

for an infant who cries continually or who might need more help with parenting or coping skills.

I want to add my words of thanks to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), the committee and subcommittee chairmen, and ranking members for working expeditiously to bring this important resolution to the floor. I urge all Members to lend their support to this resolution which seeks to protect our Nation's most precious resource and our Nation's most innocent citizens, our children.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 59, which expresses the sense of Congress that a National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week should be established.

As a cosponsor of this resolution, I want to bring attention to a problem that is often overlooked: Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS). This issue was brought to my attention by one of my constituents, Janet Goree of Clearwater, Florida, whose granddaughter Kimberlin lost her life as a result of SBS. While nothing can be done for Kimberlin, it is my sincere hope that bringing the public's attention to this important issue will prevent further tragedies.

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is a serious acquired traumatic brain injury caused by "shaking" a child in order to stop them from crying. SBS frequently occurs in children less than one year of age, although there have been documented cases of SBS in children as old as five years of age.

Madam Speaker, most individuals with experience dealing with small children can relate to the frustration of not knowing how to meet the needs of a consistently crying child. However, it is important that everyone understands that infants cannot and should never be shaken as a remedy to stop them from crying.

The typical causes of SBS is an adult holding a child by the arms or trunk and shaking him or her back and forth with a repeated force. When a child is shaken, delicate veins between the brain and skull are ruptured and begin to bleed. Naturally, the pooling of blood between the skull and the dura—a fibrous membrane that lies next to the brain—causes the formation of subdural hematomas, which produces pressure that, along with the natural swelling of the bruised brain, causes damage to brain cells. Once brain cells are damaged, they can never be regenerated or replaced.

The swelling and pressure associated with SBS also causes the brain to push and squeeze down on the brainstem, which controls vital functions such as breathing and heartbeat. If the swelling and pressure are not alleviated, vital functions will cease and the child will die. Previous studies have suggested that 15–30% of the children die, and it is estimated that only 15% escape SBS without any type of permanent damage.

Medications may be administered to reduce the swelling and surgical methods may be used to relieve pressure on the brain, but an ounce of prevention is always worth a pound of cure. Parents, child care workers, and any-

one who deals with small children should remember that much less force is required to cause significant damage to a child's brain than an adult's. Although no scientific studies have documented the exact amount of force needed to cause SBS in humans, most medical professionals recognize that shaking is often so violent that any reasonable person would know it to be dangerous to a child.

I am pleased that individuals such as Janet Goree are taking action to educate the public about the dangers of Shaken Baby Syndrome. The Shaken Baby Alliance maintains a database of victim families willing to offer support, as well as provides volunteers to run an electronic mail support group for families as well as professionals. Information on the Alliance can be found on their website at www.shakenbaby.com.

On Saturday, April 28, the Shaken Baby Alliance is sponsoring a candlelight vigil on the West Front steps of the Capitol to remember the lives of those children lost to SBS and shine a light on this problem so that future tragedies can be prevented.

Madam Speaker, Shaken Baby Syndrome is a form of child abuse. Like any other form of abuse against children, it cannot be tolerated. I hope that my colleagues will support H. Con. Res. 59, and join us in efforts to educate the public about SBS, reminding our constituents to "never, never, never shake a baby."

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 59, as amended.

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

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the prevention of shaken baby syndrome."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 91) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the human rights situation in Cuba.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 91

Whereas, according to the Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of Cuba continues to commit widespread and well-documented human rights violations against the Cuban people and to detain hundreds more as political prisoners;

Whereas the Castro regime systematically violates all of the fundamental civil and political rights of the Cuban people, denying

freedoms of speech, press, assembly, movement, religion, and association, the right to change their government, and the right to due process and fair trials;

Whereas, in law and in practice, the Government of Cuba restricts the freedom of religion of the Cuban people and engages in efforts to control and monitor religious institutions through surveillance, infiltration, evictions, restrictions on access to computer and communication equipment, and harassment of religious professionals and lay persons;

