



William J. Murray

The Chairman's Action Report

Religious
Freedom
Coalition

July 20 , 2005

RFC ON THE HILL

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AMENDMENT



William J. Murray speaks at press conference as Congressmen Bartlett, Istook and McHenry listen

On the steps of the Supreme Court the morning of July 14, Congressman Ernest Istook along with myself representing the Religious Freedom Coalition introduced an amendment whose purpose is to roll back Supreme Court abuses. Congressman Istook said that the Religious Freedom Amendment "will preserve the original balance of the First Amendment, protecting religious expression by Americans while preventing the establishment of any official religion."

The Amendment was introduced this week after the Supreme Court issued two convoluted rulings on the Ten Commandments. In a Texas case the Court said the Ten Commandments could be displayed and in a Kentucky case said they could not. The core of the Supreme Court decision rested on intent. In essence the Court ruled that if the builders intended the Ten Commandments monuments to be meaningless they can be kept, but if they are intended to have meaning they must be removed.

Unlike other constitutional amendments previously introduced which concern only the pledge or the Ten Commandments, the RFA is much broader in protecting the traditions and religious heritage of our nation. The RFA already has more than 100 co-sponsors.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

During Thursday's news conference on the steps of the Supreme Court I wore a bright red Ten Commandments tie. At one point in the press conference I lifted the tie off my shirt and asked those present, "When will the Court forbid me to wear this tie with the Ten Commandments printed on it because I am standing on government property?" This was a real question. The Court is following "international law" and instinct, not the Constitution of our nation. Already in several cases the Court has referred to "international law."



William J Murray and Congressman Istook announce Religious Freedom Amendment

In France a farmer was ordered to take a cross off his property because it was visible from the road. Is this the "international law" the court will follow in the future? This trend to move toward international law is being combated by some in our Congress. Congressmen Feeney and Goodlatte have moved forward a resolution that is discussed below.

The Religious Freedom Coalition actively promotes the display of not only the Ten Commandments but other symbols of the religious heritage of this nation. The tie I wore at the news conference at the Supreme Court can be ordered from the Religious Freedom Coalition

MORE ON THE RFA AND TEN COMMANDMENTS

As mentioned in the last Chairman's Report, on the morning of June 27, 2005, members of the Religious Freedom Coalition staff were on hand at the Supreme Court Building for decisions to be rendered on the Ten Commandments. While in front of the Supreme Court, Peggy was interviewed by ABC News and several newspapers.



RFC's Peggy Birchfield is interviewed on steps of Supreme Court

In the past the Religious Freedom Coalition has supported several Jurisdiction Acts in Congress to strip the Federal Courts of any authority to make decisions to remove the Ten Commandments. Now we are moving forward with Congressman Istook's new Amendment to the Constitution that would protect not only the Ten Commandments, but the entire religious heritage of our nation.

THE SUPREME COURT AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Congressmen Tom Feeney (R-FL) and Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) introduced the Reaffirmation of American Independence Resolution instructing federal courts to remember their role is to interpret US law, not foreign laws. The resolution was introduced because of the continued practice of Supreme Court Justices citing European and other foreign laws in rendering decisions in US federal courts. No court in France would take into account an American law in order to render a decision, but in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case which legalized sodomy, Justice Kennedy cited a decision by the European Court of Human Rights. While H Res-97 is a resolution and holds no force of law, its passage would be a means of the House telling the Senate what kind of Justice they want to see sit on the Supreme Court bench replacing Sandra Day O'Connor.

Current Justice Scalia understands the problems we face in dealing with "international law." In the *Lawrence* case he warned in his dissent that, "The Court's discussion of these foreign views (ignoring, of course, the many countries that have retained criminal prohibitions on sodomy) is therefore meaningless dicta. Dangerous dicta, however, since 'this Court ... should not impose foreign moods, fads, or fashions on Americans.'"

Retiring Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor differed with Justice Scalia, as does Justice Kennedy. In an Atlanta Journal story she was quoted as saying, "I suspect that over time we will rely increasingly, or take notice at least increasingly, on international and foreign courts in examining domestic issues." Doing so, she added, "may not only enrich our own country's decisions, I think it may create that all important good impression."

"All important good impression" on who? Do we want to make a good impression on Communist China, or perhaps the despots who run North Korea? Justice O'Connor wants her friends at lush country clubs in her home state of Arizona to have a good impression of her and that means being socially liberal which is the way she consistently voted.

Only the Senate can act in the confirmation of federal judges, the House plays no part at all. However, the passage of H Res-97 will send the Senate a message that America wants Supreme Court justices that interpret American law, not European law!

INTERNATIONAL

TONY BLAIR, THE G-8 AND PALESTINIANS

While the eight most powerful men in the world met in Scotland, the city of London was bombed by Islamists. In response Prime Minister Tony Blair obtained a commitment of \$3 billion (yes billion) to be sent to the Palestinian Authority. Announcing the deal, Blair told reporters: "We offer today this contrast with the politics of terror. The G8 agreed to a substantial package of help for the Palestinian Authority amounting to up to \$3 billion in the years to come, so that two states - Israel and Palestine - two peoples and two religions can live side by side in peace."

