

Kendrick on Foreign Policy



Cuba

Since the early 1960s, the tight-fisted rule of Fidel Castro's regime has forced the United States to develop an isolation policy toward Cuba. As the Cuban government celebrates the 50th anniversary of its revolution, Kendrick Meek vows to work with President Obama on a foreign policy that can bring about democratic change in Cuba.

In Congress, Kendrick has a consistent record of working to promote democracy in Cuba, and will continue to fight for individual freedoms for Cubans.

At the same time, Kendrick believes that family members should be allowed to visit elderly or sick relatives. Cuban Americans and their loved ones should not be punished by severe travel restrictions that can strain family bonds already stretched thin by Castro's policies.

Darfur

Kendrick Meek has long argued that genocide is occurring in Darfur and that the United States must take action to stop the mass killings, rape and displacement occurring in this region of Sudan. He has spoken out on the issue and worked on a bipartisan basis to bring relief to those targeted.

In 2007, Kendrick led a congressional delegation to Chad, Ethiopia and Kenya to examine events in Darfur and broaden our political, security and economic commitment to Africa.

He has co-sponsored and supported legislation to pressure the government of Sudan, ask the president to take immediate steps to protect civilians in Darfur, and bar the U.S. government from contracting with companies linked to the genocide.

Haiti

As the member of Congress who represents the largest number of Americans of Haitian descent, Kendrick Meek has been a leader on issues facing Haiti. Haiti, while only 600 miles from our shores, is a world away when it comes to the everyday lives of its citizens. The rising cost of food has placed an additional hardship on Haiti's people, three-quarters of whom live on less than \$2 a day. One in five Haitian children is chronically malnourished. A recent *New York Times* article reported that the sale of patties made of mud, oil and sugar typically eaten by the most destitute—are booming.

Kendrick has shown his concern for Haitians by:

- Supporting increased funding for disaster relief.
- Voting in favor of trade preferences for Haitian goods.

Kendrick has also requested Temporary Protected Status for Haitians living in the United States after fleeing political and economic chaos in their country. He has worked closely with other members of Congress from Florida to ensure that Haitians, who have escaped difficult circumstances and risked their lives to reach our shores, are not caught up in heated debates over immigration.

While President René Préval has made giant gains in securing and stabilizing Haiti, recent natural disasters have threatened to undo much of this progress. Kendrick believes that the United States must step forward to help one of its closest neighbors. He understands the need to take an aggressive position on aid to Haiti and is working with the Obama Administration to help the Haitian government maintain stability. It is in the United States' best interests, both morally and financially, to do all that we can do to help our neighbor, and Kendrick is leading the charge.

Iraq and Afghanistan

Kendrick Meek believes that we must honor the heroism and sacrifices of our service members. Thanks to their bravery, we have begun the drawdown in Iraq that Kendrick has consistently advocated, and we are beginning a new strategy in Afghanistan with the support of allies we too have long neglected.

During his first six years in Congress, Kendrick served on the House Armed Services Committee. Repeated trips to combat zones with fellow committee members allowed Kendrick to speak with and learn from service members in the field as well as their commanders. These visits have strengthened his belief that for all of our military's bravery and ingenuity, reconciliation and security in Iraq and Afghanistan can only be brought about politically.

Kendrick was among the first to speak out against the Bush Administration's decision to shift attention and resources from al-Qaeda in Afghanistan to Saddam Hussein's Iraq. That diversion caused us to lose ground in Afghanistan. By all estimates, our military will continue to face many dangers as it fights to disrupt the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

The renewed focus on the real threat to international security will require an international response and American leadership. As a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Kendrick will help ensure that we work with our allies to finish the job our military started in 2001.

Israel

Kendrick Meek is a strong supporter of Israel and the Jewish community. Kendrick has visited the nation twice and is a consistent supporter of U.S. aid to Israel, in both times of peace and conflict. He also believes that the world must recognize Israel's right to exist and its need for secure borders.

In order to protect America, Israel and our other allies, Kendrick believes that Iran must not be allowed to secure nuclear weapons capability. Increased economic, diplomatic and political sanctions are needed to persuade Iran to turn away from its dangerous pursuit of nuclear weapons. He also believes that peace will never come to the Middle East until Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza disarm and agree to a two-state solution.