Whereas the totalitarian regime of Fidel Castro actively suppresses all peaceful opposition and dissent by the Cuban people using undercover agents, informers, rapid response brigades, Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, surveillance, phone tapping, intimidation, defamation, arbitrary detention, house arrest, arbitrary searches, evictions, travel restrictions, politically-motivated dismissals from employment, and forced exile;

Whereas workers' rights are effectively denied by a system in which foreign investors are forced to contract labor from the Government of Cuba and to pay the regime in hard currency knowing that the regime will pay less than 5 percent of these wages in local currency to the workers themselves;

Whereas these abuses by the Government of Cuba violate internationally accepted norms of conduct;

Whereas the House of Representatives is mindful of the admonishment of former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo during the last Ibero-American Summit in Havana, Cuba, that "[t]here can be no sovereign nations without free men and women [. . . m]en and women who can freely exercise their essential freedoms: freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of participation, freedom of dissent, freedom of decision";

Whereas President Vaclav Havel, an essential figure in the Czech Republic's transition to democracy, has counseled that "[w]e thus know that by voicing open criticism of undemocratic conditions in Cuba, we encourage all the brave Cubans who endure persecution and years of prison for their loyalty to the ideals of freedom and human dignity";

Whereas former President Lech Walesa, leader of the Polish solidarity movement, has urged the world to "mobilize its resources, just as was done in support of Polish Solidarnosc and the Polish workers, to express their support for Cuban workers and to monitor labor rights" in Cuba;

Whereas efforts to document, expose, and address human rights abuses in Cuba are complicated by the fact that the Government of Cuba continues to deny international human rights and humanitarian monitors access to the country;

Whereas Pax Christi further reports that these efforts are complicated because "a conspiracy of silence has fallen over Cuba" in which diplomats and entrepreneurs refuse even to discuss labor rights and other human rights issues in Cuba, some "for fear of endangering the relations with the Cuban government"; and businessmen investing in Cuba "openly declare that the theme of human rights was not of their concern";

Whereas the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva provides an excellent forum to spotlight human rights and expressing international support for improved human rights performance in Cuba and elsewhere;

Whereas the goal of United States policy in Cuba is to promote a peaceful transition to democracy through an active policy of assisting the forces of change on the island;

Whereas the United States may provide assistance through appropriate nongovernmental organizations to help individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change and promote respect for human rights in Cuba; and

Whereas the President is authorized to engage in democracy-building efforts in Cuba, including the provision of (1) publications and other informational materials on transitions to democracy, human rights, and market economies to independent groups in Cuba, (2) humanitarian assistance to victims of political repression and their families, (3) support for democratic and human rights groups in Cuba, and (4) support for visits and permanent deployment of democratic and international human rights monitors in Cuba: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives condemns the repressive and totalitarian actions of the Government of Cuba against the Cuban people; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President—

(A) should have an action-oriented policy of directly assisting the Cuban people and independent organizations, modeled on United States support under former President Ronald Reagan, including support by United States trade unions, for Poland's Solidarity movement ("Solidarnosc"), to strengthen the forces of change and to improve human rights within Cuba; and

(B) should make all efforts necessary at the meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 2001 to obtain the passage by the Commission of a resolution condemning the Government of Cuba for its human rights abuses, and to secure the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Cuba.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to render my strong support for House Resolution 91, a resolution which documents and condemns the systematic repression of the Cuban people by Cuba's totalitarian regime and urges the member countries of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to do the same. This resolution was passed with bipartisan support by the Committee on International Relations last Wednesday, March 29. We thank the leadership on both sides of the aisle for understanding the importance of moving this measure quickly through the House.

H. Res. 91 gives the Cuban people a voice that has been denied to them by the tyrannical regime that represses them. It serves to empower those who are struggling to bring democracy to their island nation of Cuba. It also sends a clear signal to the world and specifically to the member countries of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights that the United States Congress stands firm in our commitment to human rights and freedom, that the U.S. supports the Cuban people and condemns the abhorrent behavior of the Cuban regime. It calls on the member countries of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to adhere to the Geneva Convention which stipulates that the observance of human rights cannot be conditioned, that no external action can justify violations of the fundamental rights of every human being.

