

Even though transit and rail systems throughout the world have been the targets of deadly terror attacks, including the London subway system a year ago this month and the rail system in Bombay, India, just yesterday, the Bush Administration seems guilty of the same lack of anticipatory thinking that plagued our approach to aviation security prior to 9/11.

In fact, as has happened so often in our nation's history, public voices calling attention to the inadequate security provided for railroads and public transit appear to be warning of a problem in plain sight that is essentially being ignored by officials whose basic plan is apparently to hope that nothing happens.

In July of last year, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security articulated the Bush Administration's general indifference to security on transit systems when he announced that our nation's public transit systems should expect to bear most of the costs of funding security improvements themselves. At that time, the Secretary dismissed the idea that a terror strike on a transit system could produce "catastrophic consequences" by saying "a bomb in a subway car may kill 30 people."

Under pressure, Secretary Chertoff backed away from his statement. However, the Bush Administration appears to have continued its policy of essentially leaving to public transit systems and to railroads much of the financial burden associated with providing any security enhancements on these systems.

Thus, in fiscal year 2006, the federal government appropriated just \$150 million in security grants to be divided among transit intercity passenger rail, and freight rail systems. This is the same amount provided in fiscal year 2005.

In fact, federal grants for transit and railroad security since 9/11 have totaled just over \$550 million. By comparison, the Congressional Research Service reports that the federal government has spent nearly \$20 billion on aviation security since September 11, 2001. As evidenced by this funding disparity, national focus has been almost exclusively on aviation security despite the fact that almost 7 times more people use public transportation on a daily basis than fly on airplanes.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the lack of focus, the inadequacy of federal funding has been accompanied by repeated failures on the part of the Department of Homeland Security to develop comprehensive risk assessments and mode-specific security plans as documented by several GAO studies and now by a study written by the Democratic Members of the Committee on Homeland Security.

I strongly support the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2006, H.R. 5714, as well as other measures that would strength rail and transit security in our Nation. It is simply incomprehensible to me that Congress has not yet considered and passed these measures that would close gaping holes in our transit security system and significantly increase funding for security grant programs.

Mr. Speaker, while it will not be possible to protect our transit and rail systems from every possible terror threat, we are not yet doing all that we can to make these systems as safe as possible. Our failure to anticipate the unthinkable before 9/11 led to the tragic death of 3,000 innocent Americans. It is past time that we act to secure our public transit and rail systems before another unthinkable act leads to the deaths of more innocent Americans.

PERMITTING USE OF CAPITOL ROTUNDA FOR CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SPEECH OF

**HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 10, 2006*

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, this week H. Con. Res. 427 passed the House of Representatives by voice vote. This bill would permit the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Department of Veterans Affairs. I would like to lend my voice to this memorable event.

Madam Speaker, in 1930 President Hoover signed Executive Order 5398 which established the Veterans Administration a ultimately led to the formation of the Department of Veteran Affairs. The VA (as it has affectionately become known) has strived to both honor and serve the men and women who protect one of our Nation's most treasured ideals—liberty. For 75 years, the VA has helped ensure that those who choose to enter the armed services are not forgotten after they honorably serve their country.

For this reason, we should celebrate the concept and accomplishments of the VA. Indeed, the VA is a vital cabinet level department, which oversees an honorable and necessary function of the U.S. Government.

The VA has three branches, which aim to provide a smooth transition for veterans when they return home from active duty. These branches—the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration—should be roundly applauded for their service to America's former servicemen and servicewomen.

Beginning in 1946, the VA's health unit, now known as the Veterans Health Administration, has sought to provide adequate health care to injured veterans returning from war, starting with World War II. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the VHA expanded into a leading health care provider and now has over 150 medical centers across the country. According to the VA, provided care to more than 5.3 million individuals in 2005.

In addition to providing health care services, the VA, through its Veterans Benefits Administration branch, has provided educational services to veterans, beginning with the passage of the GI Bill in 1944. According to the VA, 7.8 million World War II veterans, alone, benefited from educational opportunities that the bill offered. I also applaud the VA for assisting the families of our fallen heroes, the men and women of our armed services who died in combat fighting for liberty. The VA's National Cemetery Administration should be praised for providing memorials to those veterans who died for our liberty.

Madam Speaker, it is an honor for me to have the opportunity to recognize the VA for what it has and will continue to do for our veterans. As a member of the House of Representatives, I always look to support legislation that honors our veterans. On June 27, 2006, the House of Representatives agreed to H.R. 4843, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2006. H.R. 4843

increases compensation rates to veterans with service-oriented disabilities, and the House of Representatives should be proud of this great legislation.

