

Not only did Fifine do her job, she brought a sense of kindness and consideration to an establishment more used to divisiveness and self-importance. Fifine would never let an opportunity to compliment riders of fifth floor elevator number five pass by. Her customary "You look nice today" would raise spirits and brighten moods even in the darkest of hours.

So often, those of us in the Capitol Hill community rush about our business and don't take a moment to reflect upon how great this institution is. Fifine kept this in mind every day. Her appreciation for her job and the U.S. Congress was second to none.

In an April 21, 1997 interview with the Washington Post, Fifine stated: "I love the congressmen," she said. "They have a lot of work to do and don't always have time to talk. I give them time to work, but I always talk to them. I love my job."

Fifine, we greatly appreciate you for taking the time to talk with us and thank you for a job well done. Our prayers and thoughts are with you and your family. We will miss you greatly.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL DURHEN
CHRISTIAN

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Commander Michael Durhen Christian. Michael was a prisoner of war in Vietnam from April 24, 1967, to March 4, 1973. Today marks the 30th anniversary of his release.

Mike was a highly decorated soldier, touting two Silver Stars, three Bronze Stars, four Air Medals, the Legion of Merit, and the Navy Commendation Medal. But perhaps what Michael is most well known for is the flag he made while in the Hao Lo POW Camp.

In the last year of his imprisonment, Mike began collecting bits of fabric. He fashioned a needle out of bamboo, used the thread from his blanket, and made an American flag that he sewed to the inside of his jacket. Mike's flag was a source of pride and comfort for many of the soldiers. Mike would hold up his flag, and they would salute.

When the guards at the POW Camp eventually found the flag, Mike was beaten and tortured for hours. When he was returned to the cell, Mike immediately gathered his remaining cloth and began to sew again. Leo Thorness, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and survivor of the Hao Lo POW Camp stated "Now, whenever I see the flag, I think of Mike and the morning he first waved that tattered emblem of a nation. It was then, thousands of miles from home in a lonely prison cell, that he showed us what it is to be truly free."

Mike attended Butler High School in Alabama and still has family in our community. In September 1983, Mike lost his life in a house fire. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize LCDR Christian today. His patriotism and service to this country serve as an example to all Americans.

INTRODUCTION OF BIKE
COMMUTER ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, Congressman MARK FOLEY and I are introducing legislation to extend commuter benefits to bicyclists. This important legislation includes bicycles in the definition of transportation covered by the qualified transportation fringe benefit.

Currently, employers may offer a Transportation Fringe Benefit to their employees for commuting to work. Employees who take advantage of this program may receive a tax exemption benefit totaling \$180 for participating in qualified parking plans or \$100 for transit or van-pool expenses. Employees may also opt to take cash compensation instead, which is subject to employment taxes. The Bike Commuter Act would extend these same Transportation Fringe Benefits to employees who choose to commute by bicycle.

It's time to level the playing field for bicycle commuters. Bicycling is one of the cleanest, healthiest and environmentally friendly modes of transportation that exists today. At a time when communities across the country are seeking to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and increase the safety of their neighborhoods, bicycles offer a wonderful alternative to driving for the more than 50 percent of the working population who commute five miles or less to work. The Federal Government should do its part to support these goals by providing transportation benefits to people who choose to commute in a healthy, environmental, and neighborhood-friendly fashion.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, bicycles are second only to cars as a preferred mode of transportation, demonstrating their potential for commuter use. Many Americans own one or more bicycles, but limit their use to recreational purposes. This legislation is an important step in making the Federal Government a better partner for more livable communities.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION BY
JOHN BRADY KIESLING

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker I commend to the attention of my colleagues the following letter of resignation written by American diplomat John Brady Kiesling. Mr. Kiesling served in the U.S. State Department as Political Counselor at the American Embassy in Greece before resigning his post on Thursday, February 27—ending twenty years of public service. Mr. Kiesling's letter is an eloquent expression of principal in opposition to war with Iraq and America's heavy-handed approach to foreign policy under the leadership of President Bush.

US DIPLOMAT JOHN BRADY KIESLING,

February 27, 2003.

Secretary of State COLIN L. POWELL,
Letter of Resignation.

ATHENS

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I am writing you to submit my resignation from the Foreign Service of the United States and from my position as Political Counselor in U.S. Embassy Athens, effective March 7. I do so with a heavy heart. The baggage of my upbringing included a felt obligation to give something back to my country. Service as a U.S. diplomat was a dream job. I was paid to understand foreign languages and cultures, to seek out diplomats, politicians, scholars and journalists, and to persuade them that U.S. interests and theirs fundamentally coincided. My faith in my country and its values was the most powerful weapon in my diplomatic arsenal.

