

Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER], and thank the gentleman from California [Mr. CUNNINGHAM], who still remains my hero.

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1500

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I do rise in strong support of H. Res. 231. I will be brief. I want to congratulate the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] for his exceptional and dogged pursuit of human rights and economic freedom in Vietnam, and I am pleased to help expedite his resolution here.

The resolution correctly notes that several provinces in Vietnam have experienced anticorruption protests in recent months, a phenomenon that is quite remarkable for Vietnam. This Member would suggest that these protests should be considered to be a good sign by Americans, for it is clear that a great many Vietnamese people have had enough of corrupt local bureaucrats siphoning off the wealth of the nation.

This Member has also been informed that the protests have been sufficient to force the national government to deal with some of those corrupt officials. Certainly it will make it easier for U.S. businessmen to operate in Vietnam, and that is important, for this Member has heard several reports of numerous horror stories from U.S. business leaders about corruption in that country.

The resolution of the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] rightly reaffirms U.S. support for political, religious and economic freedom in Vietnam and calls upon the government to permit free and fair elections where competing political parties are allowed to participate. These are basic freedoms that we can all support and we do support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H. Res. 231.

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

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute, just to summarize what this is all about.

I think if someone was paying attention to the last several resolutions that have come to the floor, one will note that there is a relationship between them, and that is, since the end of the cold war and during the cold war, our country had its divisions and they reflected themselves within the political battles that were going on throughout our country during the elections, various elections that took place. But since the end of the cold war, there has been a unanimity of opinion in the United States and a coming together of both conservatives and liberals, of Republican and Democrat, behind those traditional values that our Founding Fathers wanted to be the basis of our decisionmaking.

We are supposed to be on the side of the good guys. I mean, it is as simple as that. We should be on the side of the good guys. We should be on the side of the oppressed and those people who want more freedom and democracy and to treat people honestly and decently, and against the tyrants and the thugs of this world.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution goes to the heart of that. Whether it is Saddam Hussein or the dictatorship in Vietnam, we are on the side of democracy and human rights.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for House Resolution 231, the sense of Congress regarding Vietnam, which urges the President to make clear to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that we are committed to economic, religious, and political freedom for the people of Vietnam. As you know, the United States continues to open diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Because of the growing relationship the United States has with Vietnam, we must be concerned with its poor human rights record.

May 9, 1997 was the third anniversary of Vietnam Human Rights Day here in the United States. However, current human rights' conditions in Vietnam are poor. For example, religious leaders and political dissidents are still being arrested and jailed. Dr. Doan Viet Hoat and Dr. Nguyen Dan Que are two, among many political prisoners with serious medical conditions who are held in harsh conditions with little, if any, access to medical care.

Despite prohibitions on physical abuse, there is evidence that security officials beat detainees as well as use threats and other psychological coercion to elicit false confessions. The Vietnamese Government denies citizens the right to change their government and significantly restricts freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, privacy, and religion. Vietnamese citizens are generally prohibited from contacting international human rights organizations.

Vietnam is currently negotiating a trade agreement with our Government to seek MFN status and privileges associated with Overseas Private Investment Corporation [OPIC]. In January 1997, the United States and Vietnam agreed on implementing the resettlement opportunity for Vietnamese returnees program allowing the United States to interview some of the Vietnamese returned from camps in Southeast Asia. However, this is not enough.

Child labor and human rights abuses are on the rise as well as the suppression of freedom of thought, speech, religion, press, and assembly. The Vietnamese-American community in my congressional district supports House Resolution 231. We believe that fair and open democratic elections, equal protection of all Vietnamese citizens, and the release of all political prisoners are basic and necessary steps beyond normalization.

Since this resolution is crucial to these objectives, I urge all of my colleagues to support House Resolution 231.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. ROHRBACHER for introducing this resolution urging the President to make it clear to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that America is committed to democracy, economic and religious freedom for the people of Vietnam.

Freedom is not bound by history or geography. Just as our forefathers said, people have certain inalienable rights. Democracy and basic civil liberties are not eastern or western—they are universal.

