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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 8, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HILDA L. SOLIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

INDIA: A DEMOCRACY STRUGGLING FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. STEARNS. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I come to the House floor as a result of a town meeting I had in my congressional district in which I heard from the Harvest Christian Church. It goes to the point that the United States and India, as all of us know, are the world's two largest democracies. However, although the Indian National Government guarantees religious freedom, in many of the provinces, oppression and

persecution still exist. I want to bring that to my colleagues' attention this morning. Harvest Christian Church in my home district has worked closely with many church groups in India. And, as I mentioned, during my last town meeting, Pastor Crowe shared with me some of the disturbing things that are happening there.

On April 1, during Palm Sunday celebrations in Jabalpur, in the middle of their worship service, about 30 people from a Hindu extremist group—whose name literally means “religious army”—came with sticks and started beating everybody, including the evangelist and the men and women and children who were in the congregation that day. The pastor was badly beaten and suffers severe head injury. These people were admitted in the hospital where people from that group went and threatened them. They decided to leave the hospital and are currently staying at undisclosed locations. The attackers remain unpunished for these crimes. In fact, that day no one from the government condemned the attack or sympathized with the victims or the terrorized Christian community, not to speak of offering any relief to the family that were affected by this terrorist group. The police authorities, though reluctant to name the forces behind the attack, announced finally the arrest of five persons. All were from a radical Hindu background and lived in the slums the pastor used to visit regularly. Persecution such as this is not uncommon in India, and these sorts of attacks are not isolated incidents.

My colleagues, in another example, a mob of around 50 Hindu extremists surrounded a house church the night of April 22 and began shouting derogatory statements at all the worshipers in the church. Terrified believers in the church shut the doors, phoned the local police and asked for help. Two policemen arrived and took two pastors to the police station. En route, a few ac-

tivists began beating and insulting the pastors and four other believers who had accompanied them, as the police officers simply looked on. “At the station, the police shouted at the pastors, and the extremists who were present made accusations that the pastors were forcibly converting people and inciting the people to stop doing Hindu rituals and to remove pictures of Hindu deities from their houses,” George said. The tirade continued until 3 a.m., when the pastors were jailed, not being released on bail until April 25. The police inspector stated the pastors were charged with “promoting enmity” between different groups on grounds of religion and “deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings or any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs.”

While there is ongoing violence against Christians in India, the good news is that it is endemic and the number of incidents are not increasing. The BJP is a Hindu political party, which was in national power until 2004 when the secular constitution party then came to power. However, they still retain positions of power in some states, and it is there where the majority of attacks against Christians occur.

According to the State Department International Religious Freedom Report 2006, “The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice. However, the government sometimes did not act swiftly enough to counter effectively societal attacks against religious minorities and attempts by some leaders of state and local governments to limit religious freedom. Despite government efforts to foster communal harmony, some extremists continued to view ineffective investigation and prosecution of attacks on religious minorities, particularly at the state and local level, as a signal that they could commit such violence with impunity.”

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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My colleagues, this is a situation that must not be tolerated. The frequency of these attacks and the lack of prosecution of extremists who perpetrate these crimes are in direct opposition to the most basic tenets of our democracy and surely the democracy in India. I urge the Indian Government to protect religious minorities and to take strong steps to enforce their constitutional laws regarding religious freedom in these oppressive provinces.

THE RISING PRICE OF GAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. As I speak on the floor today, across America citizens are being gouged at the gas pump once again. Every year, as certain as Memorial Day is celebrated at the end of this month, the oil industry jacks up prices.

On the west coast in Oregon, I paid \$3.43 a gallon for regular in Springfield. My colleague, GREG WALDEN, paid \$3.99 on the east side of the mountains. The local paper accounts for this by saying "unexpected refinery maintenance." Hmm. Maybe they could schedule maintenance at a different time of year. No, that wouldn't be quite so profitable for the industry. In fact, the industry has been colluding for more than a decade to close down refinery capacity so they can have these wonderful price spikes and gouge American consumers.

There was an industry memo back then saying how the refinery sector wasn't particularly profitable, but through mergers the industry has managed to do away with more than 100 refineries. Now we have a refinery shortage. And if they just close one down to sweep the floors, the price of gas goes up 20 cents a gallon and the industry execs cry all the way to the bank and to their bonuses. This has to stop. We have to get back in charge of this industry. We've got to break up these huge conglomerates. Start with a moratorium on further mergers. Break 'em up. Impose a windfall profits tax. Unless they invest in more refinery capacity, unless they invest in new fuels or energy efficiency, confiscate the money from them through a windfall profits tax which they have taken from the American consumers through price-gouging and reinvest it to bring down prices and make this country more energy-efficient in the future. We need both a short-term and a long-term strategy to deal with this industry.

