IN RECOGNITION OF JUANITA "SHEBA" VELASCO

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK
OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize my constituent, Juanita "Sheba" Velasco, on receiving the Global Citizen Award in Indigenous Diplomacy. Ms. Velasco, originally a weaver from the highlands of Guayaquil, Ecuador, maintains a strong passion for Mayan education and promoting indigenous diplomacy.

Over the course of her life, Ms. Velasco has worked in several museums, culture centers, schools, and universities around the world, sharing her knowledge of the Mayan culture. In fact, in 2016, Ms. Velasco was appointed the International Ambassador for peace and tourism by the Guatemalan government.

Most recently, Ms. Velasco conducted a goodwill tour in Oklahoma, in which she spoke at universities, schools, and churches in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Her tour ended with a farewell reception at the University of Central Oklahoma hosted by President Don Betz.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Ms. Velasco for receiving the Global Citizen Award in Indigenous Diplomacy and for her dedication to Mayan culture. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

HOLY SEE ARTICLES

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY
OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues several articles that I have written over the years regarding the Holy See. As a Member of the Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, these pieces serve to outline and inform discussions that our Committee will cover in the 115th Congress.

REFLECTING ON POPE BENEDICT’S PAPACY
(By Francis Rooney)

The decision to retire is an act of humility. Benedict has left an indelible mark on the Catholic Church, preserved his theme of bonding faith and reason, and even maintained integrity amidst a much-touted scandal over his trusted butler. The Servant of the Servants of God, a phrase introduced by Pope Saint Gregory I near the end of the sixth century, leaves office in an act of selflessness.

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globalized elites of these nations, we must also reach out to those left behind.

Again, the church provides the model in the various social and educational missions conducted. Francois I and countless other religious orders. These are the type of programs that provide real benefits to the Americas, and they can improve both perceptions of the United States and regional stability.

The United States can focus on aid programs that benefit up-front development and reduce the corruption inherent in top-down projects. We can provide assistance to promote better policing and social services, supporting the creation of innovative indigenous programs that ensure social welfare.

We can nurture investment in the people instead of material assets, and pursue projects that support open and fair economic competition, and equal and transparent enforcement of the law. Through improved access to U.S. markets, we can empower small business owners and entrepreneurs and show that the benefits of economic growth can be equitably distributed. Finally, we can demonstrate through deeds, not words, how the United States is a natural partner to the Holy See and can leverage its own goals and policy objectives by continued alignment with it.

The Holy See is most effective when using its platform to denounce actions which undermine human dignity, inhibit freedom and opprove people. It has influence by moral persuasion which can accomplish results hegemonic authorities often cannot on their own. It is also effective in working quietly and bi-laterally on certain political issues in relation to its humanitarian orientation, and in using the power of its global network of clergy and Catholic organizations to advance its agenda. In controversial international negotiations, there is even more potential to have an impact.

The successful alignment of President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II’s efforts to undermine communism in the 1980’s is well known. As Premier Gorbachev said, “Every country, every continent, every Europe would have been impossible without the pope.” In fact, the Russian KGB had identified the future pope as a strong anticommunist in 1971 and upon his election, the Communist Party of Poland called him “our enemy” against whom “all means are allowed” in opposing him.

There are many obvious examples of important work on the part of the Holy See on conflict resolution and the stimulation of dialogue. Pope John XXII played a critical role in mediating the conflict during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, via a subtle, clandestine exchange of communications among the pope, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev, using the editor of the Saturday Review, Norman Cousins, as an intermediary. This effort culminated with the well-known papal message on Vatican City studio on 25 October, which was published on the front page of Pravda the next day.

The work of Myron Taylor at the Holy See in the 1950’s, as John F. Kennedy said, “Roosevelt’s personal representative, is well documented. In addition to the use of Vatican neutrality to maintain his routine visits to the United States through Switzerland, all of which served to maintain a robust and valuable channel of information exchange throughout the war. The role the Holy See played so much more than simply representing the American interests among the leadership of the Holy See. Pope Pius XII and to allow his assistant, Harold Tittmann, to remain in country throughout the war, the Holy See diplomatic pouch was used to send messages to the U.S. through Switzerland, all of which served to maintain a robust and valuable channel of information exchange throughout the war. The role the Holy See played so much more than simply representing the American interests among the leadership of the Holy See.

Recently, while I was serving as ambassador, we engaged the Holy See to work to unify the Christian block in Lebanon prior to the 2006 war, so as to fortify the power sharing coalition of Druze, Hezbollah and Christian which had brought relative stability to the country for several years, and to bring the Holy See’s influence to bear in Latin America; in the case of Haiti, Consul General of the Holy See, Rafael Correa and Evo Morales in particular, became increasingly hostile to U.S. interests. It was also during my time in Latin America that I convinced the Holy See’s representative in the region to send food to alleviate post war famine in Europe is not so well known.

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I am hopeful that this “new world” pope, appearing to be more conversational and less formal, will be able to bridge the gap between the message and the “soft power” of the Holy See more effectively than ever to challenge abhorrent and oppressive behaviors in the world. So far, his emphasis on the social mission of the Church squares well with a diplomacy based on the inalienable rights of man and the protection of human dignity for all.

HONORING KATHERINE (KITTY) GEISSLER
HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, communities thrive when hard work, dedication, and sacrifice are set by voluntary example. Katherine (Kitty) Mary Geissler has served her community with honor, and it's a pleasure to wish her well on her 104th birthday year.

Kitty was born in County Limerick, Ireland. She immigrated to the United States in 1930,