

SECURING PEACE THROUGH
SHARED SACRIFICE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, as we stand on the brink of an invasion of Iraq, we must ask ourselves if there are better ways to secure long-lasting peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

I invite you to read excerpts of my remarks against an invasion of Iraq and in support of national service that I delivered Sunday, March 9, 2003 at Riverside Church. I was really moved by the sermon delivered by the Reverend Dr. James Forbes, Jr. that morning. The reading from the Bible was the parable of the weeds in the wheat field. It tells how the weeds will be destroyed but only after the weeds and the wheat grow up together and the wheat is allowed to mature. It was a great analogy as we take a look at a world today—a world that would have us believe that the weeds would be Saddam Hussein and that some are saying we have to destroy the entire wheat field in order to get him.

UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE

Every minute of every day of every year that we live is actually part of history. We never really perceive what it is we do, how important it is, what we could have done or what we didn't do, until that day is over.

Well, I can share with you now that I was not excited about that trip. I didn't intend to walk and I asked Percy why didn't he walk down there if he felt so excited about this? But he said no and set it up with Andrew Young and John Lewis. I was running for office and he said how important it would be at least for me to go down and have my picture taken.

Well, having my picture taken seemed like it made a lot of sense. So I got a roundtrip ticket, and took my cashmere coat, my Stingy Brim hat, my Florsheim shoes, and went down there to have my picture taken.

I had bad feet so I knew I wasn't going to march. But when the rain started coming. I saw these poor farmers, sharecroppers and young people just finding plastic to wrap their feet in. I heard them start singing the hymns and the civil rights songs. When I saw and heard all this, I knew that I just could not return to the airport. So I switched my shoes with someone that was coming back to New York, got his sneakers (kept my cashmere coat, however) and started that march from Selma to Montgomery.

I cursed every step of the way of that march, wondering why in the world was I marching with no cameras, no TV, no reporters, in the darkness with a group of white Southern guardsman allegedly there to protect me. But it was only after that event was over that I fully recognized the power of Dr. Martin Luther King and fully understood the power of people who believed that they could make a difference.

How little did I know in marching in that march that, as a result, Americans who had been treated as a fraction of a man would be given the power to vote in the Deep South. It was a country where lives could be taken through lynchings, where people could be beaten to death and segregated, and people would say there's nothing that we could do about it. This march, and the subsequent incidents with dogs, allowed the best of America to come out—and not only turn it around, but provide for a kid from Lennox

Avenue to succeed the late and the great Adam Clayton Powell. It allowed me to be here today and say that as a result of that Voting Rights Act, we now have 39 African-American men and women serving in the House of Representatives. God is good.

It means that no matter how many weeds are growing that, if we are strong enough to be the wheat to provide the light, there is no sense in giving up on this country. It's all that we got.

We are the country. It is not just those people who come to Washington. It is us who decide just how strong we're going to be or how frightened we're going to be, or show silent we will be against the injustices that are taking place under our flag.

AN UNJUST AND UNWISE INVASION

On September the 11th, when enemies of the United States struck the World Trade Center, I think all Americans put aside whether they were Republican or Democrats, liberals or conservatives. For the first time in our history we felt the pain of hatred attacking us, and the things that we believed in. For the first time in my congressional career, New York City members were treated as members of Congress, and not merely as members of the New York delegation. We sang, "God Bless America" and said, under the President's leadership, that wherever this threat had come from, we were prepared to do whatever was necessary so that we would never feel the pain the way we did then.

However, soon the President started talking about "the axis of evil." He spoke about North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. And somewhere along the line, it was forgotten that our attackers were funded and had come from Saudi Arabia. Also lost was the fact that Osama bin Laden was the person we were searching for. Somehow the message got blurred. Soon, the President started connecting—without facts—Osama bin Laden with some force on television. And before you knew it, Saddam Hussein was transformed into the link to the tragedy that befell us at the Trade Center.