As Mexico's foreign minister, Dr. Jorge Castaneda, stated on March 20 during his address to the commission in Geneva: "The status of human rights in any nation is a legitimate concern of consequence to the international community as a whole. The task of promoting their enforcement and respect is an undertaking incumbent to all governments and to all peoples."

My dear colleagues, how much we wish that there were no need for this resolution. How we wish that the Cuban people were free from the shackles of tyranny, able to exercise their rights endowed to them by our Creator. Unfortunately, that is still a dream. The crackdown on dissidents, the detentions, the harassments, intimidation, physical and psychological torture have intensified, not decreased. Pax Christi, Freedom House, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and our own State Department all provide ample evidence of this grim reality. The intensification of abuses prompted Amnesty International to send a letter in February of this year to the Cuban authorities expressing its concerns at the serious escalation in the arrests and the harassment of political opponents inside the island.

Amnesty's letter stated: "The increasing number of people jailed for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression clearly demonstrates the level to which the government will go in order to weaken the political opposition and suppress dissidents."

In just the first week of November of 2000, 27 independent journalists and dissident leaders were arrested. Over the weekend of December 8, 100 dissidents were arrested by Cuban state security to block activities coinciding with World Human Rights Day and with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thousands of others continue to languish in squalid jail cells, devoid of light, of food, and of medical attention. Jorge Luis Garcia

Perez Antunez, an Afro-Cuban dissident and Amnesty International prisoner of conscience, has been in prison since March 1990. He has been beaten, tortured, his hands and feet bound to each other and attacked by dogs who have clawed into his flesh.

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He continues to protest the regime's human rights abuses from within his jail cell, conducting hunger strikes and writing testimonials which document the atrocities committed inside Cuba's prisons.

Then there is the case of Maritza Lugo Fernandez, vice president of the democratic movement, "30 de Noviembre-Frank Pais," and Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet of the Lawton Foundation of Human Rights, who continue to suffer "tapiados" in a small, humid cell, without windows, a solid steel door with excrement and urine on the floor.

The recently released State Department Human Rights report underscores that prison conditions continue to be harsh and, indeed, life threatening.

Prison guards and state security officials subject human rights and pro-democracy activists to beatings and threats of physical violence; to systematic and psychological intimidation; to lengthy periods of isolation, as well as to detention and imprisonment in cells with common and violent criminals; to sexually aggressive inmates and state security agents who are posing as prisoners.

Religious persecution has intensified with the Ministry of Interior engaging in active efforts to control and monitor the country's religious institutions, including surveillance, raids, evictions, and harassment of religious worshippers. The regime maintained the strict censorship of news and information, both domestic and foreign, with accredited foreign media facing possible sentences up to 20 years in prison if the information is not acceptable to Castro's regime.

Cuba's dictatorship has made it a priority to prevent the contact between Cuban pro-democracy advocates and the outside world.

In the last year, it arrested and interrogated Latvian pro-democracy activists, Romanian, Polish, Swedish and French journalists, a Czech member of parliament, and a former finance minister, and countless others because they met with dissidents and opposition leaders. These foreign visitors did not allow themselves or their actions to be controlled by the dictatorship. They chose to shine the light of truth on Cuba, and today, Madam Speaker, we in Congress can do the same.

I urge our colleagues to vote for this important measure and to do it for them. As the posters show on the wall, the families of Cuba's political prisoners, do it for their sons, for their daughters, for their mothers, for their

fathers, husbands and wives; for Cuba's dissidents and for their opposition. Vote for House Resolution 91 because it is right and because it is just.

As the global leader, the United States has as our duty and obligation the responsibility to carry forth our message of freedom; and let us begin by voting yes on House Resolution 91.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, let me first congratulate my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for her leadership on this matter.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. The United Nations Human Rights Commission is meeting as we speak, and it will soon be considering country-specific resolutions, including a resolution on Cuba and the appalling human rights situation there.

The Cuban government, Madam Speaker, remains the last dark stain of totalitarianism in the Western Hemisphere, which is otherwise marching forward towards increasingly democratic and open societies.

