vote was divided, but I looked at the members of the subcommittee who will be hearing on Wednesday about cannabis laws in the District of Columbia. There are seven members of that subcommittee; and two Republicans on that subcommittee, that seven-Member subcommittee, voted to respect states' rights and voted, in effect, to allow States to do what is necessary when it came to medical marijuana for veterans.

Yes, the parties are coming together on this issue, and for that reason it makes no sense whatsoever to have a divisive hearing that calls out one local jurisdiction—the weakest in the country because the District of Columbia has no Senators, because while I vote in committee, whatever you do to my District or even for my District, I cannot vote on it on this floor.

I can tell you this. As a result of this hearing and because the D.C. decriminalization bill has to lay over here for 60 days before it becomes final, it is still here, I have alerted my allies throughout the country, and particularly in those States which have decriminalized marijuana or legalized it. So if any Member of this House ever gets oversight over this matter and dares to vote that the District can't decriminalize cannabis, even though their citizens have the opposite right, we will call them out.

I don't believe that kind of hypocrisy exists in this House, nor do I know whether there is any attempt to try to overturn our laws. I have to come to the floor proactively, my friends, because Members don't exactly come to me ahead of time and tell me when they want to perform the illegitimate act of overturning a local law in the District of Columbia. So I am calling them out right now: Don't you dare to seek to countermand the elected, the democratically elected D.C. council which has decided what is best for its citizens, particularly if your own jurisdiction—and I have called your names—has decided that some form of marijuana possession decriminalization or legalization should occur in yours.

Even for those of you who come from parts of the United States which have

not changed their marijuana laws, let me say to you: I respect that your local jurisdictions, your State jurisdiction has not acted in that way. There are real issues here. We don't want people smoking marijuana to end up where people who smoke cigarettes did.

A lot of what is being done now, the city is already holding hearings on the law's effects, is putting in place measures that would have the effect of not only alerting people to the problems of smoking anything, but keeping this matter from being excessive. Smoking pot perhaps has more of a chance of being excessive at least among young people if it is barred. I am not so sure now that it is allowed in so many States, a third of the States, that you will have nearly the excitement about smoking pot as you did before it was decriminalized.

Whatever is the result is not for a national legislature, not in America where local matters get decided by local folks. Yes, there is a conflict with Federal law. That is for the Federal Government in its implementation of drug laws to take care of.

□ 1315

And if you want to somehow go out against these States which are rapidly decriminalizing marijuana laws—you have got to come after all of them, not just one—that is what I am here to say. We don't intend to be the outlier that Congress uses to prove its point about marijuana.

We demand respect for the principles for which the Constitution stands. Nothing in the Constitution says anything about respecting local control, except for the District of Columbia. The Framers left some control of D.C. matters with Congress, but certainly not the kind of control that would be exercised here. The Congress on its own decided that even the control that the Framers left in the Congress, it would never exercise, when it passed 40 years ago the Home Rule Act of the District of Columbia.

The Home Rule Act says that matters of local law are for the local jurisdiction of the District of Columbia, just as they are for the local jurisdiction of each of the 50 States. That was a landmark law. We intend that it will be respected. No hearing called, however illegitimate as this hearing is, is enough to override that law and its intent.

That law needs to be expanded, not sat upon with a hearing that picks out one local law. It needs to be expanded so that the 100 percent of local funds raised in the District of Columbia don't have to come before a national body before we can spend our own money, as if you were the masters of our local funds—almost \$4 billion of it raised from local citizens and local businesses.

You want to bring us before you on Federal funds? Be my guest. But don't come to the District of Columbia when it comes to its own money. And don't

come to the District of Columbia when it comes to its own laws.

Nobody in this House can speak with any credibility to the reasons, and they are legion, but don't forget the most important reason that the District decided to decriminalize its laws. It didn't even legalize marijuana, as two States have done; it decriminalized them.

It is a modest step, it is a responsible step. And it is a step taken in the face of horrific evidence, shameful evidence, that showed that, essentially, the only people that got arrested in the District of Columbia for marijuana possession are Black people. That is an outrage. The council had to do something about it. Just as the other States, for whatever reasons, have decided to move for local reasons, our council has moved for entirely local reasons.

We ask you to respect that move, especially when it comes to what I am sure will be countless lives of African American citizens in the District of Columbia that will now have a chance, at least, to escape from penalties of law enforcement, to live a fruitful life because they will not start off in life with marijuana possession penalties that ruin their entire lives.

