

wounded. In America, the Sisters served in the Civil War nursing wounded on both sides of the conflict.

In March 1898, the six original Sisters of Mercy, or the "Hospital Sisters" as they were known, opened the doors of the original Mercy Hospital, in the former Haines House on Hanover Street in Wilkes-Barre. Before the end of that summer, the hospital provided care for seventeen wounded veterans of the Spanish-American War.

The Mercy Hospital in Wilkes-Barre flourished immediately, tending to the region's injured coal miners. Donations to support their effort poured in; wealthy individuals donated fuel and money and the poor shared their food with the Sisters. Only the coal companies failed to offer support, refusing to even offer a discount on coal for heat.

Mr. Speaker, over the last hundred years Mercy Hospital has suffered the wrath of nature several times. In the Flood of 1936, the Hospital was almost destroyed. Again in 1972, when Hurricane Agnes caused the Susquehanna River to inundate the Wyoming Valley, the hospital sustained six million dollars of damage. In 1996, the hospital was forced to evacuate once again as the Susquehanna reached flood stage.

Undaunted by economic hard times, changes in health care, nature's wrath, and the staggering growth in new technology, Mercy Hospital has not only survived but grown into a state-of-the-art facility. Expanding and providing services that no other local health facility has undertaken. From the McAuley House, a shelter for women and children, to a special and innovative clinic for expectant mothers, Mercy Hospital has contributed to the community for 100 years. The state-of-the-art hospital of today owes its success to the vision and perseverance of a handful of dedicated Sisters.

I am extremely pleased to join with the community in thanking Mercy Hospital for its dedication and service and send my very best wishes for continued prosperity.

REGARDING IRAN

HON. BOB NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, on March 29, 1998, the Iranian government was quoted in considering the proposal to set up an American office at the Swiss embassy. The office would be held by an official from the U.S. Information Agency. In light of this possible ease of tension between the U.S. and Iran, I would like to submit an article from the Middle East Insight regarding the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and the United States.

IRAN: THE INADEQUACY OF LABELS

(By George A. Nader)

This past December, I had the opportunity to attend and observe first-hand the 52-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Tehran. The summit clearly demonstrated both the failure of U.S. efforts to isolate Iran and the emergence of a strong and popular political leader. Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has not only emerged as a significant force within his own country but has inherited the leadership of

the OIC—which represents the world's 1.2 billion Muslims—for the next three years. This is another indication that Iran—whether the United States is ready for it or not—has positioned itself as a leader of the Islamic world into the new millennium.

The election of President Khatami in May 1997 was facilitated by a 70-percent landslide comprised in large part of the middle class, women, and young voters (half of Iran's 60-million population were not even born at the time of the Shah's overthrow in 1979). Notably, among Khatami's supporters was the group that took over the U.S. Embassy in November 1979 and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

One dramatic change clearly evident at the OIC summit was the absence of the old banners touting "Death to America". Instead, foreign visitors were warmly welcomed. When Iranians became aware that I had come from the United States to observe the summit, they responded positively and with great enthusiasm. Though some of the old rhetoric remains, it is fading, and few among the population take it seriously.

Unfortunately, the dialogue among Western media analysts, political pundits and other so-called experts—both preceding and following the OIC summit—regarding the new status of President Khatami has been simplistic and misleading. The notion that we are currently witnessing a 'struggle for the soul of Iran' or that 'moderates and conservatives' are battling for supremacy in Iranian political circles fails to recognize the complex interplay between various personalities and factions within Iranian society. The question posed in the West of whether the moderates or radicals are now on top assumes a paradigm of political dynamics in Iran which is simply false. Iranian political culture today is more subtle, multi-faceted and intricately interwoven than many seem to realize. When asked in a January 6, 1998, CNN interview about the supposed factions in Iran, President Khatami responded that "terms such as conservative, moderate and the like are more often meaningful in the West."

Khatami enjoys the full blessing of both Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and former President Hashemi Rafsanjani. All three get along well, and their congenial relationship was obvious during the OIC summit. Both Khatami and Khamenei are clerics and descendants of the Prophet, and wish to strengthen the country's Islamic system of government. Their respective families are close. In fact, as a religious student in Mashad, Khamenei became a disciple of Khatami's father who was a highly respected ayatollah. Similarly, both Khatami and Khamenei are products of Iranian society and were educated exclusively in Iran; Khatami studied religion in Qom and philosophy in Isfahan.

President Khatami's perceived overtures to the United States have been mistakenly contrasted with comments by Khamenei. Khatami has prompted much speculation concerning Iranian relations with the United States during both his December press conference after the OIC summit in which he referred to a "thoughtful dialogue with the American people" and his January 6 CNN interview in which he called for cultural exchanges between the two countries. After his December press conference, Khamenei—who has opposed any improvement in U.S.-Iranian bilateral relations—expressed satisfaction with Khatami's address.

