DISTURBING PATTERN OF PAKISTANI ACTIONS DEMANDS SERIOUS SCRUTINY BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Pallone) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday in this House we approved on a bipartisan basis a resolution congratulating the people of India and their government for the successful parliamentary elections recently concluded by that thriving democracy. I was pleased to support that resolution and to speak in favor of it.

Unfortunately, action on another resolution that has been approved by the Committee on International Relations and is ready for consideration on this floor has been delayed. That other resolution would express the strong opposition of Congress to the recent military coup in Pakistan that overthrew the civilian government. While individual members of Congress, including me, have spoken out against the Pakistani coup, it is important for the House of Representatives to go on record collectively stating that we do not tolerate the overthrow of an elected government.

I am very disappointed, Mr. Speaker, in the Republican leadership for the continued delay in bringing up this resolution. Since we are about to adjourn, I feel the resolution is dead for this year.

Last month, Mr. Speaker, the military coup in Pakistan was one of a series of disturbing actions that deserve very close scrutiny and clear condemnation by the U.S. government, the Congress, as well as the administration. One of the most shocking of these was last week’s rocket attacks against American and UN targets in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. The rockets were aimed at buildings in the heart of the capital, including the U.S. Embassy, a library and cultural center known as the American Center, and an office tower housing several UN agencies. Thank God, no one was killed, although one person was injured, a Pakistani guard at the American Center.

Mr. Speaker, the attacks came 2 days before UN sanctions were scheduled to be imposed on Pakistan. The United States, along with India, are determined to send a strong message that Pakistan’s actions were condemned by the U.S. and the international community, and yet here is the Pakistani regime tolerating, if not directly supporting, the operations of these movements in their country.

We have recently seen another example of the lack of respect for democracy and the rule of law on the part of the new Pakistani military regime with the initiative to indict the deposed Prime Minister, Sharif, on trumped up charges of treason and hijacking, charges which carry the death penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get carried away singing the praises of Mr. Sharif. He was deeply involved in the ill-fated military campaign in Kashmir earlier this year. But he was the recognized legitimate leader of the nation, a democracy in charge in Pakistan. The turn of events is recognized by that thriving democracy. I should add, Mr. Speaker, that Pakistani military leaders, many of the same elements who carried out last month’s coup d’etat, precipitated a major crisis by unleashing an attack against Indian positions in the area of Kargil, on the line of control that separates India and Pakistan controlled areas of Kashmir.

Pakistan’s actions were condemned by the U.S. and the international community, and Pakistan was forced to essentially withdraw. But the attacks by Pakistani forces on India army positions continued day-to-day, causing casualties on both sides and threatening the stability of the entire South Asia region.

You have to wonder, Mr. Speaker, why the U.S. continues to try to win the favor of the Pakistani regime, given the proven collaboration between Pakistan and the fundamentalist Taliban militia in Afghanistan, and with bin Laden. Bin Laden and the Taliban represent the height of violent anti-Americanism, and yet here is the Pakistani regime tolerating, if not directly supporting, the operations of these movements in their country.

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