

headaches. According to Farida Akhter, executive director of the Research for Development Alternatives in Bangladesh, quote, it is cheaper to use Third World women for such birth control experimental devices and methods than to use an animal in the laboratory in the West, end quote.

Through such grossly unjust experimentation, poor women have been robbed of the most important resource they have, their own healthy bodies. A woman's health is key to the survival of her entire family in many of these countries, and this must come to an end.

In the name of population control and under the guise of family planning, America and the United Nations have exported horror to women abroad. And our family planning advocates call this progress?

Mr. Speaker, we should be calling it by the most descriptive and accurate term that it is: Slavery.

I urge my colleagues to join in support of the Tiahrt resolution today. Reaffirm that all family planning programs should be completely voluntary. Help maintain the dignity of women around the world.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we would urge adoption of the resolution. I think it is a very good resolution. I want to again thank the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) for proposing it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues in support of House Resolution 118, which reaffirms the principles of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. This Programme of Action addresses the sovereign rights of countries and the rights of informed consent in family planning programs.

This resolution states that all family planning programs should be voluntary and completely informative on the various planning methods. Informed consent and voluntary participation are essential to the long-term success of any family planning program.

Family planning programs are an essential part of reproductive health care. Each year an estimated 600,000 women die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth most in developing countries, where pregnancy and giving birth are among leading causes of death for women of childbearing age.

With the current world population at over 5 billion and growing, we must support international family planning programs. Women in under-developed countries must have access to information that will allow them to make informed reproductive health decisions concerning contraception and the spacing of their children.

In supporting this Programme of Action, we support international reproductive health services and the sovereign right of other countries to make decisions concerning the well-being of their citizens.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the resolution we are debating today quotes from the Programme of Action of the

International Conference on Population and Development. As many of my colleagues know, the ICPD met in 1994 and reached a consensus on a 20-year Programme of Action that makes an unprecedented commitment to women's rights and concerns in international population and development activities.

I applaud my colleagues for supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action. But since the authors of this resolution left out a good portion of the Programme, I'd like to fill in our colleagues about the rest of it, because it also deserves our strong support.

The Programme of Action calls for universal access to a full range of basic reproductive health services. It also calls for specific measures to foster human development, with particular attention to the social, economic, and health status of women. It supports integrating voluntary family planning activities with other efforts to improve maternal and child health to make the most effective use of our limited resources.

The resolution we are debating here today discusses the need to respect the religious and cultural realities of the countries in which we fund family planning activities. I agree. I also believed that we need to respect the rights of women around the world to make free and informed choices about their own reproductive health. And we need to help educate women and men to ensure that they have the information and resources they need to stay strong and healthy and to nurture healthy children.

In addition to supporting the portions of the Programme of Action included in the resolution we are debating today, the United States also must live up to the financial commitments it made at the ICPD.

To reach the Programme's year 2000 goal of providing \$17 billion for international family programs worldwide—one-third of which would come from donor countries like the United States—the United States would have to triple its international family planning assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the authors of this resolution support the ICPD's Programme of Action. Now I look forward to working with them to implement all aspects of the Programme.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 118.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 99) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the human rights situation in Cuba, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 99

Whereas the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, is

an international mechanism to express support for the protection and defense of the inherent natural rights of humankind and a forum for discussing the human rights situation throughout the world and condemning abuses and gross violations of these liberties;

Whereas the actions taken by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights establish precedents for further courses of action and send messages to the international community that the protection and promotion of human rights is a priority;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guides global human rights policy asserts that all human beings are born free and live in dignity with rights;

Whereas international human rights organizations, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Department of State all concur that the Government of Cuba continues to systematically violate the fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens;

Whereas it is carefully documented that the Government of Cuba propagates and encourages the routine harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, detention, imprisonment, and defamation of those who voice their opposition against the government;

Whereas the Government of Cuba engages in torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment against political prisoners including the use of electroshock, intense beatings, and extended periods of solitary confinement without nutrition or medical attention, to force them into submission;

Whereas the Government of Cuba suppresses the right to freedom of expression and freedom of association and recently enacted legislation which carries penalties of up to 30 years for dissidents and independent journalists;

Whereas religious freedom in Cuba is severely circumscribed and clergy and lay people suffer sustained persecution by the Cuban State Security apparatus;

