

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 20, the resolution "Concerning Economic, Humanitarian And Other Assistance To Northern Somalia." To understand the importance of this resolution, we must look to the recent history of politically, economically and war torn Somalia.

Cities in Somalia have traditionally been centers of trade, administration and education. Now they lie shattered. In Hargeisa, for example, 80 percent of the buildings have been destroyed, supply infrastructures like electricity and water have been smashed, the schools left roofless and ruined, the hospitals devastated and the citizens have suffered without the most basic facilities. Anti-personnel mines and unexploded shells lie buried in the rubble of the city, still deadly, forbidding the clearance of much of the debris. Such terrifying conditions in what had been stable and well-established cities symbolize the legacy of Siad Barre's disastrous years of power.

As the Africa Watch Committee set down in its 1990 report on the region, "It is difficult to overstate the Somali government's brutality towards its own people, or to measure the impact of its murderous policies." Two decades of the presidency of President Siad Barre have resulted in human rights violations on an unprecedented scale, which have devastated the country. Even before the current wars, the human rights of Somali citizens were violated systematically, violently and with absolute impunity. The most bloody conflict, and the longest lasting, has been the war in the North against the Isaak clan, the largest in the region." Recounts given by the people who have and continue to be exposed to physical violence and verbal abuse in Somalia paints a picture of dead, wounded, displaced people and impoverished and demolished cities.

Mrs. Fozia Mohamed Awad, speaking of the problems in Northern Somalia recants "I personally lived through the 1985 massacre, when fifty to sixty men were driven out of prison and shot by government soldiers. This happened in the city of Burao, and there were no trials or court appearances, they were just shot down. After these killings, the government confiscated our property, established control posts at the entrances of our towns and along the highways and nothing could happen without them being bribed."

One morning the government army arrived at, Fozia Awad's village, approaching from a dried-up riverbed. They opened fire, killing all they could see—people and animals. They killed her mother and two other women relatives. In all, sixty people were killed on that occasion at the water point. Then they went to the nearby village and killed everybody there, except a few who fled into the bush.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, H. Con. Res. 46 is extremely important in that it expresses the sense of Congress deploring the escalation of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea which has resulted in the massive and senseless loss of life, as well as substantial economic hardship to the peoples of both nations. This measure strongly urges both Eritrea and Ethiopia to bring an immediate end to the violence between the two countries and strongly affirms U.S. support for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework Agreement. In addition, H. Con. Res. 20 calls on the United Nations Human Rights Commission and all human rights organizations to investigate human rights abuses in connection with

the forced detentions, deportations, and displacements of populations caused by this conflict.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Congressman CAMPBELL and Congressman PAYNE for introducing this important resolution. This resolution presents a commitment by the United States to the people of Somalia. It is for the spirits of the thousands of people who have died in Somalia and 60,000 more who have been detained or forced from their homes who are crying out for world intervention. This resolution is a first step.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 20.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.J. RES. 2

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of House Joint Resolution 2, of which I am not particularly fond, and to which my name was added without my knowledge in error.

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

There was no objection.

CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF GENEVA CONVENTIONS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 102) celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the humanitarian safeguards these treaties provide in times of armed conflict.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 102

Whereas the Geneva Conventions of 1949 set basic humane standards of behavior during armed conflict, and are the major written source of international humanitarian law;

Whereas these Conventions prescribe humane treatment for civilian populations, wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel, and prisoners of war during armed conflict;

Whereas these Conventions recognize the International Committee of the Red Cross as an independent and neutral organization whose humanitarian mission is to protect and assist civilians, prisoners of war, and other victims of armed conflict;

Whereas "the red cross in a field of white" is not an ordinary organizational symbol, but one to which the international commu-

nity has granted the ability to impose restraint during war and to protect human life;

Whereas the American Red Cross and its sister national societies are members of a world-wide organization rooted in the provisions of international humanitarian law and dedicated to the promulgation of its principles, among which are the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

