

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), our distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, for having considered this measure at an early date and for favorably recommending it to the House for consideration.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), one of the original authors of this bill.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, extend my appreciation for the leadership that the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), chairman of the Committee on International Relations, is showing with regard to the introduction of this measure. What the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) is doing here, I think, is extremely important; and the importance of it will resound for many years, decades and longer into the future.

I also want to express my appreciation to Roger Bowen, who is the president of the State University College at New Paltz for his interest in international studies and promoting study abroad.

The bill of the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) is an extremely important measure. Obviously, it is important for these students who will be the primary beneficiaries in that they will have the opportunity to travel and study in a foreign country and get all of the benefits that flow from such an experience, benefits of interacting with the culture that is different from their own, benefits from having the opportunity to become more familiar with the language which is different from their own, and also opportunities to expand their own personal knowledge and experience.

But the beneficiaries of this bill go far beyond the individuals who will be initially benefited. In fact, I think, Mr. Speaker, the initiative of the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) will benefit the country as a whole.

As we find more and more that we are put in the position of being the principal leader militarily and economically in so many places around the world, nevertheless, at the same time, we find that so many of our students, future leaders in this country, are unaware of foreign cultures and inadequately versed in foreign languages. That leaves us unable in many ways to take the kind of leadership role which we ought to and appropriately would be taking.

The legislation of the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) is going to fill that gap. More and more students who would not have the opportunity because of their financial situation to travel and study abroad will

now be given the opportunity to do so. Their benefits will inure to themselves, to their families and to their future. But those benefits also will inure in a very profound and long lasting way to the benefits of our country and the other countries around the world with which we interact.

So I think that the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) is doing something here today that is very, very important; and I hope that all of us will fully recognize the significance of his initiative and that we will all support it very enthusiastically.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4528, the International Academic Opportunity Act. A bill that I feel allows positive movement in the area of education for our country today.

This bill authorizes \$1.5 million dollars be given to a program that would enable lower income students, the opportunity to travel and learn abroad. I feel this is an excellent initiative that will serve this country well with the reaped benefits that are produced as these students return back to their communities here in the United States with a moral global mind.

I have long since stated that the economic divide is a strain that must be done away with in this country, and clearly education is a way to achieve that goal. Especially, in the case of international education opportunities, where all socio-economic groups are allowed to participate. Ensuring all students the opportunity for success and growth under our nation's academic umbrella.

This is why I am in strong support of this program that will be known as the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program. This will be an effort to help all students afford up to a year of study abroad by providing a grant of up to \$5,000, for a year to those accepted into a foreign college or university, that is in partnership with their home institution. This grant will be given only to students who already receive need-based assistance and Pell Grants to complete their education.

I will conclude this speech of strong support with a quote I recently read from John F. Kennedy, "Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."

These words of wisdom are a perfect guide for what we, as representatives of the people should strive to achieve. The benefit of our country lies in our youth. So I encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHUGH). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4528, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING CONDEMNATION OF USE OF CHILDREN AS SOLDIERS AND EXPRESSING BELIEF THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD SUPPORT AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, LEAD EFFORTS TO END THIS ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 348) expressing condemnation of the use of children as soldiers and expressing the belief that the United States should support and, where possible, lead efforts to end this abuse of human rights, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 348

Whereas in the year 2000 approximately 300,000 individuals under the age of 18 are participating in armed conflict in more than 30 countries worldwide;

Whereas many of these children are forcibly conscripted through kidnaping or coercion, while others join military units due to economic necessity, to avenge the loss of a family member, or for their own personal safety;

Whereas many military commanders frequently force child soldiers to commit gruesome acts of ritual killings or torture against their enemies, including against other children;

Whereas many military commanders separate children from their families in order to foster dependence on military units and leaders, leaving children vulnerable to manipulation, deep traumatization, and in need of psychological counseling and rehabilitation;

Whereas child soldiers are exposed to hazardous conditions and risk physical injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, malnutrition, deformed backs and shoulders from carrying overweight loads, and respiratory and skin infections;

Whereas many young female soldiers face the additional psychological and physical horrors of rape and sexual abuse, being enslaved for sexual purposes by militia commanders, and forced to endure severe social stigma should they return home;

Whereas children in northern Uganda continue to be kidnaped by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which is supported and funded by the Government of Sudan and which has committed and continues to commit gross human rights violations in Uganda;

Whereas children in Sri Lanka have been forcibly recruited by the opposition Tamil Tigers movement and forced to kill or be killed in the armed conflict in that country;

Whereas an estimated 7,000 child soldiers have been involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone, some as young as age 10, with many being forced to commit extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, and amputations for the rebel Revolutionary United Front;

Whereas on January 21, 2000, in Geneva, a United Nations Working Group, including representatives from more than eighty governments including the United States, reached consensus on an optional protocol on the use of child soldiers;