Whereas the Government of Cuba routinely restricts workers' rights including the right to form independent unions;

Whereas the Government of Cuba denies its people equal protection under the law, enforcing a judicial system which infringes upon fundamental rights while denying recourse against the violation of human rights and civil liberties;

Whereas in recent weeks the Government of Cuba has carried out a brutal crackdown of the brave internal opposition and independent press, arresting scores of peaceful opponents without cause or justification;

Whereas the internal opposition in Cuba is working intensely and valiantly to draw international attention to Cuba's deplorable human rights situation and continues to strengthen and grow in its opposition to the Government of Cuba;

Whereas at this time of great repression, the internal opposition requires and deserves the firm and unwavering support and solidarity of the international community;

Whereas the Congress of the United States has stood, consistently, on the side of the Cuban people and supported their right to be free: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns in the strongest possible terms the repressive crackdown by the Government of Cuba against the brave internal opposition and the independent press;

(2) expresses its profound admiration and firm solidarity with the internal opposition and independent press of Cuba;

(3) demands that the Government of Cuba release all political prisoners, legalize all political parties, labor unions, and the press, and schedule free and fair elections;

(4) urges the Administration, at the 55th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, to take all steps necessary to secure international support for, and passage of, a resolution which condemns the Cuban Government for its gross abuses of the rights of the Cuban people and for continued violations of all international human rights standards and legal principles, and calls for the reinstatement of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Cuba;

(5) declares the acts of the Government of Cuba, including its widespread and systematic violation of human rights, to be in violation of the charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(6) urges the President to nominate a special envoy to advocate, internationally, for the establishment of the rule of law for the Cuban people; and

(7) urges the President to continue to actively seek support from individual nations, as well as the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the European Union, and all other international organizations to call for the establishment of the rule of law for the Cuban people.

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

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

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 99.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 99, a resolution detailing the systematic violations of human rights by the Castro regime; a resolution rendering our unwavering support to the dissidence and internal opposition in Cuba; a resolution that restates the U.S. commitment to freedom, to democracy in Cuba; a resolution which calls for further U.S. and international resolve against the oppression and subjugation of the Cuban people.

As the U.S. delegation begins its work in Geneva for the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that they be empowered by the passage of this resolution, which is a bipartisan effort and a bipartisan message that the United States Congress cannot be silent on this issue and will not tolerate the abuses inflicted by the Castro regime against its own citizens.

This message we hope will be heard and received by the international community as a call to action against the

deplorable human rights situation in Cuba. There is never a wrong time to condemn abuses inflicted upon our fellow human beings. It is always correct to speak out against injustice. There is never a wrong time to underscore the plight of hundreds of thousands of political prisoners or to underscore widespread cases of torture, of executions, of disappearance, of intimidation, of persecution, of forced exile throughout the four decades that Cuba has been under the brutal totalitarian dictatorship.

It is not only our moral obligation but the duty of the United States as a global leader and a vanguard of democracy.

My dear colleagues, the Castro regime has not changed. Let us not allow ourselves to be fooled by the facade created by the regime and its apologists. As Juan Tellez Rodriguez, independent Cuban journalist for the Freedom Agency, said earlier this year, "The government in Havana continues to close itself off to the world. It insists on its closed, oppressive political system. It does not even open up to its own people who suffer and die slowly."

Indeed, it seeks to silence the independent voices on the island because it realizes the power of the human spirit, of what individuals can accomplish when they are able to exercise their natural rights.

He goes on to say the Castro regime understands all too well the meaning of President Ronald Reagan's words when he said, "No arsenal and no weapon in the arsenals of the world are so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women."

So the Castro regime continues to use any method, any strategy, any action to stifle freedom of expression in an attempt to undermine the Cuban people's struggle for liberty and democracy in their island nation.

One of the most recent examples illustrating the repressive nature of the Castro dictatorship is the imprisonment, the trial and the sentencing of Cuba's best known dissidents, and they appear for our colleagues in the posters right in front of the well. Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, Felix Bonne Carcasses, Rene Gomez Manzano and Vladimiro Roca Antunez. These four brave Cubans were arrested in 1997 after petitioning the regime for immediate reforms and publishing a pamphlet entitled "The Homeland Belongs to Us All," whereby they describe their hopes for a free and democratic Cuba.