Whereas the international programs of the American Red Cross bring relief from natural and manmade disasters abroad, contribute to the development of nonprofit relief organizations abroad, and include the teaching of international humanitarian law throughout the United States;

Whereas many domestic programs of the Red Cross in health and safety, disaster, blood, youth, and service to the members of the Armed Forces of the United States grew out of a response to armed conflict;

Whereas, thanks to the efforts of Clara Barton and Frederick Douglass, the United States ratified in 1882 the first convention for the amelioration of the condition of wounded and sick members of the armed forces in the field;

Whereas in 1955 the United States ratified the Geneva Conventions of 1949; and

Whereas the Geneva Conventions of 1949 are among the most universally ratified treaties in the world: Now, therefore, be it

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

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

The Congress—

(1) recognizes the historic and humanitarian significance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the signing of these treaties;

(2) exhorts combatants everywhere to respect the red cross emblem in order to protect innocent and vulnerable populations on every side of conflicts;

(3) commends the International Committee of the Red Cross and the more than 175 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, including the American Red Cross, on their continuing work in providing relief and assistance to the victims of war as prescribed by these Conventions;

(4) applauds the Promise of Humanity gathering organized by the American Red Cross in 1999 in Washington, D.C., as an important reminder of our responsibilities to educate future generations about the principles of international humanitarian law;

(5) commends the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the more than 175 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, including the American Red Cross, for their work in educating the world's citizens about the humanitarian principles of international humanitarian law as embodied in the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

(6) invites the American Red Cross during this anniversary year to assist Congress in educating its Members and staff about the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

(7) supports the anniversary theme of the International Committee of the Red Cross that "Even War Has Limits"; and

(8) calls upon the President to issue a proclamation recognizing the anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the Conventions themselves as critically important instruments for protecting human dignity in times of armed conflict and limiting the savagery of war.

SEC. 2. GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949 DEFINED.

In this concurrent resolution, the term "Geneva Conventions of 1949" means the following conventions, done at Geneva in 1949:

(1) Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (6 UST 3114).

(2) Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of the Armed Forces at Sea (6 UST 3217).

(3) Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (6 UST 3316).

(4) Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (6 UST 3516).

□ 1315

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), the sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. In 1949, the Geneva Conventions were formally adopted which set the rules for safeguarding members of the armed forces who are wounded, sick, shipwrecked, prisoners of war and civilian workers of the military. At the same time, the dream of Henry Dunant was realized. Henry was the founder of the Red Cross movement, and in 1859 he originally proposed the establishment of a civilian volunteer relief corps to care for the wounded.

It was in 1949, nearly 100 years later, that the Geneva Conventions were formally ratified. In the old days, they did not take prisoners. They killed them. As it evolved through the years, beginning in 1859 when Henry Dunant started the program, we began to be more humane in our treatment of war. So in 1949, nearly 100 years later, the Geneva Conventions were formally ratified, and the Red Cross was recognized as the world's humanitarian organization.

Through his vision and determination, an organization was built that has educated, protected, given hope, provided comfort and relief to millions of people all over the world. Today virtually every country in the world is part of the Geneva Conventions. It was because of Mr. Dunant and these conventions that I and my family had hope during my 7 years of captivity as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. After I was shot down over Vietnam, a Vietnamese officer came up to me with a Red Cross on his lapel and said I could write a letter. Seeing the cross, I assumed he was working for the Red Cross and was visiting me to ensure that I would be treated humanely as the Geneva Conventions dictated. As Members know,

our wars with both Korea and Vietnam, those two countries did not formally adopt the Geneva Conventions. They signed them but they did not adhere to them.

After we spoke, he asked me if I wanted to write a letter. I wrote the letter and later learned it was never sent. I found out later that in Communist countries, there are not many left nowadays, the military runs the Red Cross and they do it the way they want to and not the way a humanitarian Red Cross that we know our Red Cross in America by and in other nations, the international one, does. They are not volunteers with humanitarian goals in mind.