Our State Department Country Report on Human Rights for the year just ended, again describes the Government of Cuba as having continued to violate systematically the fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens. The State Department report states the Cuban government severely restricts worker rights, including the right to form independent unions.

One of the most significant aspects of this resolution is providing assistance to independent nongovernmental organizations and independent trade unions that can make an enormous contribution to the improvement of human rights in Cuba, and I strongly welcome the resolution's focus on this issue.

I also want to recognize the ranking Democratic member of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), for his extraordinary leadership in this important arena. He was one of the first to propose directing assistance to these kinds of activities.

We all hope that the U.N. Commission on Human Rights will provide for the appointment of a special rapporteur for Cuba, who could give an independent and objective view of the human rights conditions on the island. I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 91.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the vice chairman of our committee.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend, the

gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be the principal sponsor of this resolution on human rights in Cuba and especially grateful to the chairwoman of the Subcommittee of International Relations and Human Rights, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for her courage, for her consistency in promoting human rights in Cuba and all around the world. That consistency, I think, is very much needed in politics and in statesmanship, and I applaud her for it.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), who has been outstanding in his defense of those who labor against all odds time and time again. Mr. DIAZ-BALART is a powerful voice in Congress on behalf of the persecuted and opposed. It is an honor to be his friend and colleague.

We had the only hearing last year on Elian Gonzalez when he was abducted and sent back to Cuba. We heard from a number of people who dealt with children's rights—or the lack of children's rights—in Cuba, who talked about how the child is molded by Marxist ideology and that the parents have little or no rights with regard to their own offspring. We heard testimony from Reverend Walker who cited Matthew 25, one of my favorite teachings in the Bible, which talks about our Lord saying, "When I was hungry did you feed me, when I was naked did you clothe me?" And he was defending the Cuban dictatorship. Amazingly, he said that he saw the fulfillment of Matthew 25 in Cuba, which was an astounding and patently untrue statement to be made by a clergyman.

Then I asked him about a portion of Matthew 25 which he somehow left out. Jesus said: "When I was in prison, did you visit me?" So we asked him—I asked him and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) jumped in right after me—did you Rev. Walker ever visit any of the 400, maybe as many as 1,200, political dissidents who have languished in Castro's gulags day in and day out? Did you ever visit any of those?

He said, oh, yes. Then the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) asked if I would yield and he jumped in and said, "Name them."

Not one single person was named because apparently he had never visited, to the best of our knowledge, any specific dissident; never spoke to power the dictatorship that is to say to Castro, in Havana of the needs and the daily degradations that are suffered and endured by those who labor for democracy.

As this resolution attests, and other speakers will surely amplify, the Castro regime is a totalitarian government that routinely employs torture, extrajudicial killings, forced abortion, and other gross abuses against its own citizens.

In my remarks, I would like to concentrate some of my time on the particularly grave situation of human rights defenders, the brave men and women inside of Cuba who dare to criticize the actions of the regime or who simply advocate compliance with the minimum standards of civility and decency set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

One thing that frequently happens to human rights defenders in Cuba is that they are subjected to what the government calls "acts of repudiation." Here is what the most recent Country Report on Human Rights Practices issued by our State Department had to say about these acts. At government instigation, and I quote,

"Members of state-controlled mass organizations, fellow workers or neighbors of intended victims are obliged to stage public protests against those who dissent from the government policies, shouting obscenities and often causing damage to the homes and property of those targeted. Physical attacks on the victims sometimes occur. Police and state security agents are often present but take no action to prevent or to end the attacks. Those who refuse to participate in these actions face disciplinary action, including loss of employment."

If a human rights defender persists in disagreeing with the government, he or she may be committed to a psychiatric institution. Like its former ally and protector, the Soviet Union, the Cuban government abuses psychiatry to imprison religious and political dissenters under the rubric of such diagnoses as, quote, "apathy towards socialism, or," and I quote, "delusions of defending human rights."