Meanwhile the calls from the Islamic pulpits controlled by the Palestinian Authority continue to call for the death of Israeli citizens and the destruction of America. PA controlled radio and TV continue to air material calling for violence. In July the violence escalated to the point that the American press was forced to print the stories. Several suicide bombings were ignored by our liberal press, but when a mall was hit they were forced to print the story. After the mall bombing and several rocket attacks on homes that killed women and children, the Israeli Defense forces attacked.

Despite this violence and preaching of hatred, no conditions were placed on the \$3 billion to be given to the Palestinian Authority to stop the teaching of a culture of death in the media and in the PA controlled school. There was also no condition that non-Muslims receive some of these funds.

MEETING WITH SYRIAN AMBASSADOR

On July 12, 2005 I met with Ambassador Imad Moustapha of Syria and several key issues concerning Christians were discussed. The Ambassador stated that more than 60,000 Iraq Christians have fled the rising tide of extremist violence and are now refugees in secular Syria. The Ambassador expressed further fears that the continuing violence in Iraq was threatening the stability of the region by attracting extremist elements from all over the world. He said his nation is not knowingly assisting any terrorists infiltrating into Iraq and further that the border with that nation is better secured from the Syrian side than the Iraqi side.



**Ambassador Moustapha
and William J Murray**

When I asked the Ambassador about democratization in Syria he told me that the nation was moving toward a multi-party system and that President Assad hoped to have meaningful elections in the near future. The meeting was sponsored by the Institute for Religion and Public Policy. Since that meeting I have spoken with the Ambassador by phone about the conditions of Iraqi Christian refugees in Syria, and a fact finding mission to that nation may be organized to investigate the situation.

In the next few weeks I hope to be able to bring you more information directly from new contacts we are making in Iraq and Syria. We must defend the rights of Christians to practice their faith in Islamic areas of the world.

ISLAMIC JIHAD AND SYRIA

The same day I met with the Ambassador, the Islamic Jihad, which is head quartered in Damascus, Syria took credit for the bombing of the mall mentioned above in Netanya, Israel that killed four teenage girls. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice immediately demanded that Syria break its ties to Islamic Jihad. "It is essential that the Syrian government end its support for terrorist organizations, particularly those who are head quartered and harbored in Damascus," Rice said.

Syria is a nation run by secular technocrats who want better relations with the West and who know that their nation's continuing flirtation with terrorist organizations is counter productive to that end. Intelligence sources indicate that Syria allows these groups to exist on its territory for the same reason Saudi Arabia allowed Osama Bin Laden to raise funds there for decades -- fear. The secular Syrian leadership believes that by allowing groups like Islamic Jihad to operate in Damascus that they themselves will not be attacked. In the long run this has not worked for Saudi Arabia and will not work for Syria either.

TORMENT OF IRAQI CHRISTIANS

On July 13th the Religious Freedom Coalition participated in a press conference on the continuing persecution of Assyrian Christians in Iraq organized by the Iraq Sustainable Democracy Project. It is becoming painfully evident that the Bush Administration did not understand the true minority picture in Iraq and has therefore failed to protect and provide for sub-groups. As an example, the Administration continues to treat the Kurds in northern Iraq as a persecuted minority and runs all funding for rebuilding through their leaders. However, the Kurds are abusing Christians and other minorities in their areas such as the Mandaeans. The Mandaeans are followers of John the Baptist. (The Mandaeans speak Aramaic, the language of Christ.)

American taxpayer money that is going to Iraq is not getting to the smaller minority groups, particularly the Christian groups. During the much touted election in Iraq, Christian ballot boxes vanished while Kurd villages that did not even exist had "high voter turnout". As a result of the disparity of US aid going to Muslim groups and the constant attacks on churches and Christians by extremist Muslims, the Christians have voted with their feet. More than 60,000 Christians have fled to Syria. Christian communities that had endured Saddam Hussein and persecution since the 7th century are fleeing. The biggest failing of the Bush Administration in Iraq has been a failure to understand that persecuted minorities themselves often persecute other smaller minorities.

LEAVING FOR THE WEST BANK

In less than two weeks I will once again travel to Bethlehem. During the first week of August I will distribute thousands of dollars to families of school age children to help them pay tuition and other costs of attending Christian schools. In some instances 100% of tuition has already been provided by the schools, but the families have no funds for uniforms, school lunches or study materials. In other instances the families must pay a share of the tuition. With most Christian families unemployed, this is a great burden.

The average grant per child will be about \$300.00. For some families this will mean the difference between being able to send their children to Christian schools, or sending them to public schools run by the Palestinian Authority. While in Bethlehem I will also be working to arrange for business ventures to help Christian families stay in the birthplace of Christ. Christians once numbered 85% of the population of Bethlehem, and they have now been reduced to less than 20%. Unless Christians in the West reach out and help the Christians in and around Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ will become nothing more than a theme park operated by Muslim businessmen.

[YOU CAN STILL HELP THESE KIDS](#). Please help our work in the Holy Land with a gift to RFC Bethlehem Project, PO Box 77511, Washington, DC 20013. If your church or corporation would consider a grant please call Scott Parker at 202.543.0300.

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William J. Murray, Chairman

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