When Khatami says he wants dialogue with the United States, he means with the American people and not the government. When Khamenei says that America is bad, he means the government and not the people. We in the West are looking for dichotomy

and division. But both Khatami and Khamenei have said that none of their comments contradicts the other's. Khatami proposes cultural exchange as a means of building bridges between civilizations, but has ruled out—at least for now—any direct dialogue with the U.S. government and stated that there is no need for political ties. Equally important, Khatami has never called into question the core belief of the Iranian political system that the supreme spiritual leader should be selected by a group of clerics—and not "elected by the people"—to be the representative of God in the temporal order.

The Islamic Revolution has reached an advanced phase in its development. In this stage, much consideration is being given to defining Iran's relationship with the Arab world and the West. This is a new beginning for Iran and thus it may not be very helpful to take its ideological pulse too quickly or frequently. It may also be helpful to remember that, while the Islamic Revolution dates back only 19 years, its Persian underpinnings stretch back to the dawn of civilization.

In 1992, in an earlier stage of the Revolution, Khatami was driven from his position as minister of culture because he relaxed press and media censorship rules. In 1997, these same forces supported his candidacy for president. Khatami's agenda did not change in the intervening years, but the Islamic Revolution did progress. This is also demonstrated by the fact that his entire government was endorsed by the Islamic establishment—a virtually unprecedented phenomenon. Iran's revolution has moved into a more advanced stage, with multiple forces coexisting within a common framework.

Acknowledging this reality is important for the opening of a dialogue between the United States and Iran. If Washington is sincere in its desire to open up lines of communication, then the Clinton administration must reach out to the whole political spectrum in Iran and not just to specific elements. This may be a slow and excruciatingly deliberate process, but in the end it is the only one that can bear fruit.

There are two things Washington can do to move this process forward. First, it can tone down its belligerent rhetoric (as President Clinton has recently begun to do); harsh rhetoric only tends to alienate. In addition, the United States should revisit the issue of frozen Iranian assets seized after the 1979 American Embassy takeover. This may make it easier for the Iranians to address U.S. concerns regarding weapons of mass destruction and support for international terrorism.

The United States may be the only remaining superpower, but it still must be very careful when dealing with Iran. Western ideological paradigms, on which we rely so heavily to understand political dynamics overseas, are predated by 4,000 years of Persian culture. The application of superficial political labels will neither illuminate nor elucidate Iran's complex decision-making matrix.

CHILD SURVIVAL, TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL AND MICROCREDIT

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit my testimony which I presented this week at the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs into the RECORD of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me this opportunity to come before you today to speak about the important programs contained in your foreign assistance bill. I am a strong supporter of a number of these programs, including child survival, tuberculosis control and microcredit.

I want to begin by thanking you for your unwavering protection of child survival programs over the past few years. I know that it is thanks to you and this Subcommittee that each year this program has been specifically protected and expanded. Child survival programs provide life-saving vaccinations and micronutrients to millions of needy children in the developing world. I know that I do not have to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that child survival programs mean simple, cost-effective solutions like oral rehydration therapy, which prevents 1.5 million child deaths each year, and five cent capsules of vitamin A, given to children three times a year, which reduce child death rates by as much as twenty-five percent in affected populations. The vaccinations that are funded each year, Mr. Chairman, are a large part of the reason that three million children are immunized from diseases and, therefore, able to escape death. I am aware that you have had to push hard for the protection of child survival programs, and I commend you for your dedication to these children.

I would also like to thank you for expanding your Child Survival and Disease Account by \$50 million in FY98 to include more funding for infectious diseases. I thank you for that increase, because I know how critically important such funding is, especially in terms of our global fight against the disease of tuberculosis.

The spread of TB concerns me, because it is often considered a disease of the poor and a problem of the developing world—and yet, we are all in danger of contracting it. It is on the rise around the world and here in the United States, where it is estimated that fifteen million Americans are infected with the bacteria that causes TB. This city of Washington, D.C. where you and I spend so much of our time, is one of TB's "hot zones" in the United States—and my own district in Southern California is at risk, as people travel back and forth across our international border. With two million people crossing international borders each day, stopping this threat at the border is not a realistic option. This disease is a danger to the health and economic well-being of all Americans, and we must do more to control it.