We have to take on the OPEC cartel. Now, this President is all about free trade. All about free trade. He wants more free trade agreements. Seven of the members of OPEC are in the World Trade Organization, highly touted by this President as a rules-based trade organization to promote free trade. They are conspiring and colluding among themselves and with Big Oil to

jack up the price of oil. That's illegal under the WTO. Why won't President Bush file a complaint against OPEC? Perhaps because he's a little too tight with the Saudis, the royal family that runs that country and others. And they obviously, as well as industry execs, are profiting immensely from this situation.

We need to, as I said earlier, ban further mergers. My bill would establish a commission to study market power and suggest remedies to that. To me the simplest remedy is antitrust and to break up some of these giant conglomerates and again begin to bring a little bit of competition back to this industry.

The windfall profits tax I mentioned earlier, impose a windfall profits tax on these folks and take that money and reinvest it in energy efficiency and new fuels and research unless they will spend the money on energy efficiency, new fuels, and refinery capacity which is needed in this country.

If we don't take action, it isn't going to happen. ExxonMobil is making \$4.6 million per hour, \$109 million per day, \$3.2 billion a month and \$40 billion last year. One corporation. Last quarter they set yet another record. And you can bet with the price-gouging going on today, they're going to set yet another record. Every quarter is a new record. But the President talks about free market forces. These aren't free market forces. These people are conspiring to gouge the American consumers and drive up prices at the pump. We need real price relief soon. This Congress must act and the President must stop stonewalling and protecting his friends both domestically and internationally who are involved in the oil cartel.

CHINA AND THE 2008 OLYMPICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. I thank the gentlelady.

I want Members to see an editorial that was in the Wall Street Journal by Ronan Farrow and Mia Farrow entitled "The Genocide Olympics."

It deals with the issue that there was a full page ad today in The Washington Post with regard to the genocide that is taking place in Sudan, and the one country that has the opportunity to really make a difference to stop the genocide in Sudan is the country of China.

Mia Farrow says in this editorial, "One World, One Dream is China's slogan for the 2008 Olympics. But there is one nightmare that China shouldn't be allowed to sweep under the rug. That nightmare is Darfur, where more than 400,000 people have been killed and more than 2½ million driven from flaming villages by the Chinese-backed government of Sudan."

I have seen those villages and the burning of the villages and we know

that the genocide could be stopped by China.

Mia Farrow goes on to say, "That so many corporate sponsors want the world to look away from that atrocity during the games is bad enough. But equally disappointing is the decision of artists like director Steven Spielberg, who quietly visited China this month as he prepares to help stage the Olympic ceremonies, to sanitize Beijing's image." Steven Spielberg, who produced Schindler's List, is now going to try to turn the 2008 Olympics in China to look like a wonderful, wonderful thing.

China is involved in Sudan where they have Antonov bombers bombing the people, helicopters coming in and killing the people, and the Janjaweed who come in and do all sorts of bad things—kill, rape and maim. And China has used its veto power, Mia Farrow says, on the U.N. Security Council to repeatedly obstruct efforts by the U.S. and the U.K. to introduce peacekeepers to curtail the slaughter. Beijing, she says, is uniquely positioned to put a stop to the slaughter, yet they have so far been unabashed in their refusal to do so.

Now, there are some people saying that maybe—maybe—the 2008 Olympics ought to be boycotted. Now, how will you feel, watching or going to the 2008 Olympics and knowing that the country that is doing that could stop the genocide in Darfur?

And so I would urge that if China does not deal with the issue, then the sponsors, but also the people from the West, certainly ought not encourage China to say that we don't care, therefore, we're going to go to your Olympics when Mia Farrow calls it "the Genocide Olympics."

And then she says some other very tough things about Spielberg. Does he really want to be this? I mean, the Chinese are in essence doing what the Nazis did in the Olympics in the thirties, cleaning the streets and changing things.

China has the ability to stop the genocide that is taking place in Sudan, and I think everyone should do everything they can. This administration should do more and everyone in the Congress should do more, that if China doesn't use its leverage in the U.N. and allow the Security Council to pass a resolution allowing the end to come out with regard to U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur, then I believe that Mia Farrow and those who are concerned and are considering boycotting the Olympics will be right. This is a test for China.

Now, the Chinese Embassy is working this Hill aggressively. The Chinese Embassy will be working the administration. The Chinese Embassy will be working powerful governments around the world. But as long as the genocide continues in Darfur where 400,000 people have died, 2.1 million are living in refugee camps, knowing that China has the ability to stop what it mentions on