Later on during my captivity, a real Red Cross representative finally visited me and some of my letters made it home, through the Red Cross, and my family was able to send some that way as well. Those letters were some of the only comfort my family and friends here in America received during my nearly 7 years in captivity, and they were possible because the American Red Cross was there to make sure that the Geneva Conventions were followed.

I tell that story simply to illustrate the power and respect that the symbol of the Red Cross holds throughout the world. The Red Cross and its affiliates are the organizations that are there in time of need, whether it be to ensure the human rights of political prisoners or to help reconstruct the homes and lives of victims of national disasters. The Red Cross is always there.

In my case they were there to uphold the most powerful of human rights treaties, the Geneva Conventions. That is why today I congratulate and say "thank you" to the Red Cross, the American Red Cross and the International Red Cross on the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. I know that my family and I are very grateful to the Red Cross, to the volunteers who selflessly continue to serve so that human dignity is not compromised and human suffering is eliminated. I congratulate the Red Cross and the international movement, and again commemorate the anniversary of these important international treaties.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) for bringing this important measure before this body at this time.

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

Let me first pay public tribute to my good friend and distinguished colleague the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) for bringing this matter to the body and for his heroic service to our Nation. We are deeply in his debt. I also want to commend the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, for sponsoring this legislation.

I am, of course, delighted to ask all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 102. The Geneva Conventions, Mr. Speaker, were concluded in 1949, 50

years ago, to address the terrible practices that occurred during the Second World War. They established a comprehensive framework for dealing with treatment of combatants and civilians alike. The conventions include a wide range of protections. Persons who are not or are no longer taking part in hostilities according to the conventions need to be respected, protected and treated humanely. They must be given appropriate care, without discrimination of any kind. Captured combatants and other persons whose freedom has been restricted must be treated humanely. They need to be protected against all acts of violence, particularly against torture. If they are put on trial, they must enjoy the fundamental guarantees of proper judicial procedures. The right of parties to an armed conflict to choose methods of warfare are not unlimited. There must be no unnecessary or superfluous injury or suffering inflicted. In order to spare the civilian population, armed forces at all times must distinguish between civilian populations and civilian objectives on the one hand and military objectives on the other hand.

I think it is extremely important for us to state with pride that the American armed forces have gone out of their way to minimize or to eliminate what is typically called collateral damage, damage to civilian populations.

Since 1949, these and other protections have been critical in stopping at least some of the violence and abuse of both combatants and civilians. Through the good offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, large numbers of American soldiers and citizens have been assisted in the invocation of these conventions.

In this connection, I want to pay tribute to Elizabeth Dole, who led the American Red Cross with such distinction over a long period of time. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this 50th commemorative celebration of the Geneva Conventions.

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

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

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, this resolution celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 recognizes the important contributions the Geneva Conventions of 1949 made to international humanitarian law. Last August we observed the 50th anniversary of these treaties. During this century, we have seen the scope and devastation of conflict and warfare reach hitherto unimaginable bounds. In order to ameliorate the far reaching, devastating consequences of battle and conflict, the states parties to the Geneva Conventions have undertaken to recognize certain limitations and to humanize the laws of war. I commend the author of the measure the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON)

who through his own heroic experience as a POW during the Vietnam War has firsthand knowledge of the significance of these conventions. His North Vietnamese captors attempted to derogate from their obligations under the Geneva Conventions by injecting political issues into whether or not they had to be applied to U.S. airmen and other servicemen taken prisoner. Condemnation in the U.N. and elsewhere of its position forced Hanoi to apply these nonpolitical and humanitarian instruments regardless of any other political considerations.

Other provisions of the Geneva Conventions concerning the treatment of civilians during war or internal conflict have been shown by the events we have witnessed in this decade in the former Yugoslavia, in Central Africa and now in East Timor to be highly relevant. It is the Geneva Conventions that have by and large provided the basis for the indictment of numerous suspected war criminals by the Hague Tribunal. When these vital pieces of international humanitarian law are respected, the Geneva Conventions can and do temper the devastation of modern conflict. And when they are not, those violators who breach their provisions risk being considered as beyond the bounds of humanity, and the civilized world.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House to approve H. Con. Res. 102, calling for appropriate recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS).

