

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE CRIME PREVENTION AND PROTECTION ACT

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, did you know that anyone with access to a computer and a modem could buy or sell firearms and explosives over the Internet with little or no federal regulation? And, did you know that, as a result of this loophole, children and career criminals are illegally purchasing firearms and explosives right now? Unfortunately, obtaining the instruments of violence over the Internet is as easy as "point, click, ship."

For far too long, gunfire in our homes, our communities, and in our schools has continued to steal young lives and destroy families. As scenes like Columbine High School and the North Valley Jewish Community Center killing spree continue to haunt America, we must step-up our efforts to protect children from gun violence.

One important step in the process of protecting our children from gun violence is closing the dangerous loophole that allows guns to be purchased from unlicensed dealers over the Internet. To accomplish this, I am introducing the "Electronic Commerce Crime Prevention and Protection Act." This much-needed legislation would ban all sales of firearms, ammunition and explosives over the Internet.

I would like to thank Congressman BRAD SHERMAN, Congressman ROBERT BRADY, Congressman JAMES MORAN, Congressman JOHN LARSON, Congressman MARTIN MEEHAN, Congressman RICHARD NEAL, Congressman ROBERT MENENDEZ, Congressman NANCY PELOSI, and Congressman JOSEPH HOEFFEL for joining me as original cosponsors of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor my legislation to ensure that the Internet remains a wonderful mechanism for commerce, communication and learning, and not a means for obtaining the tools of violence.

INDIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS ISSUE NEW REPORT ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES, ARBITRARY EXECUTIONS, AND SECRET CREMATIONS IN INDIA

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab recently issued a new report on enforced disappearances, arbitrary executions, and secret cremations of Sikhs in Punjab. It documents the names and addresses of 838 victims of this tyrannical policy. The report is both shocking and distressing.

The Committee is an umbrella organization of 18 human rights organizations under the leadership of Hindu human rights activist Ram Narayan Kumar. The report discusses "illegal abductions and secret cremations of dead bodies." In fact, the Indian Supreme Court has itself described this policy as "worse than a genocide."

The report includes direct testimony from members of the victims' families, other witnesses, and details of these brutal cases. The human rights community has stated that over 50,000 Sikhs have "disappeared" at the hands of the Indian government in the early nineties. How can any country, especially one that claims to be the "world's largest democracy," get away with so many killings, abductions and other atrocities? Will the Indian government prosecute the officials of its security forces who are responsible for these acts? Will the Indian government compensate the victims and their families?

If America can compensate the Japanese victims of the internment camps during World War II, why can't India compensate the families whose husbands, sons, wives, or daughters have been murdered? Murder is a lot more serious than internment, and these acts are much more recent.

The Council of Khalistan recently issued a press release on the Committee's report. I am placing that release in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

NEW REPORT EXPOSES ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES, ARBITRARY EXECUTIONS, SECRET CREMATIONS OF SIKHS BY INDIAN GOVERNMENT IDENTIFIES VICTIMS OF GENOCIDE BY NAME

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 15, 1999—The Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab, led by Hindu human-rights activist Ram Narayan Kumar, has issued an interim report entitled "Enforced Disappearances, Arbitrary Executions, and Secret Cremations" which exposes secret mass cremations of Sikhs by the Indian government.

The report contains a 21-page list of 838 victims who were identified by name and address. This is a very preliminary report. Three of India's most respected human rights group issued a joint letter in 1997 stating that between 1992 and 1994, 50,000 Sikhs were made to disappear by Indian forces. They were arrested, tortured, and murdered by police, then their bodies were declared "unidentified" and cremated. The Indian Supreme Court described the situation as "worse than a genocide."

More than 250,000 Sikhs have been killed since 1984. Over 200,000 Christians have been killed since 1947 and over 65,000 Kashmiri Muslims have been killed since 1988. Thousands more languish in prisons without charge or trial, according to Amnesty International. Last month, 29 Members of the U.S. Congress wrote to the Prime Minister of India demanding the release of these political prisoners.

The report makes reference to the police kidnapping and murder of human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra in 1995. Khalra "released some official documents which established that the security agencies in Punjab had been secretly cremating thousands of

dead bodies labelled as unidentified," the report noted. "Khalra suggested the most of these cremations were of people who had earlier been picked up in the state on suspicion of separatist sympathies," according to the report.

"In September 1995, it was Khalra's turn to disappear; he was kidnapped from his Amritsar home by officers of the Punjab police." In October 1995, the police murdered Mr. Khalra. Despite an order of the Supreme Court, none of the police officers involved has been brought to justice. The report also cited an official inquiry's findings of "flagrant violation of human rights on a mass scale."

"This report shows that for Sikhs there are no human rights in India," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "The genocide by the Indian Government shows Sikhs that there is no religious tolerance in India and India will never allow Sikhs or other religious minorities to exercise their religious or political rights," he said.

"If India is the democracy it claims to be, then why not simply hold a plebiscite on independence in Punjab, Khalistan? Dr. Aulakh asked. "Instead of doing the democratic thing and allowing the people of Punjab, Khalistan, of Kashmir, of Christian Nagaland to vote on their political status, as America has repeatedly allowed Puerto Rico to do and Canada has allowed Quebec to do, the Indians try to crush the freedom movements by killing massive numbers of people in these minority nations," he said. "Democracies don't commit genocide."

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1906, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

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SPEECH OF

HON. JOE SKEEN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 1, 1999

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture I fully expect the Secretary, in conjunction with the International Arid Lands Consortium, to expand efforts in the area of arid lands research, specifically in the areas of water, grazing and drought mitigation programs applicable to arid and semi-arid regions. Not only will an expansion of these efforts prove valuable to America's farmers and ranchers, the employment of the existing scientific/political relationship between the Department, the International Arid Lands Consortium, Israel and Jordan could prove highly beneficial to the Middle East peace process as well.

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