

Whereas recent violence in Zimbabwe has resulted in several murders and brutal attacks on innocent individuals, including the murder of farm workers and owners;

Whereas violence has been directed toward individuals of all races;

Whereas the ruling party and its supporters have specifically directed violence at democratic reform activists seeking to prepare for upcoming parliamentary elections;

Whereas the offices of a leading independent newspaper in Zimbabwe have been bombed;

Whereas the Government of Zimbabwe has not yet publicly condemned the recent violence;

Whereas President Mugabe's statement that thousands of law-abiding citizens are enemies of the state has further incited violence;

Whereas 147 out of 150 members of the Parliament in Zimbabwe (98 percent) belong to the same political party;

Whereas no date has been set for parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe;

Whereas the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe now exceeds 60 percent and political turmoil is on the brink of destroying Zimbabwe's economy;

Whereas the economy is being further damaged by the Government of Zimbabwe's ongoing involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Whereas the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization has issued a warning that Zimbabwe faces a food emergency due to shortages caused by violence against farmers and farm workers; and

Whereas events in Zimbabwe could threaten stability and economic development in the entire region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) extends its support to the vast majority of citizens of the Republic of Zimbabwe who are committed to peace, economic prosperity, and an open, transparent parliamentary election process;

(2) strongly urges the Government of Zimbabwe to enforce the rule of law and fulfill its responsibility to protect the political and civil rights of all citizens;

(3) supports those international efforts to assist with land reform which are consistent with accepted principles of international law and which take place after the holding of free and fair parliamentary elections;

(4) condemns government-directed violence against farm workers, farmers, and opposition party members;

(5) encourages the local media, civil society, and all political parties to work together toward a campaign environment conducive to free, transparent and fair elections within the legally prescribed period;

(6) recommends international support for voter education, domestic election monitoring, and violence monitoring activities;

(7) urges the United States to continue to monitor violence and condemn brutality against law abiding citizens;

(8) congratulates all the democratic reform activists in Zimbabwe for their resolve to bring about political change peacefully, even in the face of violence and intimidation;

(9) recommends that the United States send a bipartisan delegation under the auspices of the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs to observe the parliamentary election process in Zimbabwe; and

(10) desires a lasting, warm, and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and a democratic, peaceful Zimbabwe.

The resolution was agreed to.

AMENDMENT TO PREAMBLE OFFERED BY MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the preamble.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment to the preamble offered by Mr. GILMAN.

In the 14th clause of the preamble, strike "no date has been set" and insert "June 24 and June 25, 2000, are the dates".

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no comment on the amendment.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we do not object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment to the preamble offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 500.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

□

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING INDEPENDENT MEDIA IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on International Relations be discharged from further consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 352) expressing the sense of the Congress regarding manipulation of the mass media and intimidation of the independent press in the Russian Federation, expressing support for freedom of speech and the independent media in the Russian Federation, and calling on the President of the United States to express his strong concern for freedom of speech and the independent media in the Russian Federation, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I believe the House needs to understand why we are proceeding in an expeditious manner, but I would ask the Chair, in deference to the fact that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) has such extraordinary experience in this area, if we could be permitted to allow him to go forward and then allow the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), who has a great deal of experience in this area.

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank my distinguished chairman and leader, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), and my distinguished good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), for bringing this very timely legislation and thank all the members on the Committee on International Relations to allow us to make a statement on the seriousness of the situation that is occurring in Russia over the last several months relative to freedom of the press.

As my friend has stated and my colleagues are aware, I have a special interest in Russia. I just made my 21st trip there last weekend with Secretary Cohen, where I was able to attend meetings with him and the defense minister and the leaders of the Duma on improving American-Russian relations.

I felt that we achieved a considerable amount of progress, but I would be less than candid if I did not tell my colleagues that there are serious problems inside of Russia. All of us were optimistic when the new President Putin took over in January and was elected in free and fair elections several months later, but there has been a pattern well documented in this bill of actions against members of the free press, including Radio Free Europe and the independent radio and TV stations in Moscow and, most recently, including the chairman and the head of Media Most Corporation, Mr. Gusinsky. In fact, the distinguished chairman knows because he was host to the number two person at Media Most. As the distinguished chairman knows, just several weeks ago, we had the number 2 person from Media Most over speaking to Members of Congress expressing the real concerns of what happened with the FSB invasion of their headquarters and the outrage that many of us felt about having this independent media feel the pressure of what appears to be the Putin government, in trying to crack down on the ability of Russians to speak out.

Russia is a fragile democracy, and that fragile democracy is going to exist and succeed only based upon the success of their free media, and we must in America speak out when we see incidences occur like the incident involving the reporter who was responding or reporting on the Chechnyan war to the efforts by Gusinsky to report on concerns within Russia about the direction of the Russian government. And while President Putin and leaders in the various factions may not agree with what is being said by the Russian media, they must understand that a free democracy must have that free speech, or it will cease to be a free democracy.

I might also add that we are heartened that Mr. Gusinsky has recently been released, but I also want to mention there are other patterns of strong-arm tactics coming out of Russia, Mr. Speaker. On April 3, one of our Pennsylvania constituents, a Penn State