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## Opening Statement of Representative Morella

Constance A. Morella

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## OPENING STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE MORELLA

Rep. Constance A. Morella\*

It is a pleasure to be here. We salute you. We greet you. You came a long way for what I think is going to be a very profitable and very productive symposium. Certainly the timing and the issue are of critical importance.

I want to welcome you to Washington. For some of you, it may be your first trip. I hope that you will have a chance to look around Washington to see how beautiful it is. Of course, I know that you have the great splendors of South Africa, Cape Town, Mount Tabul, and Johannesburg, but I also hope that you will have an opportunity during this wonderful symposium to be able to get around and see our capital city.

I have been honored to be a part of the Aspen Institute study of South Africa,<sup>1</sup> a task force established by the House leadership, to look into South Africa and sanctions, so that we, as Members of Congress, would have more knowledge of what is going on, and what we can do in terms of government, human rights, and abolishing apartheid.

Our first meeting was in 1989, and I want you to know that the site was chosen so that people could get away from their own habitats, to be able to discuss freely and with a minimum of distractions. Today, in this room, there are people who previously could not even talk to each other, who have come together to sit around the table as part of CODESA and other groups working for harmony. And so this indicates something about the progress that has been made.

It was in January of 1990, just before President de Klerk addressed the parliament with regard to the dramatic stand that was being taken against apartheid, that I visited South Africa for the first time. I had an opportunity to talk to Mr. Sosulu—just before Mr. Mandela was released—and, of course, President de Klerk.<sup>2</sup> We met with the ANC, the

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\* Member of the United States House of Representatives, from the 8th District of Maryland.

1. *Status Report of US Sanctions on South Africa*, DEPT. OF STATE DISPATCH, May 6, 1991.

2. *See id.* (discussing issues covered in the January 1990 meeting).

PAC, the Azanian Peoples' Organization (Azapo), Chief Buthelezi, Cyril Ramaposa, who is with us today, and Colin Eglin.<sup>3</sup> We met with members of the National Party and these various groups to enhance our understanding.<sup>4</sup>

Our second visit was in April 1991, when we could measure some of the progress that had been made.<sup>5</sup> Much more needs to be done, of course. You are here now to learn from our mistakes, and to learn from the progress and the advancements that we have made through the solidity of our constitution and federalism. I think that merely learning that we have a lot in common in terms of our pluralistic societies, is a tremendous advancement.

You are the major players in what is going to be taking place right now and in a very short period of time. You have many major decisions to make. You must decide between a presidential or a parliamentary system and among different examples of those systems. South Africa must also decide whether its constitution will be largely a political document, or a socio-economic document as well. South Africa must decide whether political decisions will be made by majority will or by consensus. The many divisions in South African society suggest decision by consensus.

South Africa will, I hope, look to the United States Constitution. Many of its strengths would be of interest to South Africans: majority rule with guarantees of individual and minority rights; individual rights, both guaranteed and explicit; an independent and apolitical judiciary; and a House and Senate comprised in such a way as to balance popular and regional concerns. These are very important as you know and as I have seen in your program.

Our constitution is an ever flowing document, and certainly has its flaws if you look at history: slavery, and prohibiting women from voting, in particular. But it is a moving document. It is a document that can change to reflect a changing society. Quite frankly, I hope that this document, in the near future, will also have an equal rights amendment.

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3. *Id.*

4. *See id.* (outlining the series of meetings of the various groups).

5. Stephen Taylor, *U.S. Ready to Lift Sanctions on Pretoria*, *TIMES*, April 5, 1991. *See* Ellyn Ferguson, *Engel Visits South Africa, Says Apartheid is Doomed*, *GANNETT NEWS SERVICE*, April 18, 1991 (recounting the April 1991 meeting attended by seventeen congressional members).

So before leaving you today, I want to remind you that our Constitutional fathers met over 200 years ago in Philadelphia during July, a very, very hot period of time. They met in a closed, non-air conditioned room, and they stayed there until they accomplished what they set out to accomplish. I have a feeling that the heat and the passion of the room enabled them to complete their task in a relatively short period of time. I do not wish upon you, my friends, a non-air conditioned room for your deliberations or any similar problems. But I do wish that you have a very productive symposium, and that you learn, as John Donne espoused in one of his meditations, that no man or woman is an island, that we are all connected to each other, that what one country experiences or suffers, so does the rest of the world, just as when one person achieves, we all benefit from those achievements.<sup>6</sup> That is quite a paraphrase, but the point is that we are looking toward international peace, and it can only come about by working collectively. So best wishes to all of you, and I know that you will appreciate the interchange that will take place today. Thank you for inviting me.

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6. JOHN DONNE, MEDITATION XVII, DEVOTIONS UPON EMERGENT OCCASIONS 86-87 (Anthony Raspa ed., 1975).