These four pictured above us languished in Castro's jails for more than 600 days without any charges filed against them, surviving inhumane treatment for almost 2 years, preparing to begin a hunger strike on March 16 if they were not brought to trial. So the Castro regime initiated the facade of a trial on March 1 amid a roundup and detention of dissidents. Last week, the regime sentenced Marta Beatriz, Felix, Rene and Vladimiro to varying prison terms merely for exercising their

rights and for seeking to secure the rights for their fellow countrymen.

As we consider this House Resolution 99, I would like my colleagues to think about these four brave men and women. I would like for us to ponder upon the words written by Marta Beatriz Roque in a letter dated February 7 of this year and smuggled out of her prison cell. In it, she said, "I remain in my belief that the homeland belongs to all of us. Sufficient time has passed and there have been enough postponements. The time for liberty in this small prison will not wait. My brothers, I believe that we should not fear the shadows because their presence means that a light shines from a place not far away. Our struggle for our Nation's democratization already has been marked by this imprisonment. We have endured and passed the difficult test that will make us more persistent in our demands."

"I will be convinced of our cause's justice to my last breath. Even if we are sent to our deaths," she writes, "we already have made a mark in life and we always will be a symbol to all of the world of repression, despite the laughable defamation to which we have been subjected to by this regime."

From her jail cell, Marta Beatriz Roque closes her letter to her fellow dissidents by saying, "May God permit us to be together forever in the struggle."

With the sentencing of these four dissidents, Marta Beatriz, Felix, Rene and Vladimiro, the Castro regime thought that it would intimidate the internal opposition into silence and submission. Assuming it could stifle the struggle for freedom and muzzle self expression of the people, the regime believed that it would be able to continue manipulating public opinion in its favor in order to generate greater commercial ventures with foreign investors and governments that would help prolong its hold on power.

Perhaps others could turn a blind eye to the words of Marta Beatriz and other dissidents; to the articles by independent journalists which document the human rights abuses and the violations of civil liberties. The U.S. Congress, however, could not and must not.

The Cuban people need our unconditional support now more than ever. They need to know that the U.S. is unwavering in our commitment to a free and democratic Cuba; that we will not weaken our resolve amidst international pressure; that a superpower and global leader, as is the United States, will defend the rights of the oppressed against the oppressor.

Let us be the light that Marta Beatriz spoke of in her letter. Let us render our unequivocal support to her and to the fellow dissidents sentenced recently by the Castro regime merely for exercising their rights.

My dear colleagues, I ask that we protect the sanctity of the basic rights endowed upon all human beings; to

support the Cuban people in their struggle to live free as individuals and as citizens, and I ask for a vote in favor of this resolution today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, after I conclude, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of my time be given to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) for purposes of control.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and commend my colleagues from Florida and New Jersey for their leadership effort here.

As bad as our entire Cuba policy is, this is a resolution that makes sense. The four dissidents should never have been arrested in any way, and I join my colleagues in condemning the Cuban government for their continued failure to recognize what are internationally accepted standards for human rights.

Cuba is a country without a free press, without free labor unions, with no independent judiciary and no freedom of association. We might want to take our lead, though, for a general policy from the Catholic church, and that is that engagement can pay better dividends than the present confrontation which now goes on for better than 30 years.

In that 30 years, I think Fidel Castro has been able to use the embargo as an excuse for his failed policies and police state. Nothing will bring down Castro's government faster than direct contact with Americans on a daily basis.

I believe this resolution is right because we need to speak out every time Castro tries to slam the door on freedom and of expression in his country.

□ 1345

But I think the policy is wrong, because it gives Castro cover. We ought to join together and do what we did in the former Soviet Union and other places where there were repressive governments: Condemn their oppressive acts, and send Americans there to engage them, to show them the contrast of a great, free, and open society.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS).

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

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who has followed the long, tragic, sad history of the Castro regime in Cuba knows all too well the systematic violation of human rights employed by Castro to maintain his grip on power, his deadly grip on power.

The resolution before us calls on the Clinton administration to secure passage of a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Commission that condemns the Cuban government for its gross abuses of human rights of the Cuban people.