Let me tell you, I have listened to President Bush privately and publicly. I have heard from the CIA and the FBI. And I can tell you without fear of contradiction that the President of the United States, has not given one scintilla of evidence to connect the actions of Saddam Hussein with the tragedies that struck us here in New York City. And, if Colin Powell, the CIA, and the FBI have evidence that Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction, why in the heck didn't they give it to the U.N. inspectors so they could get these weapons out?

I want to make it abundantly clear that what I learned on Lennox Avenue applies to me today. If somebody is around the corner waiting to hit me in the head with a pipe, I want him taken out right away. Preemptive strikes don't bother me. But for this great country, without any evidence that we're in imminent danger, to select a developing country that's defenseless against our power, and deliver in ultimatum that they must show evidence of how they disposed weapons of mass destruction, or we will drop bombs on them until they're senseless—3,000 high tech bombs in 48 hours—that's not the great America that I'm proud to be a part of.

An attack against Iraq would be the first time that our country has ever struck another country without provocation. Doing so, we will lose the moral authority to tell other countries that God made us to live and work together. If Pakistan and India decide that they don't trust each other, if the Taiwanese and the Chinese don't trust each other, if the North Koreans fear that they're

going to be attacked by South Korea, do they also have the right to a preemptive attack? What international body could we appeal to in good faith and say that they were wrong?

They tell me that there will be little collateral damage, but how much is "little" when you're talking about the lives of people? They tell me we have the technology to reduce the loss of life of Iraq's people—mothers and children, innocent people. But if we have that technology to determine where the innocent people are in Iraq, why couldn't we use that technology to locate the weapons?

LET'S TALK ABOUT OIL

Why Iraq? Why now? Why the rush? At the end of the day, the question has to be: Will we in New York, will we in the United States, will we on this planet, feel any safer after bombing Iraq senseless?

It goes beyond Iraq or weapons of mass destruction. It has to, because we know as a fact that weapons of mass destruction are in North Korea. And take my word for it, these people in North Korea are the meanest people in the world. I know. I've dealt with them. You can't imagine people starving to death in North Korea, with 40,000 American troops in South Korea, being isolated by their former friends, the Russians, who have collapsed, the Chinese, who look at them suspiciously, the Japanese, who have had problems with them historically. The only thing they got are these dangerous weapons which they're selling, and we are saying that we got to negotiate with them while we bomb Saddam Hussein.

It would seem to me if we're prepared to go to the international community to contain North Korea, that that is the least we can do for civilization and the United Nations to contain Saddam Hussein.

But let's think about it, because we have to be practical about it. There ain't no oil in North Korea.

Now, let's talk about oil, because some of my colleagues in Washington may be listening to me here, not just because I'm at The Riverside Church, but because C-Span is here, and we like to watch each other. So, to my colleagues that may be watching, let's talk about oil. For years we have been addicted and dependent on foreign oil and gasoline. 55-percent of the oil that we consume today comes from foreign countries. We have been promising ourselves since the days of sweater-wearing Jimmy Carter that we were going to do better. But each year we import more and more oil from abroad.

Any economist will tell you—and those of you that came to church late may have seen some of them on TV this morning—that the one thing that could possibly turn this economy around would be cheaper oil prices. That, if the price of oil continues to rise, then what we know in our community to be a recession could become a depression for us and a recession for other people in this country.

The largest reservoirs of oil are in this region, with Iraq controlling most of it. But the countries in the region that do have oil have joined together in order to make certain that they keep the price of oil high so that they would get an income. They have decided that they will control the supply of oil from the region in order to get what they think would be a fair price for oil.

Now, the President of the United States has said to me privately and, if you listen to him carefully, he has said it publicly, that we have to have as our first mission to seize the oil wells in Iraq. That we will be sending airborne troops there to prevent Saddam Hussein from destroying them. Once we seize those oil fields, he has said, we will bring in American and European technology. To do

what? To develop the full potential of the production of oil in this area. By doing this, he shatters the restriction on the supply of oil that OPEC has put on and shatters any idea that the reduction in the supply of oil would increase the price of oil.

