

Congress last week. Where the first measure urged the Administration to consider sanctions, this bill specifies parameters for doing so.

Mr. Speaker, credible estimates indicate that Iran may be only one year away from fielding a missile of 800 mile range, the so-called Shahab-3, and less than three years away from a missile of 1,240 miles range, the Shahab-4. Even more troubling, these missiles could be armed with chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons—capable of wreaking mass destruction on wide areas.

If we thought Iraqi SCUD missiles posed a danger during the Persian Gulf war of 1991, we must show even greater concern regarding this new threat from Iran. We must use all the tools at our disposal to prevent it—and sanctions are one such tool. I comment my colleagues for authoring this legislation.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as everyone is aware, the British and Irish Governments face an unprecedented opportunity to achieve real peace in Northern Ireland. For the first time since the partition of Ireland in 1922, all parties are participating in peace talks while a cease-fire is in effect.

The Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, which I chair, has held two hearings on human rights abuses in Northern Ireland and on the prospects for improved human rights conditions as part of the current peace talks. At our hearings, international and American human rights experts, as well as victims and relatives of victims, provided compelling and eye-opening testimony about human rights abuses, the disregard for the rule of law, and the personal tragedies people in Northern Ireland have endured. All of our witnesses welcomed the interest and support of the U.S. Government and affirmed that American standards and ideals are critical to the success of the process.

After the first hearing, I led a human rights, peace mission to the north of Ireland. I met with leaders from political parties on all sides of the conflict and with key officials in the Government, including Secretary of State Mo Mowlam. I was pleased by Secretary Mowlam's intimate understanding of the human rights concerns and remain hopeful that human rights protections will be afforded to members of all communities in Northern Ireland.

While optimistic, I remain cautiously optimistic.

Unfortunately, not even the best of intentions guarantee that the final agreement will genuinely protect human rights. In peace processes around the world, most recently in Bosnia, and Guatemala, we have seen that the atmosphere at these negotiations, the pressure to get an agreement, and the reluctance to reopen old wounds can have the unfortunate side effect of making human rights an after-thought rather than a central element to the agreement.

I submit for the RECORD today, Mr. Speaker, my bill as amended, House Concurrent Reso-

lution 152 which condemns violence and urges the participants of the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland to fully integrate internationally recognized human rights standards as part of the peace process. This resolution, which has broad bipartisan support and has been approved by the full International Relations Committee, puts Congress on record supporting human rights reforms in Northern Ireland. The text of the resolution is a culmination of information gathered on the trip and at the hearings. It identifies abuses and pronounces concrete recommendations for advancing human rights and building a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

In addition to condemning the violent crimes of paramilitary groups on both sides of the conflict, House Concurrent Resolution 152 addresses the failures of the British Government. Notwithstanding the abuses perpetrated by partisan paramilitary forces, or by the police for that matter, we must remember that the central responsibility for protecting rights and maintaining the rule of law belongs to the Government—which in this case, at this particular time, is the British Government. When governments resort to methods that are illegal, unjust, or inhumane, even when these methods are seemingly directed against the guilty or the dangerous, the effect is not to preserve law and order but to undermine it.

It is particularly saddening that the British Government, America's trusted ally, is the object of serious and credible charges of disrespect for the rule of law in the north of Ireland. All of the major human rights organizations, Amnesty International, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch have been particularly critical of pervasive restrictions on the due process of law in Northern Ireland and they have testified that law enforcement officials of the United Kingdom, members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, tolerate, and even perpetrate some of the gross abuses that have taken place in the north of Ireland.

Under emergency legislation applicable only to Northern Ireland, police have expansive powers to arrest and detain suspects and to search premises without a warrant. In addition, the Government can suspend the right to trial by jury—the much maligned Diplock Courts System—and the universally recognized right to be preserved from self-incrimination has been abridged.

It seems to me that the power to arbitrarily arrest, detain, intimidate; the power to deny timely and appropriate legal counsel; and the power to compel self-incrimination is an abuse of power normally associated with our adversaries, Mr. Speaker, not our allies.

Thus the resolution is a wake up call to our friends. Friends don't let friends abuse human rights.

Witness after witness at our hearings expressed a fear that as political issues are addressed, universal human rights such as the right to silence, the right to jury trial, the right to attorneys, and the right to work free of discrimination, just to name a few, will be neglected.