Since the U.S. State Department agrees that "The human rights situation in Cuba remains deplorable," and recognizes that "the Cuban government has taken no significant steps towards political change," it seems to me that the Clinton administration would be eager to back up its rhetoric with some solid action. Making sure the international community does not let Castro's human rights abuses go unchallenged would be a very good place to start.

I encourage my colleagues to support this resolution, and I commend the sponsors for bringing this issue before the House. It is long overdue.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN), who has been a strong supporter on behalf of human rights and democracy in Cuba.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. Also, I thank the sponsor, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 99, expressing the sense of the United States House of Representatives regarding the human rights situation in Cuba. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this resolution.

The wrongful imprisonment by Fidel Castro of the group of four, four Cuban citizens who were speaking out about the need for peaceful change, peaceful transformation to a democracy in Cuba, and were jailed by Fidel Castro, is only the latest example of Fidel Castro's efforts to suppress the most basic human rights of the Cuban people. Jailing Cubans for speaking their conscience is unjust, it is wrong, and it is important for the United States of America and our Congress to condemn such actions.

However, let us step back for a minute, because not every American follows what is going on in Cuba every day, and ask ourselves, why are there human rights violations going on in Cuba? The answer is simple: Fidel Castro, Fidel Castro, a dictator, a totalitarian ruler, has decided that for the last 40 years, only he and he alone can decide the fate of the Cuban people. He says he is the only person in Cuba who God has given the right to rule over and decide the basic human rights of the Cuban people.

It is fundamentally undemocratic. It is fundamentally wrong. He is the last surviving totalitarian dictator in the Western Hemisphere. That is who Fidel Castro is. Even after 40 years of totalitarian rule, Fidel Castro will not give his people freedom.

All Fidel Castro has to do is hold free elections. If he is so popular, if his poli-

cies are so wise, then the people of Cuba will elect him. Why is he afraid to hold free elections? Because he is a totalitarian dictator who does not have the support of his people, and he knows it.

I am proud to be a supporter of this resolution that focuses the world's attention where it should be, on the refusal of one man, Fidel Castro, to give the millions of people in his country their freedom, the last totalitarian dictator in the Western Hemisphere.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH).

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I was thinking, as I heard the last speaker talk about the possibilities of challenging Castro on free elections, how we could challenge our president to build a bridge to the 21st century in Cuba, building a bridge on the foundation of free speech and free elections in Cuba.

As the gentleman from New Jersey said, let us talk about the 21st century. Let us talk about bringing Cuba into the world community. Let us be reminded of the long, long struggle for a free Cuba. Unfortunately, real progress is being threatened by businesses, by baseball owners, and by government officials who are too willing to engage in an appeasement policy in exchange for quick cash.

The arrest and recent sentencing of the "group of four" underscores what the Miami Herald has described as "a draconian new law setting 20-year sentences for dissidents who dare to support United States policies regarding Cuba."

The arrests also show the failure of this appeasement policy. Innocent people have been denied their most basic rights, their ability to speak freely and think freely about the government of Fidel Castro. So much for an engagement policy. Once again a permissive engagement policy has failed, just as our misguided engagement policy towards Communist China has failed, because the totalitarian police state of Castro must be toppled, not by trade but by a strong resolve.

Baseball owners, business owners and our own government officials should turn their backs on a quick financial gain and instead, fight for freedom in Cuba by maintaining a strong resistance against the policies of Fidel Castro. They are policies of dying decades, not the 21st century. Our vision must project forward, toward a free, strong, liberated Cuba.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to one of the leading human rights advocates in this Congress, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS).

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANKS) and commend my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for introducing this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, like many others in this body, I would be more than ready to start changing our policy towards Cuba if the pattern of human rights violations would not continue. It is an appalling phenomenon that Castro continues his policy of suppression, oppression, and persecution of the Cuban people, particularly those Cuban people who are crying out for a modicum of democracy and freedom. This resolution properly calls on our government to carry the ball in Geneva in denouncing the human rights violations of Cuba.

When I visited Cuba sometime ago, we had high hopes that the Castro government will recognize at long last that its policy of suppression, totalitarianism, and dictatorship are counterproductive. We were hoping that there might be some loosening, that there might be some opening up, that there might be some concessions towards a free press.