Is the President saying this so that America would no longer have to depend on Middle Eastern heads of nations for higher oil prices? Is he saying this in order to get us out of the recession? Is he saying this because we are so dependent on foreign oil that we would want a stable supply?

No. The President doesn't say that at all. This is what the President says. We have to increase the supply of oil out of Iraq so that we can get the money to restore peace and harmony to the people of Iraq to build their schools and to give them health care. That is what the President is saying that we must do.

The President is also saying something else. He is saying that after we liberate Iraq—and, there is no indication that we're going to met with kids and women with little American flags waving for us—but after we liberate Iraq, that that will be the beginning of bringing democracy to all of the countries in the region.

Now, I don't know that much about the Islamic faith, but I hardly think they're waiting for born-again Bush to be bringing his type of democracy to that area.

If we hit Saddam Hussein, he will want to be remembered by the people in the region. Knowing that they are no friends of Israel in the region, it would seem to me that we're jeopardizing our friends and brothers and sisters in Israel from a preemptive strike by Iraq. Since they can't reach us, they will reach for our best friend, Israel. Israel will be forced to strike back with force—one, to show that she can sustain the hostility from the region and, two, because of the internal politics that exist between the hawks and the doves there. You tell me how it will not be perceived as the United States and Israel not having a "holy war," especially with our President saying he's going to bring democracy to the region of the Muslim states there.

Instead of us bringing a sense of peace and confidence, we're creating an atmosphere that could be chaotic as Americans go to the Middle East and Americans go abroad.

THE BURDEN MUST BE CARRIED BY ALL

Now, whenever a nation, a community or your home is in danger, it seems to me that we all have an obligation—if we've enjoyed the benefits of living in this great nation—to say, "What can we do to help?" But there's a strange atmosphere that exists in Washington, that people talk about war without talking about the sacrifices of war. You don't have to be in combat, you don't have to be shot, to understand that not all of the people who go to Iraq are coming back—that families suffer the pain of losing their loved ones, and that you're going to kill people whose lives you have no right to take away.

It reminds me so much when I was in P.S. 89, where there were groups of people that would say, "Let's fight. Someone said something about your mamma. Someone offended your sister. Let's go fight. I'll hold your coat." You know.

We got a lot of people in Washington that want to hold people's coats.

I listen to these people talking about how we should have taken out Saddam Hussein a long time ago. "We have to teach these people a lesson. We have to demonstrate the power of the United States. We have to force the United Nations to respect us." But we do this by sending people into harm's way.

There has never been a war in which we have not said that, at least in terms of fin-

ancing it, that we're going to have to pay for it through taxes. Yet this President has said, through Rumsfeld, that we can have two and three wars going on at the same time. We already have troops in Korea, Japan, Europe and Afghanistan. We're sending troops to Colombia and the Philippines. We're deploying 300,000 troops in Iraq. God knows how many more it will take for the occupation of Iraq. The President has asked for \$90 billion to pay for the first month of the invasion while advocating a \$674 billion tax cut for the wealthiest people in the United States.

When you take a look at who the liberators will be, who will be put in harm's way, it won't be the sons and daughters of members of Congress or the President's cabinet. It won't be the rich and affluent who insist that we "take them out now." No. It will be good Americans, patriotic Americans, who evaluated the economic situation in this country, and decided that the military gave them a better shake than they could get in the private sector.

And so they, like me and so many others, go into the Army. When the flag goes up, they salute it because they made a contract to fight—if they were called on. Don't tell me that they'll be checking out who is in the foxhole to see whether they were drafted or volunteered. Don't tell me that, in this great country, only those who can't do better economically should be forced to carry the burden of being killed in war. I refuse to accept that.