We ask for equality of treatment. We are equal citizens under the law. If your citizens were treated unequally, each and every Member of this House would be on this floor. I come in that spirit, and I come asking for the very same respect.

I yield back the balance of my time.

SUDAN TRAGEDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide in which nearly a million perished in a horrific 100-day span while the world idly stood by.

As has been documented in print and film, including Samantha Powers' riveting book, "A Problem From Hell: American and the Age of Genocide," cables were sent, reports of the violence and the targeting of innocents received, and yet the American foreign policy apparatus was largely consumed not with stemming the bloodshed, but rather with avoiding use of the word "genocide" less it necessitate a response. And so many people died.

Of course, there is the now notorious negligence of the United Nations in this regard, which culminated in a catastrophic moral failure on the part of the international community.

Kofi Annan, then head of U.N. peacekeeping, was receiving on-the-ground intelligence from General Dallaire, who was a Canadian general, about the impending tragedy, and yet he repeatedly refused to authorize General Dallaire to seize known weapons caches

until it was too late. What horrors might have been prevented had Annan chosen otherwise?

Fast-forward several years.

President Clinton traveled to the Kigali Airport in Rwanda and issued what has come to be known as the "Clinton apology" for failing to do more to stop the violence.

Later, President George W. Bush famously wrote "not on my watch" in the margin of a report on the Rwandan genocide.

No President, Republican or Democrat, wants atrocities to occur on their watch. I venture this much is true of President Obama. And yet every indication points to the fact that the crisis currently unfolding in South Sudan is headed the way of Rwanda.

In fact, yesterday, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, characterized South Sudan as "on the verge of catastrophe." But with the stakes as high as they are, the situation is simply not being met with the urgency it demands.

It is time for bold action.

President Obama, who so far has failed on this issue, should immediately dispatch former Presidents George W. Bush, who has a great reputation in Africa, and former President Bill Clinton, who also has a good reputation in Africa, to the region to help negotiate a lasting peace and to convey in no uncertain terms that the fate of South Sudan is a U.S. foreign policy priority.

Both of these men, President Bush and President Clinton, have done a great deal on this issue and have remained invested in Africa beyond their Presidencies.

This pair of statesmen, hailing from two different political parties, would send a powerful message to the warring factions, and especially as it relates to President Kiir, with whom President Bush and his team forged a lasting relationship during intensive negotiations involved with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and would open immediate lines of communication at a pivotal time.

I first visited Sudan in 1989, years before Darfur became a household word, and I have prayed for the day when the people of that long-suffering land would enjoy peace and representative government. I have been five subsequent times, most recently in 2012.

For more than two decades, a steady stream of Sudanese activists, Lost Boys and Girls who resettled in the United States, humanitarian groups operating in the region, and others have visited my office.

Whether it was the seemingly intractable war between the North and the South, the genocide in Darfur, or, in recent years, the violence in the Nuba Mountains set against the backdrop of the birth of a new nation, I have followed events closely in that part of the world, urging U.S. administrations of every stripe to engage vigorously in pursuit of lasting peace, justice, and rule of law.

I asked President Bush to appoint a special envoy. He appointed former Senator John Danforth, who did an incredible job with then-Secretary of State Powell.

While I did not support Obama's candidacy, I was heartened and encouraged by his rhetoric on Sudan during the 2008 campaign. I took further encouragement from some of the individuals who joined his foreign policy team—senior advisers with strong human rights credentials and a stated desire to see the United States lead in the prevention of crimes against humanity and other atrocities.

Sadly, those words have not translated into action.

As I noted earlier, Samantha Power, who rose to prominence for her reporting on genocide prevention, now represents the U.S. at the United Nations in New York. I wish her voice was stronger within this administration on this issue. I urge everyone to read her book. It was a profound book. I urge her to take the message of the book and be a spokesman in this administration.

Today, I stand before you as concerned as I ever have been about the state of affairs in South Sudan and the potential for the recent violence to spiral into genocide—a genocide that could defy even the horrors of Rwanda, given that oil reserves are in play.

On Monday, I received deeply troubling reports from individuals on the ground about recent atrocities in South Sudan and the lack of an effective U.S. or international response. I heard of civilians, including women and children, indiscriminately targeted and killed. I learned of houses of worship turned from places of sanctuary to mass graves. I was told of ethnic divisions that now run so deep, it could take generations to heal.