Last year, Dr. Oscar Biscet criticized the government for a wide range of human rights violations, including its policy of forcing women and girls to have abortions. Fidel Castro called Biscet a "little crazy man." The police then took Dr. Biscet to a psychiatric hospital for testing.

Dr. Biscet is now serving a 3-year sentence for the crime of what they call "dangerousness". Recently for fasting in remembrance of the murder of the men and women on the 13th of March, the boat that was deliberately cleared of its occupants and who were drowned by Castro's thugs, Dr. Biscet got over a month of solitary confinement simply because he fasted in protest.

Madam Speaker, political and religious prisoners are often subjected to torture and a number have died in prison due to the effects of such mistreatment and denial of proper medical care.

Madam Speaker, reasonable people may have some disagreement about what we should do from time to time with regard to U.S. policy for these brutal acts. Some believe in a policy of so-called constructive engagement. I strongly believe that our policy of isolating the regime subject to carefully

defined humanitarian exceptions for food and medicine that are already a part of U.S. law with respect to Cuba is the right policy.

The one thing we should all agree on, whatever our differences on other aspects of U.S. policy, is that the United States should tell the truth. Indeed, the whole purpose of the U.N. Human Rights Commission now meeting in Geneva is to provide a forum in which representatives of sovereign nations will speak to each other openly and honestly about human rights. This is not always as easy as it sounds, because the Commission's membership includes such world-class human rights violators as the People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Libya, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia; and it also includes Cuba, whose delegate stood up in Geneva last week and proudly reported that, and I quote, "there are no human rights violations in Cuba."

Give me a break, Madam Speaker. What utter nonsense.

Madam Speaker, a strong bipartisan vote for today's resolution will send a signal to Havana, to the community of nations assembled in Geneva, and to the victims themselves, that we Americans remain united in our commitment to tell the truth, and our commitment to the well being of those who suffer daily for democracy and human rights; and it is our hope that the truth, with the help of God, will set the Cuban people free.

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

Madam Speaker, I want to strongly commend my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), for his powerful and eloquent statement.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman emeritus of our Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in strong support of the adoption of H. Res. 91, which expresses the sense of the House regarding the human rights situation in Cuba.

I commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), our distinguished vice chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, for introducing this resolution, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for joining us in cosponsoring this resolution, particularly the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN); and the ranking minority member of our Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS); and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART); and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENEZES).

With the rise of democratic dissent in Cuba, Fidel Castro has been forced to

increase his efforts to isolate courageous dissidents from their international supporters, but this has become increasingly awkward for one of the world's last surviving Communist dictatorships.

When Germany's foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, made an issue of this case and announced his intention to meet with dissidents in Cuba, his visit to Havana was abruptly cancelled by the Cuban government.

Foreign journalists in Cuba have come under increasing pressure in recent months, and Mr. Castro has lashed out at several foreign leaders for criticizing his outrageous conduct. It would appear that Mr. Castro is willing to sacrifice his carefully packaged international image in order to prevent fellow Cubans who are opposed to his regime from receiving moral support or even having contact with citizens of democratic nations.

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Next month, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights will be considering a resolution regarding the human rights situation in Cuba. It is extremely important that this resolution be approved. Moreover, we must not accept any attempts to insert language in that resolution seeking to draw moral equivalency between the Castro regime's systematic repression of the Cuban people and our embargo, which is intended to pressure that very same regime to free the Cuban people.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to fully support this bipartisan resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), with whom I am proud to be going to Geneva for the human rights convention next week, but before doing so, I would ask that the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) yield to us the remainder of his time so that I may yield it to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would inquire, then, as to the remaining time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The total time remaining is 20 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield the remaining time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, late last night I was walking through what I consider these hallowed halls, and I came across near the Rotunda two monuments, statues, of two universal men who I am thinking about at this time. One is Kossuth, the apostle of Hungarian freedom. The other is

Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of lives during the Holocaust. I know the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) has had much to do with the fact that in these hallowed halls we have those reminders of those universal statesmen.

I realized once again last night, first, what an extraordinary honor and privilege it is to be able to serve in this Congress. In addition to that, I realized once again last night that this Congress of the United States of America is the center of dignity and democracy for the entire world, for the entire world.

