

in November—which I cosigned—to the Chairman of the Russian State Duma urging the rejection of this legislation. In particular, the letter emphasized the importance that nongovernmental organizations play in civil society and in fulfilling Russia's obligations as a democratic state and member of the international community.

Russia has made great strides since the end of the Cold War. There were serious concerns that Russia would not have a smooth transition to a fully functioning democracy. I am gravely concerned about recent developments in Russia. President Putin himself has said that "modern Russia's greatest achievement is the democratic process (and) the achievements of civil society". I therefore call on President Putin and the State Duma to be true to their word and reject this bill, to reaffirm their commitment to the democratic process and civil society.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 312, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 312.

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

There was no objection.

#### CONDEMNING THE LAOGAI

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 294) calling on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 294

Whereas the Laogai is a vast prison labor system in the People's Republic of China and consists of a network of more than 1,000 prisons, camps, and mental institutions in which detainees must work at factories, farms, mines, and other facilities;

Whereas the two major aims of the Laogai are to generate economic resources for the

state through free labor and to "reform criminals" through hard labor and political indoctrination;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China relies on the Laogai as a tool for political suppression of pro-democracy activists, Internet dissidents, labor activists, and religious and spiritual believers, including Han Chinese, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians, and "house church" Christians;

Whereas, while the Soviet Gulags no longer exist, the Chinese Laogai is still fully operational, subjecting most of its three million prisoners to forced labor by threatening torture;

Whereas fifty million people have suffered as prisoners in the Laogai since its inception;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are deprived of religious freedom and forced to give up their political views in order to become a "new socialist person" and uphold communism and the Chinese Communist Party;

Whereas in recent years, more than 100,000 religious believers have been unjustly and illegally imprisoned in one Laogai camp alone, where they have been beaten, tortured, and often killed;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are forced to work long hours in appalling conditions, including mining asbestos and other toxic chemicals with no protective clothing, tanning hides while standing naked in vats filled with chemicals used for softening of animal skins, and working in mining facilities where explosions and other accidents are a common occurrence;

Whereas it is documented that China's national policy since 1984 has been to extract organs from executed prisoners without prior consent of the prisoners or their family members, setting China apart from every other country in the world;

Whereas there are more than 1,000 instances in which organs are harvested from executed Chinese prisoners every year;

Whereas both Chinese and foreign patients from around the world receive organs transplanted from executed Chinese prisoners;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are required to make confessions of their wrongdoings, which include political and religious views that the Chinese Communist Party wishes to suppress;

Whereas Chinese citizens are not guaranteed due process of law nor even a right to trial;

Whereas many individuals are often convicted and sentenced with no trial at all, or they are convicted with "evidence" extracted through torture;

Whereas in one part of the Laogai system known as the Laojiao, or reeducation-through-labor, Chinese citizens can be detained for up to three years without any judicial review or formal appearance in the judicial system;

Whereas goods produced by forced labor in the Laogai system continue to be exported to the United States and the world;

Whereas the Chinese Government has continuously encouraged the export of goods produced through the Laogai prison system and relies on forced labor as an integral part of its economy;

Whereas forced labor and torture practices carried out in the Laogai violate international laws, standards, and treaties to which China is party, including the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and

Whereas China, a member State of the International Labor Organization, also violates many agreements regarding labor conditions and the rights of workers: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—*

(1) calls on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government;

(2) calls on the Government of the United States to fully implement United States laws that prohibit the importation of forced labor products made in the Laogai;

(3) calls on the Government of the United States to take actions to review the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Prison Labor in 1992 and the Statement of Cooperation in 1994 with respect to the Laogai;

(4) will undertake efforts to join with the European Parliament to urge the introduction of a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemning the Laogai and the human rights situation in China;

(5) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the Laogai, including the total number of Laogai camps and prisoners throughout China, the exact locations of the camps, and the business production activities taking place at the camps;

(6) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the number of executions of prisoners at the camps that are carried out every year, and the extent of the harvesting and transplantation of organs of executed prisoners;

(7) urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to allow unrestricted visits by international human rights inspectors, including United Nations inspectors, to Laogai camps throughout China; and

(8) urges the Congressional-Executive Commission on China to continue to investigate the Laogai system in China and to make recommendations for United States policy that will help protect human rights for Chinese citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution which calls for the condemnation of the vast Laogai labor system of more than 1,000 prisons, camps and mental institutions maintained by the government of the People's Republic of China, and of the use of forced labor as an integral part of China's economy.

I would note parenthetically that, back in 1992, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and I gained access to one of those prison camps, Beijing Prison Camp Number 1, a horrible place where 40 Tiananmen Square activists were being punished for their peaceful activities. Hundreds of others were also imprisoned there for political, religious and other alleged crimes. The place reeked of cruelty and sadness and was a nightmarish insight into the dark soul of the Chinese Communist dictatorship. Today, sadly, the Laogai continues its cruelty unabated.

Indeed, the continued operation of this network of Stalinist camps within