Mr. EVANS. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON). As the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and a member of the Committee on Armed Services, the issues I deal with on a daily basis address the human costs exacted by war. Whether it be the millions of disabled veterans who still seek care from the VA or the innocent men, women and children who have been maimed by land mines, the scope of the carnage caused by war is breathtaking. We have come to take for granted that it is a barbaric enterprise, a part of the human condition that will always remain with us. However, the Geneva Conventions have helped bring some measure of sanity to the insanity we call war. It has helped to act as a safety net for the innocents of the world as well as foster respect for the basic human rights of combatants. While it has never by any stretch of the imagination been a perfect instrument, it is hard to imagine the pain and suffering that would have happened in our world without its existence.

If the Geneva Convention is to remain a living and important document,

we must do all we can to ensure its relevance to the nations of the world and to all combatants. Today's resolution honoring the 50th anniversary of their creation will send an important message to the world that the United States believes in and embodies the humanitarian principles inherent in these accords.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. EVANS. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. I think the gentleman hit it right on the head when he used the phrase "some measure of sanity." This, of course, is the very best in a very difficult world. But I wholeheartedly support this resolution and I compliment the gentleman on his comments. I thank the ranking member and the chairman for bringing this resolution to the floor. I certainly hope that it will pass, not only pass but do so unanimously.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time and want to say what a privilege it is to be in this Congress with him, he being one of the foremost champions of human rights not only in this Congress but throughout the world. I am very grateful for the commitment that he has made because if there are Members who exemplify what the Geneva Convention stands for in its unfolding of principles of humanity, it is the gentleman from California. I think we could also say that the esteemed chairman of the Committee on International Relations also is someone who celebrates these high principles.

I am certainly here in support of this resolution which celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

□ 1330

It is important that we understand that the Geneva Conventions embody an agreement to try to bring principles of humanity into one of the most inhumane of circumstances in human conduct, the conduct of war, and Geneva Conventions brought together leaders from around the world 50 years ago with the express purpose of trying to find a way where, as we see a world slip into war, we could still say that there are some things that even in war are not going to be tolerated.

I have to say that in reflecting back in the last year in events which have been well publicized around the world I think it is important, when we speak of the Geneva Conventions, to also review the military objectives of NATO and Kosovo just 5 months ago which would seem to violate the very prohibition which the Geneva Convention has for deliberate attacks on civilians, and I

cite from the Geneva Conventions here, Schedule 5, Article 52.1, which states that civilians shall not be the subject of an attack, while Schedule 6, Article 13.3, states, and I quote, civilians shall enjoy protection unless they take direct part in hostilities, end of quote.

Now the Conventions, in order for them to be effective must be applied to everyone whether we happen to like a given nation or not, and they would seem, if my colleagues read them, to apply to everyone in the world, including those Serbian civilians in Yugoslavia. For instance, Convention 4, Part 2, Article 13, states the provision of Part 2 covers the whole population of the countries in conflict without any adverse distinction based in particular on race, nationality, religion or political opinion and are intended to alleviate the sufferings caused by war, end of quote.

Well, we know for a fact that NATO targeted Serb civilians and civilian infrastructures. There is no one who would contest this now. For instance, the attack on the Serbian TV station caused the death of 20 civilians. NATO planes and missiles deliberately targeted the electric power infrastructure of Serbia. One State Department official has been quoted as saying that the attack on a TV station was intended to send a message to the Serbian populace, and this is a quote, to put pressure on the leadership to end this, unquote.