The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for whom I have ultimate admiration, was born in a land that saw much suffering in the 20th century and now, fortunately, is free. The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and I were born in a land that has seen much suffering for the last 42 years and, unfortunately, is still not free, though it will be.

But the gentleman from California, knowing as he knows what totalitarianism, that scourge of the 20th century that unfortunately still remains in a few places, is all about, totalitarianism, he, perhaps more than anyone else in this hall, understands the extraordinary courage that it takes for someone who at this moment is languishing in a dungeon and whose husband is as well in another dungeon, because they are leaders of a political party in Cuba that is illegal called the 30th of November Democratic Political Party, and they ask, and they believe, and they advocate for free elections. They have two small daughters that they cannot take care of, and they are at the total mercy of the totalitarian regime, those two small daughters, because father and mother are both political prisoners.

Despite that, a few days ago Maritza Lugo, that leader of democratic Cuba, of the Cuba of the future, managed to sneak out of prison a statement. I would like to read just a part of it: From this horrible place, I come before you, the international organizations who defend human rights, defenders of democracy, justice and peace, the religious organizations, the whole world and its people, to denounce the Government of Cuba.

I accuse the dictatorial government imposed on Cuba and its repressive arm, the State Security, of all the injustices and abuses they commit against the Cuban people, the penal population, and especially against the political prisoners of conscience. I accuse those miserable and cowardly men and women who, through the use of force, commit all types of human rights violations, while nothing stops them as they attempt to defend a false "revolution" built and maintained upon a foundation of lies and infamies.

To the dictatorial government I say, stop denying that you torture people. Stop denying international organizations access to our prisons with the pretext that you don't accept others meddling in your internal affairs.

Maritza Lugo continues, I accuse the Castro government of separating the Cuban family who, in desperation, flee Cuba for political reasons, and it goes on and on.

I ask the addressees of these lines, she states, this young woman, soon to convene in Geneva at the Human Rights Commission, to discuss Cuba, to consider the ill treatment of the Cuban people by its own government. I know that no delegation, Madam Speaker, I know that no delegation will be permitted to come visit me, Maritza Lugo says, so that they can see and corroborate this raw truth. If justice exists, however, this government, the Cuban Government, should be sanctioned for this and so many other violations that they are constantly inflicting upon the Cuban population as they deceive and laugh at the world.

And another brave woman, an economist, Martha Beatriz Roque, has just published an article, and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) again knows the kind of ultimate courage that that takes: From within the totalitarian State, Castro's government maintains a system of economic apartheid that favors foreigners and denies Cubans basic opportunities. There exists an economic apartheid where no Cuban can invest in his country. He would have to leave and return as a foreigner. We cannot hope for development of social progress or an improvement in the standard of living while the economic repression weighs on our people and our country.

Now, despite, as Pax Christi, the organization, states and is quoted in this resolution that I commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for, and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) so much more, despite the conspiracy of silence that has fallen over the reality of Cuba, and despite the tourists that constantly have a good time, and the economic apartheid system, not even mentioning one word of the thousands of political prisoners in the repression against the entire Nation, despite that, this Congress today is making a statement. And those people in prison in Cuba will receive this, maybe not tomorrow, maybe not next month, but they will receive this news, and it will be extraordinarily important for them to receive the news that the American Congress, this beacon of hope for the entire world, has spoken once again. Why? Because this again, as I said, Madam Speaker, is the center of dignity and honor and of democracy for the entire world.

Yesterday at a conference going on in Havana right now, the President of something called the Inter-Parliamentary Union, approximately 1,000 members of Parliament from around the world, elected, have gone to Cuba to celebrate their conference while they party. The President of that conference was asked, is there democracy in Cuba? Her name, Najma Heptulla from India. Her answer was, The answer is yes. If we do not believe in it, then we would not have come back. Obviously, the parties, while they are being filmed must be very good. They certainly outweigh the conscience.