Whereas this optional protocol will raise the international minimum age for conscription to age eighteen and will require governments to take all feasible measures to ensure

that members of their armed forces under the age of eighteen do not participate directly in combat, prohibit the recruitment and use in armed conflict of persons under the age of eighteen by nongovernmental armed forces, encourage governments to raise the minimum legal age for voluntary recruits above the current standard of 15 and, commits governments to support the demobilization and rehabilitation of child soldiers, and when possible, to allocate resources to this purpose;

Whereas on October 29, 1998, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan set minimum age requirements for United Nations peacekeeping personnel that are made available by member nations of the United Nations;

Whereas the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in the 1999 Charter for European Security signed in Istanbul, Turkey, committed themselves to "develop and implement measures to promote the rights and interests of children in armed conflict and postconflict situations, including refugees and internally displaced children" and to "look at ways of preventing forced or compulsory recruitment for use in armed conflict of persons under 18 years of age";

Whereas United Nations Under-Secretary General for Peace-keeping, Bernard Miyet, announced in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly that contributing governments of member nations were asked not to send civilian police and military observers under the age of 25, and that troops in national contingents should preferably be at least 21 years of age but in no case should they be younger than 18 years of age;

Whereas on August 25, 1999, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1261 (1999) condemning the use of children in armed conflicts;

Whereas in addressing the Security Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, urged the adoption of a global three-pronged approach to combat the use of children in armed conflict, first to raise the age limit for recruitment and participation in armed conflict from the present age of 15 to the age of 18, second, to increase international pressure on armed groups which currently abuse children, and third to address the political, social, and economic factors which create an environment where children are induced by appeal of ideology or by socio-economic collapse to become child soldiers;

Whereas the United States delegation to the United Nations working group relating to child soldiers, which included representatives from the Department of Defense, supported the Geneva agreement on the optional protocol;

Whereas on May 25, 2000, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the optional protocol on the use of child soldiers;

Whereas the optional protocol was opened for signature on June 5, 2000; and

Whereas President Clinton has publicly announced his support of the optional protocol and a speedy process of review and signature: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress joins the international community in—

(A) condemning the use of children as soldiers by governmental and nongovernmental armed forces worldwide;

(B) welcoming the optional protocol as a critical first step in ending the use of children as soldiers; and

(C) applauding the decision by the United States Government to support the protocol;

(2) it is the sense of the Congress that—

(A) President Clinton should be commended for signing the optional protocol and should consult closely with the Senate with the objective of building support for this protocol;

(B) the President and the Congress should work together to enact a law that establishes a fund for the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of child soldiers; and

(C) the Departments of State and Defense should undertake all possible efforts to persuade and encourage other governments to ratify and endorse the new optional protocol on the use of child soldiers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

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 H. Con. Res. 348.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my full support of H. Con. Res. 348. This vitally important resolution that was introduced by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) condemns the use of children as soldiers and expresses the belief that the United States should support efforts to end this practice where up to 300,000 children under the age of 18 are combatants in more than 30 countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity last week of joining the President at the U.N. as he signed the protocols with regard to this resolution. I commend the President for signing the U.N. optional protocol on the use of child soldiers, raising the international minimum age for conscription and participation in armed conflict to age 18 and commits the governments to the demobilization and rehabilitation of child soldiers.

This measure asks the President to consult closely with the Senate to build support for the adoption of this protocol and addresses a very serious human rights abuse occurring with alarming frequency in many nations of the world, including Sierra Leone.

Accordingly, I ask for its prompt adoption. I commend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), who introduced the concurrent resolution, for his advocacy of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 348.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from

Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), the prime author of this very worthwhile bill.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding me this time and for all of his help in support of this effort.

I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to begin by thanking the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for working with me on this bill. As co-chair of the Human Rights Caucus, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) have led the fight against the use of child soldiers.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDESON) and his staff, as well as the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN), for working with me to bring this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I have a deep respect for the power of young people. Forty-three years ago, I was but a child myself when I first met Martin Luther King, Jr., and joined the nonviolent struggle for justice in America. So I know, Mr. Speaker, that young people can change the world. That is why the idea of using children as soldiers so disturbs me.

As the last remaining superpower, the United States is morally bound to use our strength to protect those who are weak and exposed. Yet, as we stand here, thousands by thousands of children in Colombia, in Sierra Leone, and countless other countries around the world have been forced to kill at one moment and used as cannon fodder the next. Children who should fill rows of school desks, instead fill columns of soldiers. The brutal use of children to fight adult wars must end. The time is now. Our job is simple, to lead the way.

In January, the United Nations reached an agreement to ban child soldiers.

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Last week the President signed this treaty. This resolution calls on the President and the Senate to work together and build support for this protocol. It urges the Congress and the President to establish a fund to help child soldiers reenter society. And most importantly, this resolution calls on the United States to use its moral authority to lead efforts across the globe to put a stop to this brutal practice.

Many of us, Mr. Speaker, have fought long and hard for freedom and justice in our own country, but our commitment to human rights, to peace, to nonviolence, to a sense of community, to justice, that commitment cannot stop at the water. It is our moral obligation, our mission, and our mandate to lead the struggle to protect children everywhere from the violence of war.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues for joining in this help, joining in support of this effort to bring this bill to the floor today.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again commend the prime author of this very worthy resolution, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), for his leadership and his hard work. I would like to acknowledge and commend the President for signing this protocol on July 5 of the year 2000 to end the use of children in war.