Now did NATO's aerial bombardment violate international humanitarian law as set forth in the Geneva Conventions of 1949? Did the bombing also violate the first additional protocol of 1977, which many of the NATO countries have ratified? The basic rule in Article 48 of Protocol 1 is that civilian populations and objects are to be distinguished from military objectives and that only military objectives are to be bombed. In addition, bombings which are intended to spread terror, and I will read that again, bombings which are intended to spread terror or attack civilian morale are expressly prohibited by Article 51. When NATO admittedly targeted the infrastructure of Yugoslavia, including water works, electricity plants, bridges, factories, television and radio locations in efforts to harm the morale of the people and to get them to overthrow their leadership, I wonder if NATO considered Article 51 which prohibited such actions.

NATO also targeted civilians when it attacked the Serbian TV station killing 20 civilians. Rules 51 and 57 also prohibit attacks on military targets that will cause excessive civilian deaths and prohibit disproportionate indiscriminate attacks. NATO bombing caused excessive loss of life and injury to civilians and possibly killed thousands.

Now we should celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and pass this legislation, but our words will ring hollow when our actions contradict them. Let us follow up this resolution with a study that honestly and

independently determines how, if at all, recent military action in Kosovo contravened the Geneva Conventions.

I urge passage of the resolution.

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

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

I would like to make a comment concerning my good friend's observations concerning NATO's participation in the recent hostilities in the former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Speaker, probably at no time in military history has there been such a deliberate attempt to minimize civilian casualties as was the case on the part of NATO. As a matter of fact, the NATO command went out of its way, even jeopardizing its own pilots, to minimize to the maximum possible extent civilian casualties. But I think it is self-evident that in a society where civilian and military facilities and infrastructure are intertwined and adjacent and contiguous the notion that warfare can be conducted without any civilian casualties is simply not realistic. The Geneva Convention makes a very clear distinction between tragic civilian casualties, unintended, inadvertent, and the deliberate punishment, maiming, killing of civilians. Let the record show that at no time did NATO do anything to deliberately injure civilians.

Now I think a special comment needs to be made with respect to Milosevic's television facilities. As any dictator, Milosevic has used the propaganda apparatus of the Serbian television network to spread falsehood, rumors, disinformation, thereby prolonging this tragic war. It would have been unthinkable for NATO not to take out Serbian television, and the post mortems following the conclusion of military activities has concluded as one of the main criticisms of NATO's action that the television facilities were not taken out earlier. I think we need to draw a very sharp line of demarcation between the deliberate injuring of civilians and the inevitable civilian losses which are entailed in military activities.

NATO must indeed be proud of its extraordinary efforts to protect all civilians and all civilian facilities. Railroad stations, bridges, radio stations, television stations are part and parcel of today's war, and to attempt to conduct a war where military and civilian facilities are so inextricably intertwined, as they are in all modern industrialized societies, is simply absurd. I think it is incumbent upon all of us not to misread or misinterpret the Geneva Conventions. The Geneva Conventions deal with deliberate injury, maiming and killing of civilians. The Geneva Conventions realistically understand that in the tragic event of war there will be civilian casualties, and that is what happened in the case of the Kosovo encounter.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LANTOS. I yield to my good friend from Ohio.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that one of the great celebrations that NATO had in this conflict was its ability to precisely target certain facilities, notwithstanding the unfortunate episode at the Chinese embassy, and that being the case, NATO together with the intelligence it was receiving absolutely understood that there were civilians in that TV station.

Now I respectfully submit that Rules 51 and 57 in this Convention, which the gentleman and I both agree ought to be honored, prohibits attacks on military targets which would cause excessive civilian deaths, and while we could engage in a debate on, I suppose, what would constitute excessive civilian deaths, I humbly submit the possibility that NATO may have gone along the line of challenging this very provision which is in the Geneva Convention, and I think that the gentleman and I both agree in our service in this Congress that we want to see the highest principles of humanity upheld, and we both understand how terribly difficult it is for all of us to have to grapple with the decisions that are made during a war because I think we would both agree that war is something that needs to be avoided at all cost, and when it is finally something that is enacted, that we observe the Geneva Conventions.

My statement here on this floor is to point out that while we can all admire the ideals that are expressed in the Geneva Conventions that it is important, I think, to review a recent history which may suggest that the Geneva Conventions could be fully exemplified in the conduct of combatants.