These reports, coupled with a smattering of news stories from the last several months, belie what can only be characterized as an emergency situation in urgent need of high-level intervention.

Consider the following excerpts from media accounts.

Voice of America, April 21:

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan on Monday accused opposition forces in Bentiu of carrying out targeted killings, including of children, and inciting "vengeful sexual violence" against women after they captured the town last week from government troops . . . UNMISS also said that individuals associated with the opposition have been using an FM station in Bentiu to broadcast hate speech.

It sort of reminds you of exactly what took place in Rwanda.

Will we ever learn?

The Washington Post, April 22:

Gunmen in South Sudan who targeted civilians, including children and the elderly, left "piles and piles" of bodies, many of them in a mosque and a hospital, the United Nations' top official in the country said Tuesday.

CNN, April 23:

South Sudanese rebels seized a strategic oil town last week, separating terrified resi-

dents by ethnicity before killing hundreds . . . Residents sought shelter in churches, mosques, and hospitals when the rebels raided Bentiu town.

Fox News, April 3:

As rebel forces entered Bentiu last week, residents were led to believe that by entering the mosque, they would be safe . . . But once inside they were robbed of money and mobile phones and a short while later gunmen began killing, both inside the mosque and inside the city hospital . . . If you were not Nuer, nothing could save you. The gunmen killed wantonly, including children and the elderly.

The Economist, April 26:

Even in a civil war that has been rife with atrocities, the scale of the massacre of civilians in South Sudan's oil hub of Bentiu on April 15-16 plumbed a new depth of hell. The rebel White Army, so-called after the ash its fighters sometimes smear on themselves, killed anyone they suspected of supporting the government, including—it is reported—200 people in a single mosque and others in churches and aid-agency compounds.

□ 1330

Local radio broadcasts helped to stir up ethnic hatred to direct the violence at perceived enemies of Riek Machar. No side is winning. Hopes of building a new country from scratch are drowning in blood.

I have a photo here—and many others—a graphic visual image of what you have just heard described. It is from the most recent massacre in Bentiu this month.

We see pictured the piles of bodies described in the news accounts, and just yesterday morning, I received reports from someone on the ground that another attack in that town could be imminent.

Where is the urgency from the Obama administration? Where is the outrage?

I read with great interest the recent statements by Kenya's president, in which he said: "During the 20th commemoration of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda"—the 20th anniversary is this month—"I expressed our region's disappointment at having done little to nothing at the time to end the slaughter of a million innocent victims, human beings in Rwanda, by a blood-thirsty cabal."

He went on—and I commend the president of Kenya for saying this: "I also pledged," he said, "in the name of Kenya and the region that we would never again allow a similar genocide to happen within our shores."

"I return," he said, "to the pledge today because of what is happening in parts of Sudan. We are outraged and gravely concerned at seeing the killings of hundreds of innocent civilians caught up in the internal conflict of the South Sudan Liberation Movement."

"We refuse," he said, "to be witnesses to such atrocities and to remain helpless and hopeless in their wake."

President Obama, Vice President BIDEN, this is happening on your watch. Will you allow it to continue? Will you to refuse to be a witness to the atrocities?

News coverage of these events have been sporadic, at best. While most

Americans are likely unaware of the horrors being perpetrated in South Sudan, people who are in a position to help know what is happening.

Yesterday, I had a press conference with Congressman PITTS and Congressman SMITH. Two members of the press—two members, only two members of the press even came. The room was empty. Nobody's covering this story hardly.

Will it be like Rwanda, when they all had all the stories, and you remember the movies that they did on Rwanda, looking back? Will the press then cover it, looking back? Will they then say whose fault it was that they didn't act?

Where is the media today? Where are the networks? Where is the Obama administration?

Cables are now being sent to Washington. Talking points are being drafted at the National Security Council and the State Department. These events are not happening in a vacuum.

Will we see the contents of the reports only after it is too late, when enterprising filmmakers and authors dredge up the documents and wonder why no one mustered the will to act?

A joint op-ed piece yesterday by long-term South Sudan expert Eric Reeves and John Prendergast, who has been on the scene, who has done so much to bring the attention to these issues, opened with the following line—they say: “No civilians in the world are in greater danger than those in South Sudan.”

Again, here is what they said: “No civilians in the world are in greater danger than those in South Sudan.”

You see how powerful—where they say even more than in Ukraine, more than in Syria?