When the Pope visited Cuba we had high hopes that the precedent of his visit would lead to modification of policies. None of these things have happened, and given the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all of my colleagues to join the sponsors of this resolution, of which I am one, in calling for freedom for the Cuban people, and denouncing Castro's continuing human rights violations.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to our colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM).

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

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, it is almost unbelievable that just 90 miles from the coast of the United States, one of two Communist dictators still existing in the world is present and still committing human rights atrocities, but that is a fact. Fidel Castro and his regime have been there for 40 years or so doing the same things they are doing today, and we in the United States and a lot of the others around the world still have not come to grips with this reality. Some want to engage in some false hope that they can have trade or communications or economic support in some way that will change the regime.

The fact is that that is not going to change. Nothing is going to change to give freedom of press, freedom of association, freedom of speech in Cuba until Fidel Castro is gone, until he is out of office.

The resolution we have before us today should be embraced by every member of this body. It is a simple resolution condemning Castro for another time, as we have done in the past, for all of his human rights atrocities, and reminding the world that he still is doing it.

What is more troubling to me than simply the fact that we are reminding folks and talking about it today is the fact that the administration has not come to grips with this; that there is still a failure and unwillingness to fully support the Helms-Burton law, to allow those who had lost their property to recover the cost and the losses when Castro took over, who still own that property; failure to recognize the true gravity of the Brothers to the Rescue operation, and the losses the victims and the families of those folks who lost their lives there suffered, and to allow, I hope they will allow this administration the collection of the recent judgment; the failure to recognize that Castro is truly a criminal in so many ways. Instead, we are going down a road so frequently of engagement that is not working.

We should internationally condemn him, the United States should condemn him, certainly this body today should condemn him for the human rights violations he continues to perpetrate.

In the strongest of words, I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution, and to send a solid message of bipartisanship in condemnation of Fidel Castro and his regime and his human rights atrocities.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, allow me to take this unpopular position. I rise today to ask my colleagues to put aside some of the rhetoric and to begin to focus on the facts.

We are but 90 miles from Cuba, and we have countries from all over the world who have developed relationships now with Cuba and with Fidel. They are developing great resorts and they are doing business. Cuba wants to do business with the United States.

I do not know why we allow China and Germany and Great Britain and Canada and other places to be there doing business, helping to promote economic development in their own countries, while we stand and we cannot figure out how to work out some kind of a peaceful coexistence with Cuba and with Castro.

I think the time has come for us to recognize, we have to be about the business of talking about normalizing relations between the United States and Cuba. I met with dissidents on my trip there just 4 weeks ago.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to our colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last month Fidel Castro pulled on the tattered scraps of his aging iron curtain to impose new restrictions on the rights of the Cuban people. Since then, nearly 100 dissidents have been arrested and detained. They have been held merely for speaking out against the Cuban dictatorship or discouraging the foreign investment that serves only to strengthen Castro's hand.

At the same time Castro is rounding up dissidents he is providing a safe haven for some of America's most heinous and cold-blooded fugitives. It is a tragic irony that a cop killer like Joanne Chesimard can live freely as a guest of the Castro regime while scores of Cuba's native sons and daughters languish in Cuba's gulags for violations of free speech.

This Congress must continue to voice our strong opposition to the degradation of human rights under Fidel Castro. I strongly urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 99, and I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her continuing leadership.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support House Resolution 99, and to ask my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to do the same. This resolution concerns the forthcoming meeting of the U.N. Commission of Human Rights in Geneva, and support for a resolution at the Commission condemning Cuba's record on human rights.

□ 1400

In 1996, I successfully presented the U.S. resolution on Cuba and Geneva at President Clinton's request, and I am pleased to come to the floor today to advocate support amongst my colleagues for this very important resolution.

Human rights is one issue for which there should be no division among Members of Congress. Regardless of my colleagues' views on U.S. policy towards Cuba, I believe that every Member of this institution believes that the Cuban people deserve the opportunity to exercise their basic human and civil rights: the right to peaceful dissent, the right to organize labor unions, the right to speak freely without fear of reprisal, and, most importantly, the right to choose their leaders. For 40 years Cubans have been denied those very basic human and civil rights by one man, Fidel Castro.