I would agree with the gentleman from California that Mr. Milosevic is not someone who at any point ought to be regarded for his role in this. He has certainly done everything he can to undermine democracy and freedom and Serbia, and I think we would all agree that he ought to be ousted. But the people who are Serbian civilians who had no role in supporting the Milosevic regime and in some cases tried to overturn him ought to be accorded the full privileges of that same Convention which we would accord to all other nations in the world, and I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for his indulgence and his kindness.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and friend for his comments, and let me just conclude by saying that the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs, General Shelton, General Wesley Clark, the head of NATO, are no less committed to fully observing the Geneva Conventions than are all the Members of this body, and with that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand in support of H. Con. Res. 102, introduced by my friend, the Vietnam War hero from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), cele-

brating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

This is not a theoretical matter for me. I know this is not a theoretical or abstract matter for the sponsor of this resolution. This resolution is about saving and honoring the lives of men and women who risk their lives in service to their country, and their families, and the innocent civilian victims of warfare.

I came precariously close to needing the protections of the Geneva Conventions myself.

On May 10, 1972, I flew my 300th air mission over Vietnam. I downed three North Vietnamese MiGs that day; together with the two I had previously shot down, I had just become the first U.S. Navy Ace of the Vietnam War. I was making the turn back home when forty miles inland, my F-4 Phantom was severely damaged by an enemy surface-to-air missile. I barrel-rolled that airplane until we reached the mouth of the Red River. My RIO, Willie Driscoll, and I ejected just as the Phantom exploded.

As we floated down to the water, there was no bravado, no silk scarf, no Benson and Hedges. I was scared to death. I saw the Viet Cong approaching my landing place from the beach. But I was blessed to be rescued by Americans. The Viet Cong did not capture me. I was spared the fate of my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), of being a prisoner of war. We are all in his debt.

These individual stories, of people whose lives were risked in war, and of people who were taken prisoner in war, point to the justification for the Geneva Conventions. It is that war is between nations, not between individual men and women; and that the men and women who risk their lives in war should be honored and treated with respect and dignity by the combatant nations involved.

Two miles west of the floor of this House lies "the wall," the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. On its surface are the names of the men and women who gave their last full measure of devotion to their country during the war in Indochina. Each of them had parents and loved ones. Many had siblings and families of their own. The names of these family members and loved ones are not inscribed on the Wall, but in their grief, they are also casualties of the Vietnam War.

For them, and for the men and women serving America's armed forces today, the Geneva Conventions are very real. They mean the difference between life and death. They define the difference between a civilized world, and barbarism.

The Geneva Conventions, and the international organization that helps implement them, the Red Cross, deserve the honor of Congress today.

I am grateful to my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) for sponsoring this resolution, and I urge all Members to support it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 102.

The question was taken.

Mr. LANTOS. 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.

COMMENDING GREECE AND TURKEY FOR PROVIDING EACH OTHER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND RESCUE RELIEF AFTER RECENT EARTHQUAKES

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 188) commending Greece and Turkey for their mutual and swift response to the recent earthquakes in both countries by providing to each other humanitarian assistance and rescue relief.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 188

Whereas Greece and Turkey, two longstanding allies of the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners, have each recently suffered devastating earthquakes;

Whereas Greece and Turkey have unresolved issues that have led to tensions in the past;

Whereas Greece and Turkey, in an unprecedented fashion, were the first to respond to these tragedies by providing their neighboring country with humanitarian assistance and rescue relief that ultimately reduced the number of casualties;

Whereas Greece and Turkey were successful in putting aside their differences in order to respond swiftly to these crises; and

Whereas Greece and Turkey have held successful talks to begin to resolve their issues of disagreement: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) commends Greece and Turkey for their mutual and swift response to the recent earthquakes in both countries by providing to each other humanitarian assistance and rescue relief;

(2) encourages the United States to continue its efforts in aiding both countries as they seek to rebuild after these tragedies;

(3) recognizes the renewed spirit of cooperation and the importance of the talks between Greece and Turkey; and

(4) encourages Greece and Turkey to persevere in resolving outstanding issues between the two countries.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

The earthquake which devastated Turkey last August, Mr. Speaker, produced a swift reaction in neighboring Greece. Putting aside their bitter and

longstanding political differences, the people and government of Greece responded to their neighbor's plight with generous humanitarian assistance and support.