According to the World Health Organization, infectious diseases cause nearly thirty percent of deaths in poor countries, and they receive only 1.5 percent in foreign aid. I know that you are doing your part to see that the percentage of aid going to infectious diseases is increased. Thanks to your \$50 million "set-aside", the Administration increased its funding for tuberculosis control programs from roughly \$1 million a year to \$15-20 million. This is a significant increase, but I am still concerned that it will be insufficient to keep up with the spread of tuberculosis—and so I urge you to do more. You have my full support for a significant increase in funding within your legislation for tuberculosis control programs for FY99.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your support for microcredit programs in the past, and I ask that you expand and specifically protect this successful and proven program in your foreign assistance bill next year. I understand, according to a recent USAID report,

that funding for microcredit has declined between 1994 and 1996. In addition, AID has not achieved a goal that it set for itself in 1994 to spend half of overall microcredit funding on programs serving the poorest people. Only \$42 million went to poverty-targeting of a very reduced overall level of \$111 million for 1996. Given the positive effects of this program on the lives of poor families and poor children, I believe that the United States should be doing more in this area. Just as with the child survival program, however, I think that without your direction, USAID will continue to underprioritize this program which is capable of changing the lives of millions of people. Therefore, I request that you significantly expand and protect this program which does so much for poor families in the developing world.

Thank you for considering these requests as you draft your legislation this year. I appreciate this opportunity to apprise you of my interest in the child survival program, in tuberculosis control, and in microcredit.

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF REVEREND DOCTOR C. WILLIAM BLACK

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Texas' great contemporary leaders, the Reverend Doctor C. William Black. On Sunday, May 1, 1998, Dr. Black will officially end nearly 50 years of pastoral service to the Mount Zion First Baptist Church in San Antonio. He is a living testament to the dictum that "one man can make a difference;" he has made a great and positive difference to his church and to the entire community he serves.

Dr. Black is an icon, a preacher with a fiery delivery and a mission of positive change. Neither his mission nor his ministry ends inside the four walls of the historic church building. Dr. Black has taken his message out into the community to lift up the broken hearted and to proclaim the fundamental equality and liberty of all persons.

An African-American born in San Antonio in 1916, Dr. Black learned at an early age that his inalienable right to liberty had not yet become a living reality. He began his quest for freedom for those trapped in post Civil War segregation. The harsh laws of a "separate but equal" society greatly restricted opportunities for African Americans. Even in those dark days of overt discrimination, Dr. Black earned great respect. In his role as minister, he served as the preacher, the civil rights leader, the business leader, and the community leader.

Dr. Black lives up to the high expectations of his community and congregation. He is well educated. He holds a masters degree and two honorary doctoral degrees. He is an Alamo Community College Foundation Board Member and a founder of San Antonio Mothers' Service Organization. Dr. Black initiated this organization, over 50 years ago, to raise money for scholarships to give to deserving students who were not likely to be recognized for their scholastic achievements in a segregated society. He founded the Mount Zion Day Care Center in 1957 in early recognition of the need for quality child care.

Despite racism, he gained a seat on the San Antonio City Council and served with

great distinction. While at that post Dr. Black distinguished himself as the first African American Mayor Pro Tem. The Eastside Y.M.C.A., the Carver Cultural Center, and the Eastside Boys and Girls Club continue to thrive today thanks to his successful battles many years ago. The Eastside Multi-Purpose Center, part of Saint Paul Square, and a street near his church bear the name of this vibrant leader.

In his role as business leader, Dr. Black organized the Mount Zion Federal Credit Union giving his congregation and members of the community access to alternative offerings for automobile loans, other types of loans, and various financial transactions. His concern for the housing needs of his community led Dr. Black to acquire financing for the building of the Mount Zion Sheltering Arms Senior Citizen Complex. In 1984, he organized the New Community builders, a non-profit housing corporation.

Reflecting on Dr. Black's years of leadership and accomplishments I know that his wife ZerNona was always there for him, as a friend, sounding board, consoler and mother of their two children. Ms. ZerNona Black is the epitome of King Solomon's words about the treasured wife. I admire her quiet strength of character, and celebrate with her the many accomplishments she made possible.

We need more leaders like Dr. and Mrs. Black who showed with their actions, and not just their words, how to be good citizens. We need leaders like them who display integrity while forging more paths to accessible education, housing, and economic mobility. We look forward to their continuing mission as drum majors of positive change, understanding, and creativity showing us the way of making our community a better place to live.

HONORING EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. RON KLINK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Labor Council of Beaver County and their efforts to raise public awareness of the discrimination toward women in the workplace. On April 3, 1998 they will be holding their Equal Pay Day rally to show their support for this important issue.

Equal pay has been the law since 1963, but today, women still receive less pay than men for comparable work. Over the past few decades, women have been given many opportunities for education and employment. They have also made contributions in quite a few career fields that were once almost entirely closed to them. With all the progress women have made, it is truly a tragedy that they are still being discriminated against in terms of equal pay.

The Labor Council of Beaver County is putting forth a great deal of effort in combating this discrimination in the workplace and trying to change the current system of gender inequity in terms of pay. Equal pay is an issue for all working women to address. The current status of their careers and their daughters' future careers depends on a change in the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to applaud the Labor Council of Beaver County for their efforts in bringing this issue to the public's attention. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the seriousness of this issue and the