Mr. Speaker, the time has come to stop supporting governments that actually work against us. We should cut off all American aid to India and declare our support for the freedom movements through democratic plebiscites. These are important steps to extend the hand of freedom to the people of South Asia.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FOR THE BRING THEM HOME ALIVE ACT OF 1999

HON. JOEL HEFLEY
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, May 25, 1999

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today the Bring Them Home Alive Act of 1999. This legislation provides a powerful incentive to persuade foreign nationals to identify and return to the United States any living American POW/MIAs served in the Vietnam or Korean War. I am pleased to be joined in this effort by 28 bipartisan cosponsors.

The on-going war in Yugoslavia has brought the plight of American POW/MIAs to the forefront of the nation's psyche. We all watched in horror several weeks ago as three captured American servicemen were displayed with visible cuts and bruises on Serbian television. We feared for their lives, their safety and their well-being. It was with great relief that we watched as Staff Sergeants Christopher Stone and Andrew Ramirez and Specialist Steven Gonzales were released, relatively unharmed, from a Serbian prison.

The story of the capture of these three servicemen ended with family reunions and a safe return home to America. However, too many POW/MIAs were not so fortunate. There is the possibility that soldiers from the Vietnam and Korean Wars are still living as prisoners of war. It is our duty to do all that we can to bring them home.

The Bring Them Home Alive Act would grant asylum in the U.S. to foreign nationals who helped return a living American POW/MIAs from either the Vietnam War or the Korean War. The bill specifically allows citizens of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, China, North Korea, or any of the states of the former Soviet Union who assist in the rescue of an American POW/MIAS to be granted asylum. The legislation would also grant asylum to the rescuer's family, including their spouse and children, since their safety would likely be threatened by such a rescue.

While there is some doubt as to whether any American POW/MIAs from these two wars remain alive, the official U.S. policy distinctly recognizes the possibility that American POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War could still be alive and held captive in Indochina. The official position of the Defense Department states, "Although we have thus far been unable to prove that Americans are still being held against their will, the information available to us precludes ruling out that possibility. Actions to investigate live-sighting reports receive and will continue to receive necessary priority and resources based on the assumption that at least some Americans are still held captive. Should any report prove true, we will take appropriate action to secure their return." The Bring Them Home Alive Act supports this official position and provides for the possibility of bringing any surviving U.S. servicemen home alive.

In order to inform foreign nationals of this offer, the bill calls for the International Broadcasting Bureau to draw upon its resources, such as WORLDNET Television and its Internet sites, to broadcast information that promotes the Bring Them Home Alive asylum program. Similarly, the bill calls on Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia to broadcast information.

Mr. Speaker, we are less than two weeks away from celebrating Memorial Day. This holiday is an opportunity for us, as a nation, to honor the soldiers and veterans who so valiantly served and protected our nation and our freedoms. American servicemen and women deserve this recognition, as well as our respect and appreciation. I believe it would be a fitting tribute to American soldiers to pass the Bring Them Home Alive Act. As long as there remains even the remotest possibility that there may be American survivors, we owe it to our servicemen and their families to bring them home alive.

HUNGER’S SILENT VICTIMS

HON. TONY P. HALL
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, May 25, 1999

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to our colleagues’ attention a humanitarian crisis in Asia, one half a world away from the glare of television lights and public concern—but one every bit as worthy of our attention as the crime scene that is Kosovo.

I recently visited rural villages in Cambodia, and was surprised to see that Pol Pot’s legacies—serious malnutrition and illiteracy—persist two decades after he was run from power. I am especially concerned that our country is focusing too much on political issues, and ignoring the tremendous humanitarian problems in Cambodia.

One aspect of these problems—hunger and malnutrition so severe that it is stunting the bodies and brains of more than half of Cambodia’s children—was explained in a superb article recently in Time Magazine’s Asian edition. We all know the tragic of Cambodia; this article describes a future sure to be needlessly sad.

Cambodia is a fertile land at the crossroads of a thriving regional economy. Its people are hard-working and innovative. With a little peace, and a little humanitarian assistance, they can again be the stable, growing rice exporters they were in the 1960’s.

I would respectfully request that Time’s article, and my own statement on the situation, be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

(From Time Asia, May 17, 1999)

HUNGER’S SILENT VICTIMS
(By Nisid Hajari)

Cambodia is accustomed to the thunder of artillery, to death tolls thickened by war
and disease. The quiet of peace, however, has begun to fail. In the silence, the fear is eerie. The latest crisis: food security, or its shameful absence among the country’s malnourished poor.

The problem is hardly new, only newly appreciated. Earlier this year a joint survey published by UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) found that in Cambodia’s poorest rural areas, at least half the children under age five are physically stunted, while 20% suffer acute malnutrition.

According to a separate U.N. study published last December, Cambodia has the highest malnutrition rates in East Asia, with an average daily intake of only 1,980 calories, even lower than that of famine-stricken North Korea (2,390 calories) “Malnutrition in Cambodia is chronic,” says the WFP’s acting country director, Ken Noah Davies. “You could call this a silent emergency, or you could call this a national crisis.”

The scope of the problem bears out that dire warning. Every year, the health service in a typical Cambodian village treats 150 to 200 cases of diarrhea, mostly in children. The doctor’s prescription? Double-up the dosage ofQB “prediction,” the village leader’s remedy for all ills, includingitis dangerous to eat when hungry. For many Cambodians, there is no alternative to eating QB “prediction” or the fermented fish paste called “prahoc”—to round out the dish. That little is not nearly enough: rice, while high in calories, has relatively few nutrients.

The WFP says Prime Minister Hun Sen was shocked by the U.N. surveys, and he now insists that eliminating malnutrition is a top priority. “Now that the fighting is over, we expect everyone to work on this issue,” says Nouv Kanun, the energetic secretary general of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

A conference of Cabinet ministers and provincial authorities last month endorsed a 10-year plan to end the root causes of malnutrition, focusing on crop diversification and awareness campaigns about nutrition, health and hygiene. Still, the damage that is already evident will plague Cambodia for years to come. “If you are malnourished for six months until you are five, you are going to be handicapped for the rest of your life,” warns Davies. “You will never be able to develop your full mental or physical capacity.” Perhaps now that warning can be heard.

POL POT'S LEGACIES—I LLITERACY AND MALNUTRITION—HAVE NOT YET FOLLOWS DESERT TO THE GRAVE

WASHINGTON.—U.S. Rep. Tony Hall, D-Ohio, today detailed his impressions of humanitarian conditions in Cambodia and warned that problems of desperate poverty—lack of education, lack of access to health care, and the lack of schools, escape routes and water systems—will not disappear even as Pol Pot's military is defeated, he achieved his hideous goal of turning Cambodia into a primitive place.

After the 1997 coup, the United States cut its funding for private charities working inside Cambodia—from $35 million to $12 million. That is unacceptable, low, given the election last year, which it is only hurting poor Cambodians who already have suffered unimaginably. Whatever Congress and the Administration think of Cambodia’s government, we need a way to help its poor, and I intend to press the United Nations, the United States, and other countries to do that.

“Pol Pot’s military is defeated, he achieved his hideous goal of turning Cambodia into a primitive place. After the 1997 coup, the United States cut its funding for private charities working inside Cambodia—from $35 million to $12 million. That is unacceptable, low, given the election last year, which it is only hurting poor Cambodians who already have suffered unimaginably. Whatever Congress and the Administration think of Cambodia’s government, we need a way to help its poor, and I intend to press the United Nations, the United States, and other countries to do that.

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