In recent weeks Castro has once again cracked down on human rights and democracy activists in Cuba. He announced a new law, the law called the "Law for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy," which authorizes extensive prison terms, up to 20 years, for dissidents and journalists found to be working "against the Cuban state." Just simply the writing of articles that may be at difference with the regime's view could cause them to be jailed and sentenced for two decades.

Last Monday, despite international appeals for their release, including an appeal from the Vatican, Castro's kangaroo court system sentenced the four well-known members of the Internal Dissident Working Group to prison terms ranging from 3½ to 5 years for

their simple publication of a document entitled, "La Patria Es de Todos," The Homeland Belongs to All.

The entirety of their crime was to write this document and to share it with the diplomatic community and the foreign media. The document did not call for Cubans to take up arms or to violently oppose the regime. In fact, quite the contrary, the document suggested that Cuba needs to make space for civil society and embrace democratic institutions to avoid the spontaneous social violence that is likely to occur without such changes.

For this simple act, Vladimiro Roca, the son of the prominent communist leader and former combat pilot Blas Roca, was sentenced to 5 years in prison; lawyer and human rights activist Rene Gomez Manzano received 4 years in prison, as did Felix Bonne, an Afro-Cuban; and Marta Beatriz Roque, who suffers from breast cancer and has been denied medical treatment, sentenced to 3½ years. That was their crime, a simple document suggesting that peaceful change can take place in their country.

This resolution recognizes the ongoing abuses of human rights in Cuba, including restrictions on religious freedom. Some confuse that the Pope's visit has now suddenly permitted all religious freedom to take place inside of Cuba, and the answer is, that is clearly not the case. Even the Vatican has expressed their disappointment at the subsequent restrictions that continue to exist on the Catholic church and other denominations who do not even enjoy the opportunities of the Catholic church, limited as they are, that have been presented.

Arbitrary arrests and routine harassment of human rights activists and the torture and confinement, without adequate nutrition and medical care, of prisoners.

The resolution condemns Cuba's flagrant abuses of human rights and urges the administration to work toward a strong resolution condemning the Cuban regime for these abuses at the meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva this spring.

Lastly, the resolution calls on the administration to appoint a Special Rapporteur, one that has existed in the past, to advocate for the establishment of the rule of law for the Cuban people.

The point of this resolution is to send a message to Fidel Castro that the United States will not stand idly by when faced with intensifying violation of human rights in Cuba. But more importantly, this resolution is intended to send a message to the Cuban people that the United States stands in solidarity with them as they struggle to exercise the basic freedoms and rights that are guaranteed to them, not by the United States but by virtue of Cuba's signature on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Lastly, and let me just say that I do not ask that Members take my word about the situation in Cuba, I just want to read to my colleagues a few ex-

cerpts from the State Department's Human Rights Report for last year.

It says: "The Government's human rights record remained poor. It continued systematically to violate fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens. There were several credible reports of death due to excessive use of force by the police. Members of the security forces and prison officials continued to beat and otherwise abuse detainees and prisoners. The Government failed to prosecute or sanction adequately members of the security forces and prison guards who committed such abuses. The authorities routinely continued to harass, threaten, arbitrarily arrest, detain, imprison, and defame human rights advocates and members of the independent professional associations" struggling to create civil society inside of Cuba, "including journalists, economists, doctors, and lawyers, often with the goal of coercing them into leaving" their own country.

"Prison guards and state security officials also subjected human rights and prodemocracy activists to threats of physical violence; systemic psychological intimidation; and with detention or imprisonment in cells with common and violent criminals, aggressive homosexuals, or state security agents posing as prisoners. Political prisoners are required to comply," political prisoners, these are just people who speak up for democracy and human rights, who do not enjoy what we are doing in this Chamber at this very moment, at this time, regardless of my colleagues' views, individuals who just simply speak up their mind are routinely put with common criminals and often are punished severely if they refuse.

"Detainees and prisoners often are subjected to repeated, vigorous interrogations designed to coerce them into signing incriminating statements, to force collaboration with authorities, or to intimidate victims."

One of them, Wilfredo Martinez Perez, died as a result of his opposition to the Cuban regime. This is all the State Department Human Rights Report being quoted: "On March 30, police detained Wilfredo Martinez Perez, a member of a human rights organization, for disorderly conduct at a public festival near his home in Havana. Martinez's body was delivered to a funeral home in Guines the next day where his family and other witnesses claimed that his body showed contusions and bruises, which suggested that he died as a result of a beating while in police custody."