But, Madam Speaker, on July 19, 2006, when we commemorate the VA's 75th Anniversary, let us not forget that much more needs to be done to pay homage to our veterans, particularly those who are coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Madam Speaker, the VA reported in August 2005 that almost 23 percent of homeless men and women are veterans. Madam Speaker this percentage is far too high and far too shameful.

On a bi-partisan basis, Congress must work with the Veterans Affairs to right this seemingly forgotten atrocity. The men and women who honorably serve our great Nation deserve not only to be treated as heroes in war; they deserve to be treated as heroes when they return home.

The men and women of the U.S. armed services make it possible for us to debate. Madam Speaker, let us not debate the honor veterans deserve.

GLOBAL WARMING: PARTICULARLY HARMFUL TO PEOPLE OF COLOR

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a letter that I received from the United Church of Christ which I believe is worth our contemplation because of its sincere efforts to generate greater awareness and understanding in the international and domestic communities disproportionately affected by current environmental problems.

The earth's climate has changed over the last century. This change has had deleterious effects on the world community, but more so on poor communities who have high concentrations of people of color. Communities of color are burdened with poor air quality and are twice as likely to be uninsured than whites. Yet these communities will become even more vulnerable to climate-change related respiratory ailments, heat-related illness and death, and illness from insect-carried diseases. A study conducted by the Congressional Black Caucus substantiated his claim by pointing out that in every single one of the 44 major metropolitan areas in the U.S., Blacks are more likely than Whites to be exposed to higher air toxic concentrations.

Although people of color are less responsible for climate change, ironically they will be made to suffer the most from it. We should not avoid the issue of race, class and gender when it comes to serious discussions about the environment. The inclusion of race, class and gender doesn't take us away from the issue, but helps make the issue more comprehensive and complete.

The impact of climate change has not been addressed or assessed specifically for people of color. As we continue to seek solutions to this ever growing and changing problem, we must seek to ensure that the rights of all peoples are met regardless of race, class or gender. I enter into the RECORD this letter written

by the United Church of Christ on this important issue. As we continue to strive for a cleaner world and environment, we must also strive to protect those most vulnerable to hurt.

[From Witness for Justice #274, June 26, 2006]

GLOBAL WARMING: HARMFUL TO ALL, BUT SOME MORE THAN OTHERS

(By C.J. Correa Bernier)

The international dimensions of environmental problems are becoming the center of attention as they gain center-stage in debates concerning the future of our planet. The range of issues being discussed is extensive, but global warming seems to be a common subject in most conversations. The co-existence of environmentalism and economic development and the need for cooperation, fairness and equity among countries seems to be one of the major questions.

In the midst of our global environmental conversations we must keep in mind that the activities of human society, on a broad scale, are harmful to all, but to some more than others. In the case of global warming, we suffer along with the planet but for island nations that will disappear, or for indigenous communities, it is not an "environmental problem," it is the literal destruction of their environment, history, legacy and lives.

In the United States, communities of color are also drastically affected. A recent report notes the disproportionate correlation between African Americans in the U.S. and climate change. The report argues that African Americans are less responsible for climate change, but suffer more from the health impacts.

In 1987 the existence of a nationwide pattern of disproportionate environmental risk based on race was demonstrated for the U.S. This evidence challenged the U.S. environmental movement to recognize its tendency to ignore issues of race, class and gender when setting agendas for social action. Today the mainstream environmental community is involved in serious discussions about how to frame the eco-justice issues along with those dealing with environmental justice or environmental racism, but, to look at the issue of global warming as one that is in opposition to those confronted by the environmental justice movement will be a mistake.

The global environmental justice movement compels us to rethink our understanding of global environmental problems and existing proposals to solve them. Justice is an essential demand, in the aftermath of historic, systematic discrimination and disproportionate environmental degradation of those on the margins.

If we look at global warming as an issue of human rights and environmental justice we will be able to see the connection between the local and the global. Rising temperatures are already affecting the lives of millions of humans, particularly in people of color, low-income, and indigenous communities. The health of many has been already compromised, their financial reality has become a burden, and their social and cultural lives have been disrupted. As we dialogue, research and seek solutions to our climate and energy problems we must seek to ensure the right of all people to live, work, play, and pray in safe, healthy, and clean environments. We must envision a transition to a future that protects the most vulnerable from the impacts of climate.