Regrettably, today, the people of Vietnam are not afforded these basic liberties. This Nation has a moral imperative to foster freedom and democracy and oppose tyranny wherever it appears—this legislation expresses that sentiment.

I support this resolution and call upon my colleagues to do so as well.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNOWBARGER). All time has expired.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 231, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING MONGOLIA

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 172) expressing the sense of Congress in support of efforts to foster friendship and cooperation between the United States and Mongolia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 172

Whereas in 1990, Mongolia renounced the Communist form of government and peacefully adopted a series of changes that linked economic development with democratic political reforms;

Whereas the Mongolian people have held 2 presidential elections and 3 parliamentary elections since 1990, all featuring vigorous campaigns by candidates from multiple political parties;

Whereas these elections have been free from violence, voter intimidation, and ballot irregularities, and the peaceful transfer of power from one Mongolian government to another has been successfully completed, demonstrating Mongolia's commitment to peace, stability, and the rule of law;

Whereas every Mongolian government since the end of communism has dedicated itself to promoting and protecting individual freedoms, the rule of law, respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and the principle of self-government, demonstrating that Mongolia is consolidating democratic gains and moving to institutionalize democratic processes;

Whereas Mongolia stands apart as one of the few countries in Asia that is truly a fully functioning democracy; its efforts to promote economic development through free market economic policies, while also promoting human rights and individual liberties, building democratic institutions, and protecting the environment, serve as a beacon to freethinking people throughout the region and the world;

Whereas Mongolia's commitment to democracy makes it a critical element in efforts to foster and maintain regional stability throughout central Asia;

Whereas Mongolia has some of the most pristine environments in the world, which provide habitats to plant and animal species that have been lost elsewhere, and has shown a strong desire to protect its environment through the Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan while moving forward with economic development, thus serving as a model for developing nations in the region and throughout the world;

Whereas Mongolia has established civilian control of the military—a hallmark of democratic nations—and is now working with the Mongolian parliamentary and military leaders, through the United States International Military Education and Training program, to further develop oversight of the military;

Whereas Mongolia is seeking to develop political and military relationships with neighboring countries as a means of enhancing regional stability; and

Whereas Mongolia has demonstrated a strong commitment to the same ideals that the United States stands for as a nation, and has indicated a strong desire to deepen and strengthen its relationship with the United States: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress—

(A) supports the efforts of the Mongolian parliament to establish "United States-Mongolian Friendship Day";

(B) strongly supports efforts by the United States and Mongolia to use the resources of their respective countries to strengthen political, economic, educational, and cultural ties between the 2 countries;

(C) confirms the support of the United States for an independent, sovereign, secure, and democratic Mongolia;

(D) applauds and encourages Mongolia's simultaneous efforts to develop its democratic and free market institutions;

(E) commends Mongolia for its foresight in environmental protection through the Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan and encourages Mongolia to obtain the goals illustrated in this plan;

(F) encourages Mongolia's efforts toward economic development that is compatible with environmental protection and supports an exchange of ideas and information between Mongolian and United States scientists;

(G) commends Mongolia's efforts to strengthen civilian control, through parliamentary oversight, over the military; and

(H) supports future contacts between the United States and Mongolia in such a manner as will benefit the parliamentary, judicial, and political institutions of Mongolia, particularly through the creation of an interparliamentary exchange between the Congress of the United States and the Mongolian parliament; and

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

(A) should, both through the vote of the United States in international financial institutions and in the administration of the bilateral assistance programs of the United States, such as the Central Asian Enterprise Fund, support Mongolia in its efforts to expand economic opportunity through free market structures and policies;

(B) should assist Mongolia in its efforts to integrate itself into international economic structures, such as the World Trade Organization; and

(C) should promote efforts to increase commercial investment in Mongolia by United States businesses and should promote policies which will increase economic cooperation and development between the United States and Mongolia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER].

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. 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. 172, now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 172 was introduced on October 22 by the distinguished gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER] together with the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER], and a second distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS].