It is inevitable that during twenty years with the State Department I would become more sophisticated and cynical about the narrow and selfish bureaucratic motives that sometimes shaped our policies. Human nature is what it is, and I was rewarded and promoted for understanding human nature. But until this Administration it had been possible to believe that by upholding the policies of my president I was also upholding the interests of the American people and the world. I believe it no longer.

The policies we are now asked to advance are incompatible not only with American values but also with American interests. Our fervent pursuit of war with Iraq is driving us to squander the international legitimacy that has been America's most potent weapon of both offense and defense since the days of Woodrow Wilson. We have begun to dismantle the largest and most effective web of international relationships the world has ever known. Our current course will bring instability and danger, not security.

The sacrifice of global interests to domestic politics and to bureaucratic self-interest is nothing new, and it is certainly not a uniquely American problem. Still, we have not seen such systematic distortion of intelligence, such systematic manipulation of American opinion, since the war in Vietnam.

The September 11 tragedy left us stronger than before, rallying around us a vast international coalition to cooperate for the first time in a systematic way against the threat of terrorism. But rather than take credit for those successes and build on them, this Administration has chosen to make terrorism a domestic political tool, enlisting a scattered and largely defeated Al Qaeda as its bureaucratic ally. We spread disproportionate terror and confusion in the public mind, arbitrarily linking the unrelated problems of terrorism and Iraq. The result, and perhaps the motive, is to justify a vast misallocation of shrinking public wealth to the military and to weaken the safeguards that protect American citizens from the heavy hand of government. September 11 did not do as much damage to the fabric of American society as we seem determined to do to ourselves. Is the Russia of the late Romanovs really our model, a selfish, superstitious empire thrashing toward self-destruction in the name of a doomed status quo?

We should ask ourselves why we have failed to persuade more of the world that a war with Iraq is necessary. We have over the past two years done too much to assert to our world partners that narrow and mercenary U.S. interests override the cherished values of our partners. Even where our aims were not in question, our consistency is at issue. The model of Afghanistan is little comfort to allies wondering on what basis we plan to rebuild the Middle East, and in whose

image and interests. Have we indeed become blind, as Russia is blind in Chechnya, as Israel is blind in the Occupied Territories, to our own advice, that overwhelming military power is not the answer to terrorism? After the shambles of post-war Iraq joins the shambles in Grozny and Ramallah, it will be a brave foreigner who forms ranks with Micronesia to follow where we lead.

We have a coalition still, a good one. The loyalty of many of our friends is impressive, a tribute to American moral capital built up over a century. But our closest allies are persuaded less that war is justified than that it would be perilous to allow the U.S. to drift into complete solipsism. Loyalty should be reciprocal. Why does our President condone the swaggering and contemptuous approach to our friends and allies this Administration is fostering, including among its most senior officials? Has "oderint dum metuant" really become our motto?

I urge you to listen to America's friends around the world. Even here in Greece, purported hotbed of European anti-Americanism, we have more and closer friends than the American newspaper reader can possibly imagine. Even when they complain about American arrogance, Greeks know that the world is a difficult and dangerous place, and they want a strong international system, with the U.S. and EU in close partnership. When our friends are afraid of us rather than for us, it is time to worry. And now they are afraid. Who will tell them convincingly that the United States is as it was, a beacon of liberty, security, and justice for the planet?

Mr. Secretary, I have enormous respect for your character and ability. You have preserved more international credibility for us than our policy deserves, and salvaged something positive from the excesses of an ideological and self-serving Administration. But your loyalty to the President goes too far. We are straining beyond its limits an international system we built with such toil and treasure, a web of laws, treaties, organizations, and shared values that sets limits on our foes far more effectively than it ever constrained America's ability to defend its interests.

I am resigning because I have tried and failed to reconcile my conscience with my ability to represent the current U.S. Administration. I have confidence that our democratic process is ultimately self-correcting, and hope that in a small way our democratic process is ultimately self-correcting, and hope that in a small way I can contribute from outside to shaping policies that better serve the security and prosperity of the American people and the world we share.

LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES REPORT
ON THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM
IN EUROPE

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for producing the report entitled "Fire and Broken Glass: The Rise of Antisemitism in Europe," which underscores the commitment of the Lawyers Committee to speak up against human rights abuses wherever they occur, and whatever form they take.

In the report, the Lawyers Committee states forthrightly that "antisemitism is racism.

Antisemitic acts need to be confronted more forcefully and treated as serious violations of international human rights." The Lawyers Committee observes that the responsibility of reporting and confronting antisemitism should not be shouldered by Jewish organizations alone; "their involvement does not relieve governments, the United Nations . . . or private human rights groups of their obligations to address antisemitism as an integral part of their work."