This resolution, which condemns the use of children, is worthy. It points out that in the world today approximately 300,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17 have been compelled and forced and abducted and coerced and brutalized into becoming combat soldiers, personal and sexual slaves, porters, or all of the above. This brutal abuse of children has got to stop. This U.N. protocol is a good beginning. Our support of this protocol is appropriate.

The work of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is admirable, and I am very pleased to support this resolution and call on all Members of the House to vote in favor of it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my strong support for H. Con. Res. 348, a resolution that will benefit the lives of many of our children around the world.

Last week, I joined President Clinton, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke, and Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers for the signing of two landmark Protocols that address prostitution, the impact of pornography on children, and the global practice of child labor. This resolution applauds the decision by the U.S. government to support the Protocol that condemns the use of children as soldiers by government and nongovernment forces.

As we vote on this important resolution, I look forward to backing for the other Protocol regarding child prostitution and slavery.

It is estimated that this year some 300,000 children under the age of 18 are engaged in armed military conflicts in more than 30 countries. Sadly, far too many of these wonderful children are forcibly conscripted through kidnapping or coercion and others joined because of economic necessity, to avenge the loss of a family member or for their own personal safety.

Military commanders often separate children from their families in order to foster dependence on military units and leaders, leaving such children vulnerable to manipulation. That is clearly unacceptable. I believe it is very unfortunate that military forces actually force child soldiers to commit terrible acts of killing or torture against their enemies, including against other children.

Last August, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1261, condemning the use of children in armed conflict. On May 25, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted an Optional Protocol on the use of child soldiers. This is a sensible addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Protocol extends much needed protection for children. My fellow Americans, this is one of the first international commitments made by this nation that protects our children. We can no longer deny that thousands of children are killed, brutalized, and sold into slavery. In Sierra Leone, half of the rebel forces are under 18 and some are as young as 4 or 5 years of age.

The Protocol addresses such action by raising the international minimum age for conscription and direct participation in armed conflict to age 18, it encourages governments to raise the minimum legal age for voluntary recruits above the current standard of 15 years of age, and it commits governments to support the demobilization and rehabilitation of child soldiers.

That is a very strong step forward. It speaks to an international sense of justice that should, indeed must be honored by governments around the world. We should commend President Clinton, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke, and U.S. Secretary Lawrence Summers for their leadership on this issue.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 348.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I speak today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 348, to express condemnation of the use of children as soldiers.

In dozens of countries around the world, children have become direct participants in war. Denied a childhood and often subjected to horrific violence, some 300,000 children are serving as soldiers in current armed conflicts from Uganda to Colombia, from Sierra Leone to Lebanon. Hundreds of thousands more have been recruited into armed forces and could be sent into combat at any moment. Although most child soldiers are teenagers, some are as young as 7 years old.

Physically vulnerable and easily intimidated, children typically make obedient soldiers. Many are abducted or recruited by force, and often compelled to follow orders under threat of death.

The United States should support, and, where possible, lead efforts to establish and enforce international standards designed to end the use of child soldiers.

On January 21, 2000 in Geneva, a United Nations working group of the Commission on Human Rights reached agreement on the UN protocol on child soldiers. I commend President Clinton for signing this protocol and want to express my hope that the Senate will ratify it as soon as possible.

The House International Relations Committee approved H. Con. Res. 348 unanimously. As a cosponsor, I urge colleagues to give their full support to this important resolution.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 348, expressing the concern of Congress regarding the use of child soldiers around the world.

The Congressional Human Rights Caucus, which I co-chair, has held a number of briefings on the use of child soldiers around the world. Nothing can be more heartbreaking than listening to stories of childhoods cut short—children's descriptions of how they were abducted in the night, made to fight with

rebel groups, forced to kill their parents or best friends and commit other unspeakable atrocities. These very children should be in school learning, playing and enjoying their youth not carrying guns and fighting for causes about which they know nothing.

Child soldiers are currently being used in more than thirty countries around the world, including Angola, Colombia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda. They serve in both government armies and in armed opposition groups. Some are forcibly recruited, other join hoping to support themselves or their families, or simply because they see it is their best chance for survival. Children sustain far higher casualty rates than their adult counterparts and those who survive often suffer trauma, injury, abuse, or psychological scarring.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) for sponsoring this resolution and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) who has been a leader on this issue for many years. It is vital that the United States Congress speak out against these human rights abuses which occur around the world against our most precious citizens, the children. We must join with the international community in condemning the countries and non-government groups which use children as soldiers. Finally, it is important to recognize this Administration for its role in signing the United Nations international protocol last week which prohibits the use of children in armed conflict.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 348, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules.

Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8, rule XX, the Chair will now put the question on each motion to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today, and then on those motions postponed from Monday, July 10, in the order in which that motion was entertained.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

House Concurrent Resolution 253, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 4442, de novo; and