This resolution commends the people of Mongolia for the remarkable progress that country has made since 1990, and as chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, I was pleased to expedite this resolution. This Member also authorized a congratulatory resolution on Mongolia which was approved by the previous Congress.

Mongolia has indeed made great strides from a one-party Communist country with a command economy to a multiparty, free market democracy. In the last 7 years Mongolia has also freed itself from Soviet domination. Within a year from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the popularly elected Mongolia legislature, whose election we are commemorating in this resolution, enacted a new constitution which declared Mongolia an independent, sovereign republic with guaranteed civil rights and freedoms. These changes were not only dramatic in scope and speed, they were also accomplished without firing a shot and with little concrete support from the outside world.

Mongolia's accomplishments are worthy of congressional commendation, and that is the major thrust of H. Con. Res. 172.

The Committee on International Relations, to which this resolution was referred, unanimously approved this resolution on October 31. The committee did make a number of minor alterations to the resolution, the most notable being language supporting Mongolia's membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace, which the Department of Defense indicates is not feasible.

Mr. Speaker, while the State Department does not make a habit of formally taking a position on non-controversial resolutions such as the one before the body at this time, we have been assured that this resolution fully conforms with U.S. policy and has the administration's support.

Mr. Speaker, again I congratulate these gentlemen for bringing this to our attention. We need to take time to recognize particular successes among our friends and allies and not just focus on negative things. This Member would urge approval of this congratulatory resolution for a Nation that has taken extraordinary strides.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations for expediting this particular resolution, as he has on so many occasions on other very important legislation that has been brought before this body.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution recognizes the remarkable political evolution Mongolia has undergone over the past 7 years. The principal author of this matter, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER] is to be commended, as well as our colleagues, the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER], and the gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS], who are also original cosponsors.

It clearly states, this resolution does, the desire of the United States Congress for further cooperation and friendship between our two countries. This resolution deserves our support. The gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], our ranking member, intends to vote "yes" on this resolution, as do I, and I urge our colleagues to do likewise.

One aside, Mr. Speaker. I would urge all of our colleagues, in consideration of matters as important as this relationship and others, that we begin as often as we can visiting these locales so that we can learn firsthand exactly what is needed for us to maintain our friendship and to make our friendships grow around the world.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. BEREUTER, for his assistance in reporting this resolution out of the full committee, and for his strong support of Mongolia. I would also like to thank Mr. DREIER and Mr. LANTOS for their support of this resolution as original cosponsors.

Too often, we come to the floor of the House to criticize other countries for what we see as their failure to live up to our standards in the areas of human rights, economic freedom, or environmental protection. Today, however, we are coming to the floor to celebrate a success story—the country of Mongolia. I am pleased to be a part of this positive message of affirmation that we are sending to one of the greatest, but most often overlooked success stories to come out of the end of the Soviet Empire.

The first democratic elections were only held in Mongolia in 1990, but this country has made remarkable progress in implementing democratic reforms while improving their economy, promoting human rights and protecting their vast and unique environment. In just 7

years, the people of Mongolia have rejected one-party rule, elected a new President firmly established civilian control over the military, and gained economic freedom. This transition—conducted in a peaceful manner—has proven to be a rarity, especially in this area of the world.

Mongolians are very positively disposed towards the United States and have modeled many of their democratic reforms on the United States system. This past June, the new prime minister ran on a platform titled, "the Contract with the Mongolian Voter." The Mongolian Government considers their transition to be very similar to our settling of the West. The Mongolian nomads—which make up 40 percent of the population—are not unlike the American cowboys. They cherish their freedom but are eager to benefit from the economic reforms that are gradually being implemented.

The Mongolian Government places a high priority on its relationship with the United States and is eager to be our partner in Northern and Central Asia, an area where we democratic, free and stable partners are hard to find. Moreover, as Mongolia gains confidence in its own voice within the region, they are seeking to prove that democracy, freedom, and human rights are universal values, and that Asian countries can promote these values and economic growth at the same time. The United States could look for no better role model for the region, or no better partner in the region than a country which has committed itself to the values that we promote as a nation.