The pair continue:

Unlike the asymmetric warfare to which we have been accustomed to hearing about in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in Darfur, symmetric warfare ensures heavy casualties in military confrontations, but victories and defeats now have more ominous consequences; for in South Sudan, the victors see a military victory as justifying civilian slaughter of the predominant ethnic group of the opposing forces, and with a terrifying momentum, ethnic slaughter leads yet to greater ethnic slaughter.

In short, crimes have been committed by both sides. There are no angels in this conflict. There must be accountability for anyone implicated in these atrocities. We have the technology, the capacity, the eyewitness accounts to know who is involved and who is actively violating the ceasefire.

Reeves and Prendergast further warn of looming famine, given that the planting season has already been disrupted with more than a million forced out of their homes, and ominously, they predicted that as many as 7 million—7 million—could face starvation this fall.

The atrocities must stop. The suffering must cease. What is the end game?

America helped give birth to South Sudan. We have a moral obligation to

do something and something bold. So I say this: President Obama, you must not allow this to continue on your watch. I call on your predecessors, President Bush and President Clinton, to immediately engage in this crisis before more innocent blood is shed.

President Bush would go. President Clinton would go. Can you imagine the image of both President Bush and President Clinton there together?

So I close with this last thought: President Obama, Vice President BIDEN, failure to act—and this will be in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for future generations to see—failure to act will be a stain on your administration and a blot on your conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) for 42 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that makes America great is that our country is a country that—regardless of one's race, one's religion, or one's ethnicity—we, as citizens of the United States, make up a collective family, the American family; yes, a diverse family, but a family, in and of itself, composed of all the people, the great variety of people we have here from every part of the world who have come here to live in freedom and enjoy the opportunity and the liberty and the justice that America represents.

Here, despite where one was born or whose one's parents are or when even one became a citizen, we are all equally part of that family.

Just as many families across our Nation have come to discover, at one point or another, in a time when there are scarce resources, when you are going through perhaps an economic crisis or trying to avert an economic crisis, it is not unreasonable to provide for one's family before helping others.

It is not selfish to watch out, thus, for our fellow Americans. It is not selfish to watch out for our fellow Americans above the well-being of foreigners, even foreigners who wish us well and, yes, foreigners who would like to become part of the American family; but, first and foremost, those Americans from every part of the world who are citizens of this country or, yes, who have come here legally in the attempt to become a U.S. citizen, their interest must be our first priority.

Tonight, I draw my attention and the attention of my colleagues to the dire consequences that we face if many—

and many people have been insisting that we do this—if we implement the so-called immigration reform which, of course, would legalize the status of those who are currently unlawfully living and working in our country.

Just as we are a nation of immigrants, we are also a nation of laws. What the American people and my colleagues must keep in mind, while debating this issue of immigration, is the distinction between legal immigration and illegal immigration.

Perhaps the thing that has disturbed me most in this debate is the attempt to blur the difference between the two, the difference, even to the point where statistics are being used to say: well, this is what immigrants have done for our society.

No, the statistics are what immigrants have done, but that does not include the illegal immigrants that are part of the equation.

No, illegal immigration is on a totally different plane. Legal immigration and illegal immigration are on totally different planes. Too often, we see these lines blurred, as I say, in this debate.

I happen to be very pro-legal immigration, and there is no reason for most Americans not to lift their head up when we actually understand that our country admits more legal immigrants annually than all the other countries of the world combined, totaling roughly a million legal immigrants every year.

While our immigration system certainly needs reforming or making it more effective and more efficient in what it is doing, this controlled and open process of legal immigration has worked well for America and demonstrates the capacity for our people to have compassion and generosity towards other human beings, other people who would like to come here to be part of the American family—coming here while obeying the rules, coming here not thumbing their nose at our legal system, coming here with respect towards the rest of us by obeying the laws and the regulations that are necessary for someone to come here legally.

Those folks have been wondrous, and, in fact, we all trace our roots back to people like this who came here and have contributed so much to the well-being of our country, and those million people who come here legally every year are a major positive asset to our country.

Despite our generous legal immigration policy, it is estimated that anywhere from 11 to 20 million foreigners are unlawfully present in the United States today.

While I certainly understand the positive motives and the essential goodness of the vast majority of these trespassers, of these people who are here illegally, it does not negate that they are lawbreakers, nor does it negate the economic and social consequences of inundating our country—