My resolution, which has broad bipartisan support, notifies negotiators in Belfast that the U.S. Congress believes that there must be reform on human rights issues if genuine peace is to be achieved. The resolution condemns political violence and recommends:

The establishment of a bill of rights for all citizens of the North;

A "Truth Commission", with international input, to investigate outstanding human rights abuses;

The repeal of the so-called "emergency legislation" which has limited human rights in Northern Ireland for over 25 years;

The establishment of a truly independent complaints mechanism for citizen inquiries regarding the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and other security forces; and

A ban on plastic bullets.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 152 has been reviewed and endorsed by the major human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, British Irish Rights Watch, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. In addition, the Irish National Caucus, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Hibernian Civil Rights Coalition have all urged swift passage of this Northern Ireland Human Rights Resolutions.

We have an obligation to do all that we can to ensure that this historic opportunity for the promotion and establishment of human rights for everyone in Northern Ireland is not squandered. I have been advised by leadership staff that when Congress reconvenes in January, we will look to move House Concurrent Resolution 152. In the meantime, it is my sincerest hope that negotiators at the current talks will need our call for addressing outstanding human rights violations and fully integrating human rights standards as part of the peace process. Without a strong human rights foundation, it is unlikely that any proposed peace settlement will be just or lasting.

I ask that House Concurrent Resolution 152, as amended, a list of current cosponsors, and a fact sheet of comments made by human rights groups about the resolution be made part of the RECORD.

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS ENDORSE H. CON. RES.
152

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, British Irish Rights Watch, Committee on the Administration of Justice, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights and others urge passage of Northern Ireland Human Rights Resolution.

"Human Rights Watch fully supports the resolution now being considered for passage by the Congress regarding human rights in the Northern Ireland peace process. The resolution rightly recognizes the gravity of past violations and the role that such abuses have played in perpetuating the conflict . . . the resolution is a signal that Congress is eager to prevent the same lack of attention to human rights issues which has doomed other peace processes and may threaten the success of the Northern Ireland peace process if action is not taken now . . . We heartily endorse the resolution."—Human Rights Watch

"Amnesty International welcomes the resolution proposed by the Congress which situates the centrality of human rights within the peace process and raises a number of key concerns which are in line with many of our own concerns. The recommendations [in the resolution], if acted upon, would make a significant contribution to developing a lasting peace in Northern Ireland."—Amnesty International

"We very much welcome this resolution. It's the first document of its kind that we have seen that does acknowledge the role that human rights must play in the Northern Ireland peace process. The individual issues that it raises are all matters of burning concern to the people of Northern Ireland."—British Irish Rights Watch

"Any effort by Congress to raise these [human rights] issues is particularly welcome and deserves widespread support. In that regard, the initiative taken by Chairman Smith and supported by other members in relation to the resolution on these issues and others is particularly welcome . . . it would be helpful if the concerns of Congress on these and other human rights could be raised with the British and Irish governments, Senator Mitchell, and with the U.S. administration . . . We look to the resolution receiving widespread support and are grateful for the efforts of Congress and hope they will continue."—Committee on the Administration of Justice

"We join in your call expressed in the concurrent resolution for repeal of emergency laws and the establishment of a mechanism for independent investigations of threats and intimidation of solicitors. We urge Congress to . . . continue to press its concerns about human rights in Northern Ireland . . ."—Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

H. CON. RES. 152

Expressing the sense of the Congress that all parties to the multi-party peace talks regarding Northern Ireland should condemn violence, adequately address outstanding human rights violations and fully integrate internationally recognized human rights standards as part of the peace process.

Whereas approximately 3,000 people have died and thousands more have been injured as a result of the political violence in Northern Ireland since 1969;

Whereas the denial of human rights has been at the heart of the violence and the conflict in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1996 states that both Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups have engaged in vigilante punishment attacks and the exile of informers "by force";

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1996 also states that members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), Northern Ireland's police force, have committed human rights abuses;

Whereas emergency legislation, namely the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, have provided the RUC with sweeping powers to arrest and detain suspects without being charged, deny them access to counsel for extended periods of time, and search their premises without a warrant;

Whereas an unnecessary reliance on emergency powers and the absence of jury trials in Diplock courts has created significant problems in the judiciary in Northern Ireland, including a dependency on confessions obtained through abusive police tactics and the acceptance of uncorroborated police statements;

Whereas these Diplock courts have, among other abuses, violated the right to remain silent and have inconsistently applied the controversial doctrine of common purpose, convicting people such as Sean Kelly and Michael Timmons on the premise that they should have anticipated the actions of others around them;

Whereas the United Nations Committee Against Torture, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the European Court of Human Rights and the United States Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights have raised serious concerns about mistreatment of detainees in Northern Ireland in prisons and in special holding centers where confessions have been forced from people such as William Bell under duress;

Whereas the emergency laws have also led to life threatening intimidation of defense

attorneys and interference in the attorney-client relationship;