So some people have accused me of introducing legislation to reinstitute the draft just to embarrass the President or because I am against the war. Others say I did it to deter people from talking about going to war because of concern that their loved ones would be placed in harm's way.

And I tell them, "You're darned right, those are some of the reasons why I introduced it."

It makes sense to me that, if we're going to determine that we're going to attack a nation, if we're going to determine that we're going to take a preemptive strike, if we're going to determine that no matter what the United Nations says, that we will go it alone, we have to find out who "we" are. And the closer that "we" are to our families, the less likely we are to say that we're going to war.

We have a situation where the President believes that God has given him a mandate to attack Iraq. It seems that there is nothing that Saddam Hussein could ever have done to prevent war. It went beyond Saddam Hussein showing where the weapons are or proving that there are no weapons. This President is bent on getting rid of Saddam Hussein; the goal is to take him out.

And so, as people were ridiculing me, I got a call from the senior senator from South Carolina. He told me, "Charlie, I am so sick and tired of all this minority stuff." He said, "While it is true that minorities find themselves in the service and in harm's way more than the general population, while it is true that they seek safe haven from the economic oppression in the military, what about some of my constituents. No one ever talks about them."

Poor whites in rural areas face the same challenges. They love the uniform and the opportunity to serve. But it doesn't mean that they want to carry the full burden of fighting wars all over the world. He told me about the National Guard. We have 800,000 people, dedicated people, in the Guard. Many of them have already served their full careers in the military, and they have decided to live the rest of their lives in South Carolina. So they join the reserve. They join the police department. They join the fire depart-

ment. They want to increase their skills in the military reserves. They want promotions. They want to increase their pensions. But they have been called up, not once, not twice, but three times. We've been pulling up the reserves, breaking up marriages, breaking up families, causing people to lose homes, and pull kids from schools.

He said that it was time that the burden of fighting wars be not restricted to those people who find themselves without financial or political influence. So Senator Fritz Hollings introduced my draft bill in the other chamber.

MAKE HISTORY—LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

I didn't believe that my bad feet and me could make any difference in bringing about the Voting Rights Act. Sometimes, some of you may believe that the power of the United States is just so overwhelming that your voices can't be heard. But let me say this to you: At some time, at some place, somebody may just ask you, "When your country decided that it was going to have a preemptive strike against a weak, undeveloped country to prove a point, did you say anything? Did you do anything? Did you demonstrate?"

We have a responsibility as Americans not to wait for things to happen, but to be involved in those happening things. We are America. We are history. Your voice really counts.

The silence has been deafening. Why? No one wants to challenge a President after the attack of September 11, 2001. No one wants to be perceived as being unpatriotic. No one wants to be perceived as if they are not supporting our brave men and women that are stationed in the Middle East.

But I tell you what. Your support of me has given me the power and the incentive, not to be classified as a profile in courage, but to represent your sentiment as you have expressed it—at the Riverside Church, in front of the United Nations, all over New York, and as we see it all over the country. You just can't be blinded by your own prejudice when the whole nation is saying that we will not be safer if we attack Iraq.

IN HONOR OF LILLY COX-KELLAR

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lilly Cox-Kellar for her significant contributions in business, as a community leader and family stalwart. Ms. Cox-Kellar has been a powerhouse of innovation and commitment, her discipline and hard work has led to a record achievement of many "firsts" for an African American who opened the doors for so many others.

Just to highlight a few of her accomplishments, Lilly was the first African American to be hired at the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) where she worked as Executive Secretary to the Treasurer. She was the first minority to hold a position with Hirshe, Rotman and Druck, an international public relations firm. As a Human Resources and Benefits Specialist, she was the first minority staff person recruited by Cogan, Berlin and Weill, a major Wall Street firm with a national staff of more than two thousand employees. As Director of Chapter Relations for the National Audubon Society, Lilly was responsible for the administrative oversight of