

Christians and Arabs enjoy cultural and political rights. My home city of Sulaimani alone has more than 130 media outlets, including 13 TV stations and dozens of newspapers—as well as unrestricted access to the Internet and satellite TV.”

The currency in Kurdish-controlled areas is worth more than 100 times its counterpart in the rest of Iraq, the San Francisco Chronicle notes. A Chronicle article described the area’s newly paved highways as well as new hotels and open-air restaurants.

The child mortality rate among the Kurds, the Chronicle points out, is about 45 percent less than that for the rest of Iraq. Such a contrast strongly suggests that Saddam’s decisions in allocating medical resources are a major factor in bringing misery to average Iraqis.

The Kurds’ progress shouldn’t be exaggerated. Many Kurds eke out only a modest living, and the area’s political system still needs to achieve the orderliness and relative comity associated with democratic systems.

On balance, though, the Kurds’ achievement after only a few years offers tremendous hope. In certain respects, it can be a role model not just for Iraq but for many countries in that part of the world.

BEHIND MEXICO’S FARM WOES

Tariffs on agricultural trade between Mexico and the United States have fallen in dramatic fashion since the mid-1990s. That embrace of open trade has put pressure on many Mexican farmers, compelling many of them to get out of agriculture altogether.

Some farm activists and commentators are blaming the United States, arguing that its heavy subsidizing of agriculture puts Mexico at an unfair disadvantage.

It’s true that U.S. farm subsidies are wide-ranging and second only to those of the European Union (although Mexico’s corn subsidies average \$150 a ton, compared to \$85 in this country). But it is woefully simplistic to lay all responsibility at the feet of the United States. Many other important factors are also in play.

Critics tend to sidestep the fact, for instance, that much of the Mexican farm sector is thriving. Under NAFTA, Mexico’s agricultural exports have gone up significantly. That growth was made possible in part because many Mexican farmers invested and modernized in preparation for the impending changes.

Other farmers, in contrast, made no adjustments. They are now feeling pressure. True, many Mexican farmers have little flexibility because they own small plots or else communal ones lacking clear title. But that only underscores the reality that such farms have precarious financial prospects to begin with.

The Mexican farm sector has brought some problems on itself by failing, in many cases, to invest in improvements for irrigation and transportation. Mexico has hurt itself, too, by failing to curtail disease in livestock. Disease is so widespread for Mexican hogs, for example, that just two Mexican states are currently allowed to export pork—and only to Japan.

A sensible strategy would be to promote industrial development so that Mexican farmers and laborers can leave unsustainable plots and take on better-paying factory jobs—which, in fact, is the course the Mexican government has been attempting under NAFTA. Anti-globalization activists, regretably, are trying to block the creation of factories in rural Mexico, arguing that the traditional farm economy needs to be preserved in its entirety.

Mexico’s farm sector has much to gain from the efficiencies and opportunities that

open markets create. Mexico will toss away those opportunities, however, if it allows farm interests and political activists to block crucial flexibility and diversification.

OPEN TRADE, OPEN MEETINGS

The World Trade Organization serves a vital function by overseeing the rules that govern the annual exchange of more than \$7 trillion in goods and services worldwide. Under the WTO’s direction, the world is moving slowly, if sometimes unsteadily, toward more open trade. The trend is healthy.

Critics raise a legitimate point, however, when they decry how the WTO conceals its deliberations from public scrutiny.

Defenders rationalize the closed-door nature of much of the WTO’s proceedings as necessary to protect companies’ proprietary information. But such an arrangement understandably leads to accusations that the deliberations are permitting private horse-trading that should more properly be conducted in public.

The United States, to its credit, has proposed a series of measures to open up the WTO process. Under the U.S. recommendations, hearings would be conducted openly. Legal briefs and final panel reports would be made available to the public in a timely fashion. Meanwhile, procedures would be put in place to ensure that proprietary information that legitimately deserves protection would receive it.

Those would all be positive steps. Some WTO members are balking but the call for greater openness should be heeded. The WTO, whose decisions have enormous ramifications for countries’ economic well-being, ought to move its operations into the daylight.

A BILL TO CREATE FEDERAL ADVERTISING PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITY BUSINESS CONCERNS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, small, disadvantaged businesses have been denied access to prominent contracting and subcontracting opportunities across the spectrum of industry. Many entrepreneurs and small businesses have either been hurt or put out of business by the gross disparity between procurement opportunities they receive and those received by large, majority owned businesses. In response to this inequity, former President Clinton enacted an executive order in October 2000 to improve the situation and rectify the inequity. The executive order’s sole focus was to increase opportunities and access for disadvantaged businesses in relation to Federal procurement opportunities.

According to the executive order, each department and agency with procurement authority was to aggressively seek to ensure that small disadvantaged businesses, minority business enterprises and other types of small businesses were intimately involved in prime contracting opportunities. The underlying premise of the order was to contribute to a reduction of inequality within the realm of Federal procurement opportunities.

I want to codify former President Clinton’s executive order specifically as it relates to

Federal advertising contracts. My goal is to ensure that minority business concerns engaged in the advertising industry have ample Federal advertisement procurement opportunities. In addition, the legislation pinpoints minority business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals as businesses in drastic need of increased participation in Federal advertising procurement opportunities.

The advertising industry is an ever-expanding industry that exposes many products and services to a growing and diverse nation. There are more than 21,000 advertising agencies engaged in the business and thousands more that want to become engaged in the advertising industry. However, for various reasons, many smaller and disadvantaged businesses have found it difficult to obtain advertising contracts, particularly large Federal government contracts. This bill will eradicate the inequity by facilitating the following:

1. Aggressively seeking to ensure that minority business concerns are aware of the Federal advertising procurement opportunities by using the most effective forms of communication, including the Internet, specialty press and trade press;

2. Ensuring that procurement authorities will work with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to make sure that eligible small business concerns receive information regarding the contracts;

3. Ensuring that the price evaluation preference programs authorized by Section 7102 of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 are used to the maximum extent when granting Federal advertising contracts to minority business concerns;

4. Requiring that contractors meet the commitments required by this legislation and other related laws (i.e., Small Business Act); and

5. Ensuring that contracts involving commitments with minority business concerns include clauses that address the assessment of liquidated damages when commitments are not met.

I sincerely hope that Congress will consider the positive effect of this bill not only for minority business concerns, but also for the betterment of the advertising industry in general. This bill can cure an ill that has plagued the advertising industry for a long time. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this issue with my many colleagues in Congress.

CELEBRATING THE WEDDING OF PETER DILLON CAIRNEY AND ANNA CHRISTINE LEE

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to hail the upcoming wedding of my good friend Peter Dillon Cairney to Anna Christine Lee in Portland, Oregon on February 1, 2003. I bring this merger to the attention of the Congress because in addition to his other exploits, Pete Cairney served his country well as an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corps, rising to the rank of Captain and serving in Operation Desert Storm.

Pete Cairney is a true American and a true New Yorker, born in Queens where, like his literary soul mate Jimmy Breslin, he was born in