Whereas the government authorities have failed to provide an effective means of independently investigating threats against solicitors and complaints of police harassment and abuse raised by citizens and solicitors;

Whereas the murder of Patrick Finucane, a leading defense and civil rights solicitor, is just one case in which the government has refused to release the findings of its inquiries and has ignored the call for independent public inquiry for the purposes of identifying responsible parties;

Whereas in contravention of internationally recognized standards and despite criticism by the United Nations Committee Against Torture and the European Parliament, the British Government uses plastic bullets only in Northern Ireland and in a way that appears sectarian;

Whereas Catholic males more than twice as likely as Protestant males to be unemployed, and a series of important proposals concerning employment equality await serious attention by the government;

Whereas the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, the 1993 Joint Declaration, and the 1995 Framework Document were signed by the British and Irish Governments and have led to the multi-party talks aimed at facilitating justice, peace, stability, and an end to violence in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the multi-party talks, attended by the representatives of the British and Irish Governments and representatives elected from the political parties and chaired by former United States Senator George Mitchell, resumed on September 15, 1997;

Whereas for the first time since the partition of Ireland in 1922 both sides of the conflict are attending multi-party peace talks creating a momentous opportunity for progress on human rights concerns; and

Whereas the objectives of the United States, which has contributed to the International Fund for Ireland, has always been to help facilitate a just and lasting peace based on a guarantee of human rights and fair employment opportunities for members on all sides of the conflict: Now therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress condemns the violence committed by paramilitary groups on both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland and, at times, by agents of the British Government, as illegal, unjust, and inhumane;

(2) the Congress commends and supports the new leadership in both the British and Irish governments for fostering a new environment in which human rights may be addressed and an agreement may be reached expeditiously through inclusive talks;

(3) the Congress commends the work of former United States Senator George Mitchell, who as the Independent Chairman of the talks has authored the "Mitchell Principles", signed by all participants, rejecting violence and emphasizing democratic, peaceful means for resolving the outstanding political issues; and

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

(A) human rights abuses have been at the heart of the conflict in Northern Ireland and respect for human rights must now be at the heart of the peace process;

(B) human rights should be protected for all citizens in a society and any peace agreement in Northern Ireland must recognize the state's obligation to protect human rights in all circumstances;

(C) the establishment of a bill of rights for the people of Northern Ireland may advance and strengthen the peace process;

(D) the multiparty negotiations should consider the feasibility of establishing an

independent "Truth Commission", with international input, to look into outstanding cases of human rights abuses committed by all sides of the conflict, giving special consideration to those who have been unable to obtain full disclosure about how their loved ones met their deaths;

(E) during this unprecedented period of peace and all party talks, emergency legislation that limits human rights should be repealed;

(F) a truly independent complaints mechanism for the review of citizen inquiries regarding alleged abuses of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and other security forces should be established;

(G) there should be a mechanism by which all defense solicitors have a vigorous independent investigation of threats they receive and are accorded effective protection; and

(H) plastic bullets should be withdrawn from use in accordance with the recommendations of the European Parliament and many other international and local bodies.

H.R. 1280: SUNSHINE IN THE COURTROOM ACT

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank all of my colleagues for their continued support of the effort to bring sunshine into our courts. Because of this dedicated bipartisan effort to bring cameras into our Nation's Federal courtrooms, this issue has become very familiar to legislators, attorneys, the media and the public. Again, I thank my colleagues for their efforts.

I would like to emphasize to the American people and to members of Congress the importance of passing H.R. 1280, the Sunshine in the Courtroom Act. This Act, which Congressman SCHUMER and I introduced in April, allows for the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, and televising of Federal court proceedings at the discretion of the presiding judge. Its passage in the next session of this Congress would protect the right of every U.S. citizen to see their judicial system at work and ensure the accountability of our Federal judges.

Proceedings on the floor of the House of Representatives, as well as the Senate, are open to all citizens through C-Span, and the local and national television news, allowing the American people to stay apprised of the actions of the legislative branch of the Government. Why then, should the judicial branch be any different? Members of the Congress are elected every 2 to 6 years, Federal judges are appointed for life. Lifetime tenure for unelected officials confers a tremendous amount of power. The American people deserve to see for themselves what is happening in Federal courtrooms. I don't think anyone should be denied that right.

One of the many clear benefits that cameras will bring to our Federal courts is a more open system, which will generate more faith in our judicial system. Chief Justice Berger once wrote, "People in an open society do not demand infallibility from their institutions, but it is difficult for them to accept what they are prohibited from observing." In many ways, the Federal courts were intended to be, and are,