□ 1345

The significance of this response by Greece did not go unnoticed or unwelcomed in Turkey, as the Turkish government as well as media commented very positively about Greece's quick response to this tragedy. In September, a strong but fortunately less destructive earthquake struck Athens, and Turkey was the first nation to respond in assistance in the form of search and rescue teams to locate survivors.

In the aftermath of those two natural disasters, the Greek and Turkish foreign ministers have been meeting and agreed to continue discussions building on the new-found good will between the Greek and Turkish people aimed at resolving the issues that have produced tensions between these two NATO allies of our Nation.

I commend the cochairs of our Hellenic Issues Caucus, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), for recognizing the significance of this thaw in relations between our two important allies in the Eastern Mediterranean and for their initiative which puts the Congress on record in support of continuing the dialogue between Greece and Turkey so that all outstanding differences can be resolved. I also thank the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), a senior member of our committee and chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, also an original cosponsor of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, we are now entering a critical stage for ensuring a peaceful future in that region of the Eastern Mediterranean. Next month, President Clinton will be visiting this region, and we hope he is going to use that occasion to make very clear to the government of Turkey our desire to see a settlement of a dispute in Cyprus on which Turkey needs to demonstrate a greater degree of flexibility.

We also hope that the President will make clear our interests in seeing that Turkey becomes accepted fully into the European Union when it meets the requirements of membership. There should be no discrimination against Turkey in that regard. In the interim, Mr. Speaker, our government should do everything we can to assist and encourage the process of reconciliation between Greece and Turkey.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support the new spirit of reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and to unanimously adopt H. Con. Res. 188.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge all of my colleagues to give their strong support

H. Con. Res. 188. It rarely happens in the course of human events that two historic enemies, through misfortune and tragedy such as an earthquake, suddenly find themselves looking at each other with a different set of eyes. This is what is happening with respect to Greece and Turkey.

We have grown accustomed over decades and generations to view Greece and Turkey as irreconcilable opponents and even enemies, this despite the fact that they both are members of NATO; this despite the fact that both have excellent relations with the United States. The tragic earthquake has brought together these two historic opponents.

I want to pay strong tribute to the leadership in both countries and express the hope on behalf of all of my colleagues that the beginnings of a more benign dialogue between Greece and Turkey might just be a harbinger of a new era to come. This will require a great deal of understanding, a great deal of acceptance on both sides; but for the first time in modern history, we see responsible Greek officials like the foreign minister making kind statements about Turkey and vice-versa.

Such a development, Mr. Speaker, would not only be in the interests of these two countries and the stability of Europe and the cohesion of NATO, but it would be of tremendous value to United States national interests. It is our earnest hope that this tragic set of events, acts of nature, might have brought together these two formerly opposed countries, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

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

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, in the place of the chairman of the committee, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the cosponsor of the bill.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time and for the cooperation of the gentleman and his committee and his staff on this piece of legislation. As a sponsor of the bill, I rise to urge my colleagues, as others have done, to support H. Con. Res. 188.

Mr. Speaker, this bill commends Greece and Turkey for their mutual and swift humanitarian assistance to one another following two devastating earthquakes which rattled these two neighbors. Tensions between these two countries have always been high, and they have come to the brink of war on more than a few occasions. Although they share a history strong with conflicts, devastation and war, they revealed to the world that, in time of need, all human lives carry the same weight.

In this devastating time, Greece and Turkey were successful in putting aside their differences in order to provide assistance for all those people who were injured, buried under the rubble,