CONDEMNING THE ATTACKS ON ISRAEL BY HEZBOLLAH AND HAMAS

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2006*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas and their continuing brutal attacks against the people of Israel.

Hezbollah took the lives of eight Israeli Defense Forces soldiers and captured two others on the Israel-Lebanon border earlier this week. This is the same terrorist group which took the lives of 257 Americans in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut 26 years ago.

The contrast between Lebanon and Israel is stark. Lebanon not only tolerates terrorists, it harbors and supports them. Lebanon has blatantly and purposefully disregarded U.N. Resolutions and diplomatic requests to disarm Hezbollah and to bring to justice the terrorist leaders. On the other hand, Israel has complied with the U.N. charter, and has had its forces withdrawn from Lebanon since May 2000. This latest attack was completely unprovoked; in fact, Hezbollah leaders claimed that it had been planned for months. Clearly, the purpose of this latest attack is to perpetuate the violence in the region.

An estimated 100 million dollars per year in weaponry and other support is sent from Tehran through Damascus to supply Hezbollah. The government of Lebanon takes a hands-off approach towards this continued violence. The Syrian and Iranian governments should be condemned for their support of the Hezbollah and Hamas terrorist organizations.

It is time for the world community to take action against Hezbollah and the nations that support it. The United States must also not allow the Iranian government to use this latest bloodshed as a diverting tactic against U.S. attention from their unrestricted nuclear program.

With the killing of Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of Cpl. Gilad Shalit by Hamas, the timing of Hezbollah's incursion and kidnapping raises grave suspicions and increases the existing tension in the region.

Israel is in a difficult position, for it must deal with state-sponsored terrorism involving the Palestinian, Lebanese, Iranian and Syrian governments. In response to these brutal attacks, Israel clearly has the right to defend herself. Like every sovereign nation, Israel is clearly justified in taking the actions necessary to safeguard its territory and its people.

My thoughts are prayers are with the families/and loved ones of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers at this difficult time.

CELEBRATING A LONG AND WONDERFUL LIFE

**HON. LINCOLN DAVIS**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2006*

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincerest regards to Ms. Ruth Johns McCluskey in Knoxville, Ten-

nessee. Ms. McCluskey will be celebrating her 100th birthday on July 28, 2006.

Ms. McCluskey, born in Smyrna, Tennessee, attended grade school at the Greenwood School in Old Jefferson Community. After graduating from Smyrna High School she attended Tennessee Normal School for Women—now Middle Tennessee State University. After receiving her degree she embarked upon the field of education and taught grades 1–8 in Crossville, Tennessee. It was during this time that she met her future husband, Rev. Joe McCluskey, a fellow teacher. During their marriage they had two children: Ruth and Joe.

Today, Ms. McCluskey stays active and engaged by reading the daily paper, magazines, and as many books as she can get her hands on. Ever the extrovert she enjoys playing bridge and cards with her friends and family.

I wish Ms. McCluskey the best, and may God continue to bless her.

ABA LAW STUDENT TAX CHALLENGE—NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW STUDENTS PLACE SECOND

**HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2006*

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two Northern Illinois University, NIU, law students, Mary Riley and Cathryn Streeter, who placed second in the Nation at the 2005 Law Student Tax Challenge. This event was sponsored by the Young Lawyers Forum of the American Bar Association's Section of Taxation. Coached by Northern Illinois Law Professor Dan Schneider, the third-year law students researched a real-life, tax-planning problem and submitted their analysis and solution for judging. After being selected as semi-finalists from a pool of 36 entries, Ms. Riley and Ms. Streeter traveled to San Diego to present both oral and written arguments in front of a panel of distinguished tax lawyers, which included the Chief Counsel of the Internal Revenue Service.

Established in 1895 by an act of the Illinois General Assembly, Northern Illinois State Normal School opened its doors to students in September 1899. In July 1957, after 58 years of physical growth and expansion in academic programs, Northern Illinois State College became Northern Illinois University by action of the 70th General Assembly. In August of 1979 the university was authorized to acquire the College of Law, which had originally been founded in 1975 by Lewis University.

Today Northern Illinois University offers programs to more than 23,000 students in the basic disciplines, the arts, and the professions through courses conducted on the main campus in DeKalb and at regional sites throughout Northern Illinois. The university's academic work is organized under the College of Business, Education, Engineering and Engineering Technology, Health and Human Sciences, Law, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Visual and Performing Arts, in addition to the Graduate School.

As the only public law school in the greater Chicago area, NIU Law has previously ranked first in the Nation for government placement,