With this resolution, the United States is recognizing the Mongolian people and their government for their unparalleled achievements in establishing a democracy. We are also encouraging them to continue to follow through with many of the proposed reforms. The next 5 years will be a critical period in Mongolian as the social costs of economic and political reform begin to take a heavy toll on some segments of the population. We must help Mongolia to stay the course on democratic self-government and free market economics through the difficult times ahead.

As the Mongolian Government charges ahead with economic reforms, they have not neglected their environment. Because of their small population relative to their land mass, Mongolia consists of some of the most pristine ecosystems in the world. The Mongolian Government has recognized this tremendous asset and has approved many environmental regulations to continue to protect these ecosystems. Specifically, the previous regime pledged to preserve 30 percent of Mongolia as a national park under the Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan. While this pledge may prove difficult to keep while progressing with economic reforms, the new government has committed to adhere to this pledge. With this resolution, the United States applauds the Mongolian Government's foresight and encourages them to continue to promote economic development without sacrificing their rich environment.

Nestled between China and Russia, with a population the size of Philadelphia and a land mass one-third the size of the United States, Mongolia will continue to be an important global partner for the United States. In light of the tremendous reforms that have been achieved in the first 7 years, the United States congratulates Mongolia on its recent successes and looks forward to increasing cooperation with the Mongolian Government and people on democratic, economic, and environmental programs.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. President, Mongolia is a shining beacon of hope for those people who are still living under repressive governments around the world. Mongolia is isolated, its population is small, its resources are limited but it has enthusiastically embraced political and economic reforms that would challenge any highly industrialized nation. Its government is also aggressively trying to preserve its environment and strengthen its parliamentary and judicial system.

We need to do all we can to ensure that Mongolia is successful and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I appreciate the efforts of our colleague from Illinois [Mr. PORTER] the sponsor of the bill and the distinguished cochairman of the Human Rights Caucus, and also thank the manager of the resolution, the distinguished Chairman of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] as well as his subcommittee's ranking member, the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN]. Accordingly, I again urge support for this resolution.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 172, 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.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN KENYA

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 130) concerning the situation in Kenya.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 130

Whereas on July 7, a large and violent confrontation occurred in Kenya when police stormed Nairobi's All-Saints Cathedral and attacked those present at a prayer meeting;

Whereas prodemocracy activists throughout Kenya have demonstrated in favor of reform of Kenya's constitution and the repeal of repressive colonial laws;

Whereas the bloody suppression of the constitutional reform rallies, the disruptive behavior of some demonstrators, and the recent ethnic confrontations in Kenya's Coast Province have jeopardized both the safety and the political rights of average Kenyans;

Whereas the Government of Kenya has continued to disrupt opposition rallies and meetings even after pledging to take a more tolerant approach to them in late July;

Whereas these events led to the consideration in early September of a package of democratic reforms by members of parliament representing the government and the opposition, but not including representatives of Kenyan civil society;

Whereas it remains unclear whether long-discussed political reforms can be effectively implemented in the time remaining before anticipated elections in 1997; and

Whereas colonial laws have given Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi sweeping powers to suppress political opponents and thwart reform throughout his 19-year rule: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes and commends those Kenyans who have demonstrated their love of peace, law, and order;

(2) condemns those who are inciting others to violence, looting, and destroying property;

(3) urges an immediate cessation to the violence in Kenya;

(4) urges the Government of Kenya to take all necessary and lawful steps to avoid more violence in the future;

(5) recognizes President Moi's response to domestic and international pressure to allow meaningful constitutional and legal electoral process reform through the current package of legislation agreed to by the ruling party and opposition party representatives;

(6) calls for the prodemocracy movement to remain unified in working toward implementing constitutional, statutory, and administrative reforms;

(7) urges rapid progress toward conducting free and fair elections; and

(8) urges the United States Government and the international community to continue to work with all parties to encourage the Government of Kenya to ensure a lasting and committed transition to democracy, including an immediate review of the propriety of the time of the next elections.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROYCE] and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. ROYCE].