But the conscience of this Congress will outweigh other interests today. I am certain that the message will go out very clearly that this Congress in sovereign representation of this Nation once again stands with the oppressed Cuban people.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

In closing, I would like to quote directly from House Resolution 91 to indicate the importance of speaking out against these practices, and I am going to quote from two important figures from the Czech Republic and the Polish movement, two of the Republics that are helping us in passing the resolution and promoting it in Geneva next week. It reads, "President Havel, an essential figure in the Czech Republic's transition to democracy, has counseled that we thus know that by voicing open criticism of undemocratic conditions in Cuba, we encourage all the brave Cubans who endure persecution and years of prison for their loyalty to the ideals of freedom and human dignity"; and "former President Lech Walesa, leader of the Polish solidarity movement," who has urged the world to "mobilize its resources, just as was done in support of the Polish solidarity movement and the Polish workers to express their support for Cuban workers and to monitor Cuban labor rights" in Cuba.

We thank these leaders for the human rights agenda in Geneva, and we hope that our colleagues will help us in passing House Resolution 91 today.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam Speaker, Cuba is a totalitarian state controlled by Fidel Castro. The Government's human rights record remains a poor one. It continues to violate systematically the fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens, who do not have the right to change their government peacefully.

The Government retaliates systematically against those who seek political change. Members of the State security forces and prison officials continue to beat and otherwise abuse detainees and prisoners, neglecting them, isolating them and denying them medical treatment.

The authorities routinely threaten, arbitrarily arrest, detain, imprison and defame human rights advocates and members of independent professional associations, often with the goal of coercing them into leaving the country. The

government severely restricts worker rights, including the right to form independent trade unions. It requires children to do farm work without compensation during their summer vacation.

Political prisoners are estimated at between 300 and 400 persons. Charges of disseminating enemy propaganda can bring sentences of up to 14 years. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international reports of human rights violations and mainstream foreign newspapers and magazines constitute enemy propaganda. The Government controls all access to the Internet, and all email messages are subject to censorship.

All media must operate under party guidelines and reflect government views. The Government attempts to shape media coverage to such a degree that it exerts pressure on domestic journalists and on foreign correspondents.

The law punishes any unauthorized assembly of more than three persons, including those for private religious services in a private home. The authorities have never approved a public meeting by a human rights group. The Government continues to restrict freedom of religion. The Government prohibits, with occasional exceptions, the construction of new churches.

Madam Speaker, these are not my words. They are not the words of the Cuban American National Foundation. They are the dispassionate words of the State Department Human Rights Report.

I'll close with two specific accounts of Cubans who suffer under Castro.

Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a doctor and human rights leader, was imprisoned for hanging a Cuban flag upside down. He has been beaten and, during several prolonged periods placed in punishment cells in isolation, prohibited from receiving visitors, food, clothes and books—including the Bible. This is worse even than the treatment given to Nelson Mandela as a prisoner.

Dorca Cespedes, a reporter for independent Havana Press, was told by the director of her daughter's daycare center, that the toddler could no longer attend, due to the mother's "counterrevolutionary" activities.

Dr. Biscet has been called the Martin Luther King, Jr. of Cuba.

Ms. Cespedes could be any one of us—a parent trying to make a living and raise her child in a life of truth and justice.

Madam Speaker, any even cursory reading of what's going on in Cuba today tells us that we've seen this totalitarianism before. We've seen it for decades in Cuba, just as we saw it for decades in the former Soviet bloc.

Madam Speaker, let us today recall our support for human rights and democracy in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and let us pledge, by agreeing to this resolution, the same support for Cubans endeavoring to seek truth and break free.

Whatever a member feels about our policy towards Cuba with regard to the economic sanctions, there is no excuse for not agreeing to this resolution condemning the human rights practices of Cuba's government.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for bringing it before us; I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the resolution; and I urge its unanimous adoption today by the House.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 91.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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.