In pointed remarks concerning the failure of European governments to address the problem, executive director Michael Posner writes, "Too often European leaders have downplayed antisemitic acts as inevitable side-effects of the current crisis in the Middle East. We reject this reasoning as an abdication of responsibility. Criticism of Israeli policies and practices is not inherently antisemitic. But when such criticisms and related actions take the form of broadside attacks against 'Jews' or the 'Jewish State,' they become racist."

The report cites recent instances of antisemitism in Europe, laments the failure of European governments to accurately report and engage in action to combat these hate crimes, and makes a series of recommendations for steps the European governments should take. The text of the report follows.

FOREWORD

A year ago the United Nations convened the third World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in Durban, South Africa. The conference was intended to highlight particularly serious patterns of racism and racial discrimination around the world and to shape appropriate global responses. The meeting succeeded in raising public attention with respect to some particularly egregious situations—not least the plight of 250 million victims of caste discrimination (among them the Dalits of India—the so-called "broken people," or "untouchables").

Further, the conference provided a long overdue acknowledgment of the criminal nature of slavery ("that slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been") and recommendations for the repair of its lasting consequences for people of African descent around the globe.

The conference also made clear that racism and racial discrimination need to be placed more squarely on the international human rights agenda. But what was positive in the conference process was seriously undermined when the World Conference itself became the setting for a series of antisemitic attacks. Directed primarily against representatives of Jewish groups, these attacks were fueled by the heated debates at the meeting concerning Israeli practices in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But the racist anti-Jewish animus displayed represented considerably more than criticism of Israeli policies and practices.

Most of the offensive behavior occurred during meetings of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and individual participants in a forum that paralleled the intergovernmental conference. Throughout the five-day NGO forum, antisemitic cartoons and materials were distributed widely and on display, tolerated by the forums's nongovernmental organizers. Representatives from Jewish organizations were denied access to some meetings—either physically excluded or shouted down and attacked when they were present and tried to speak. Efforts to put antisemitism on the nongovernmental agenda were roundly defeated by an assembly of

representatives and individual participants in procedures that were neither democratic nor principled.

Rather than serving as a forum for correcting racial and religious intolerance and hate, the public meetings and exhibition halls of the Durban conference became a place where pernicious racism was practiced and tolerated. Important recommendations adopted by the conference despite this environment, with a real potential to advance the fight against antisemitism—and other forms of racism—have as a consequence received inadequate attention. Some of these recommendations, concerning government monitoring and reporting on racist violence, are discussed here.

The outbursts at Durban reflect a growing trend toward antisemitic expression and violence in many parts of the world. As this report makes clear, there is an alarming rise in antisemitic violence in Europe: but it is on the rise in other parts of the world as well. Unfortunately, with the notable exception of Jewish organizations and a number of other human rights and antiracist groups and institutions, the world community—governments, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations alike—has not responded adequately to this growing problem. Antisemitism is racism. Antisemitic acts need to be confronted more forcefully and treated as serious violations of international human rights.

This report highlights the inadequacy of efforts by European governments to systematically monitor and report on antisemitic threats and violence—and to develop effective measures to stop it. We define antisemitism as hatred or hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic or racial group. Governments and intergovernmental organizations need to routinely incorporate facts about antisemitic assaults, arson, vandalism, desecration of cemeteries, and the proliferation of antisemitic materials on the internet into a wide range of existing human rights reporting mechanisms. Though some Jewish organizations, like the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, are doing excellent reporting on these issues, their involvement does not relieve governments, the United Nations and its regional organizations, or private human rights groups of their obligations to address antisemitism as an integral part of their work.

In the pages that follow, we outline the scope of antisemitism, in Europe and examine some of the efforts by European governments and institutions to monitor and confront the problem. In our view these efforts are insufficient. Too often European leaders have downplayed antisemitic acts as inevitable side-effects of the current crisis in the Middle East. We reject this reasoning as an abdication of responsibility. Criticism of Israeli policies and practices is not inherently antisemitic. But when such criticisms and related actions take the form of broadside attacks against "Jews" or the "Jewish State," they become racist.

In this report we make a series of recommendations as to how these abuses can better be investigated and reported in the future. These recommendations are intended as a starting point for a much larger discussion about how anti-semitism and other forms of racism can better be addressed as a more central element of the global human rights debate. At the end of last year's Durban meeting, we wrote that "[t]he subjects of this conference are the human rights issues of the 21st century. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance affect each of us in our own communities. All of us—governments, the UN, NGOs—must