URGING INTRODUCTION OF U.N. RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO END ITS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHINA AND TIBET

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 56) urging the appropriate representative of the United States to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to introduce at the annual meeting of the Commission a resolution calling upon the People's Republic of China to end its human rights violations in China and Tibet, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 56

Whereas the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, provides a forum for discussing human rights and expressing international support for improved human rights performance;

Whereas, according to the Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to commit widespread and well-documented human rights abuses in China and Tibet;

Whereas the People's Republic of China has yet to demonstrate its willingness to abide by internationally accepted norms of freedom of belief, expression, and association by repealing or amending laws and decrees that restrict those freedoms;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to ban and criminalize groups it labels as cults or heretical organizations;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China has repressed unregistered religious congregations and spiritual movements, including Falun Gong, and persists in persecuting persons on the basis of unauthorized religious activities using such measures as harassment, prolonged detention, physical abuse, incarceration, and closure or destruction of places of worship;

Whereas authorities in the People's Republic of China have continued their efforts to extinguish expressions of protest or criticism, have detained scores of citizens associ-

ated with attempts to organize a peaceful opposition, to expose corruption, to preserve their ethnic minority identity, or to use the Internet for the free exchange of ideas, and have sentenced many citizens so detained to harsh prison terms;

Whereas Chinese authorities continue to exert control over religious and cultural institutions in Tibet, abusing human rights through instances of torture, arbitrary arrest, and detention of Tibetans without public trial for peacefully expressing their political or religious views;

Whereas bilateral human rights dialogues between several nations and the People's Republic of China have yet to produce substantial adherence to international norms; and

Whereas the People's Republic of China has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but has yet to take the steps necessary to make the treaty legally binding: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) strongly supports the decision of the United States Government to offer and solicit cosponsorship for a resolution at the 57th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, calling upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its human rights abuses in China and Tibet, in compliance with its international obligations; and

(2) urges the United States Government to take the lead in organizing multilateral support to obtain passage by the Commission of such resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam 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 the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as a cosponsor of House Resolution 56, I rise in support of the manager's amendment and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important resolution, which urges the passage of a U.S.-sponsored resolution at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights which calls upon the Chinese Government to end its human rights violations in China and Tibet.

During committee consideration, the chairman requested unanimous consent that the Chair be authorized to seek consideration of House Resolution 56 on the House suspension calendar.

□ 1530

No objection was heard. The manager's amendment includes an amend-

ment by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) updating the resolution to reflect the fact that the Bush administration has introduced a resolution at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva concerning the deplorable human rights condition in the People's Republic of China. The title will be amended to reflect the modifications made by the manager's amendment.

This resolution is a statement of fact outlining that China is an authoritarian state which continues to systematically violate the human rights of everyone, and the civil and political liberties of all of its citizens. State security personnel are responsible for numerous abuses, such as political and other extrajudicial killings, lengthy incommunicado detentions, and the use of torture.

National, racial, and ethnic minorities remain subject to intense persecution and discrimination. The authorities frequently launch campaigns to crack down on opposition and pro-democracy groups. Freedom of movement, speech, assembly, and association are severely restricted. The controls on religious worship have intensified, with harassment of church leaders and other faithful, including fines, detentions, physical abuse, and torture. Many houses of worship have been destroyed.

Trafficking in persons, mainly women and children, for forced prostitution or illegal forced labor continues, placing this segment of the population in constant risk of slavery.

Recently, we have seen how their blatant disregard for the universal rights and liberties of human beings extends to foreign visitors, as reflected by the detention of academics by the Chinese regime. Dr. Xu Zerong, a Ph.D. from Oxford University, was detained last fall; and to date the Chinese authorities have not offered any explanation for his continued detention. His family still does not know where he is being held.

Professor Li Shaomin, a U.S. citizen who teaches business at the City University of Hong Kong, was arrested on February 25. The Chinese have yet to present any information regarding charges against him.

There is the case of Dr. Gao Zhan, a research scholar based at American University, detained last month by Chinese authorities.

Just today, Human Rights Watch's Academic Freedom Committee sent the letter to the Chinese leader to protest these detentions, and calling on the Chinese leadership to follow internationally recognized standards of due process to protect the lives and the rights of these scholars.

Further, there is the grim situation that the U.S. is facing of protecting and securing the safe return of 25 Americans being held hostage by the PRC. This picture paints a profound