How convenient for the Cuban authorities, arresting someone who is simply at a public festival and delivering his body dead home the next day to his family.

That is the evidence, among others, that our colleagues need to decide on. That is the way in which they should cast their votes on this resolution. I cannot believe that those who support human rights in other parts of the

world cannot support human rights inside of Cuba. Therefore, I expect them, as they speak in other parts of the world, to speak up today and to also cast their vote with us.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), a prime sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, what is it that we are condemning today? Among the many things that have already been mentioned in terms of human rights violations, we must add the law that Castro and his puppet parliament passed last month that the Cuban people, by the way, have coined with the definition of the "Titanic Law" because they know that the regime, as the tyrant knows as well and those around him, that the regime dictatorship is going down. So Cuban people have called it the "Titanic law," but, nevertheless, it is a savage law.

It threatens with up to 30 years of imprisonment anyone who cooperates with the United States, whatever that means; in other words, anyone who peacefully, according to the slanderous regime, advocates or works for a democratization of Cuba.

In addition, the regime arrested March 1 over 100 dissidents and journalists and took to trial the four best-known opposition leaders in the country and then sentenced them, as my colleagues have mentioned.

So these specifically are among the actions that we in Congress are condemning formally today. How are we doing it? We are condemning in the strongest possible terms the ongoing crackdown on internal opposition in the independent press, specifying that actions such as the sentencing of Rene Gomez Manzano and Vladimiro Roca and Marta Beatriz Roque and Felix Bonne, the sentencing of those four best-known opposition leaders and the crackdown must be condemned in the strongest possible terms, as also the crackdown on the brave independent press.

We also reaffirm the profound admiration and strong solidarity in support of the Congress of the United States of the internal opposition. We reaffirm our support for the Cuban people's right to be free by demanding three very clear specific actions of the Cuban dictatorship.

We demand that the Cuban dictatorship liberate all political prisoners, legalize all political parties, the press and labor unions, and agree to free and fair elections.

We, as my colleagues have stated, urge the administration as well to increase its efforts to secure a resolution of condemnation of the regime for its human rights violations in Geneva, and ask that the administration also appoint an official to advocate throughout the international community for the reestablishment of the rule of law in Cuba.

Today, the House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker, reaffirms its historic support for the Cuban people's right to be free, something that, to the credit and honor of this Congress, that Congress has done since 1898. So in the best tradition of the United States Congress, we stand once again with the Cuban people, demand freedom, free elections, democracy for the Cuban people, and reiterate to the world that we will continue to stand with the Cuban people until they are free, and they will soon be free.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask the Chair what the remaining time is between the parties.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) has 3½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) has 3½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that, as we close this debate, I want to take note of the controversy that has been brewing throughout the last couple of weeks, and that is the issue of the Baltimore Orioles seeking to play baseball inside of Cuba.

It is ironic that, as we are debating human rights and democracy in Cuba here in this Chamber, that America's national pastime, which is one of the symbols of this country, would be used in such a way at a time in Cuba in which these four leading human rights activists have been imprisoned simply for peacefully speaking their mind in a document; at a time in which Castro passes a new law that is more repressive both in the civil rights of the Cuban people as well as to foreign journalists; at a time in which he expands the spy station in Lourdes which is used by Russians, who pay the Cuban regime to use their satellite monitoring facilities to monitor commercial and military activities in the United States; at a time that all these things take place, we are going to send a message to the world that it is okay to play ball with the dictatorship.

In terms of those ball players, I will echo once again what I have personally, along with some of my colleagues, have said to them; that the very rights that major league baseball players have in this country, the rights to collective bargaining, the rights to negotiate their contract and the conditions under which they work, the rights for which they even have the right to strike on and for which they have exercised those rights in this country in order to ensure the benefits that they believe that they are justly due, none of those rights exist for the Cuban people or for Cuban baseball players.

The Cuban national team is not there by choice. They are there ultimately because they must be there. They have no ability to negotiate any contract. They have no ability to be able to determine the nature under which they play. They have no ability to determine whether or not they will have the

right to strike. None of that exists for them or for any Cuban worker.

Foreign companies that actually invest inside of Cuba, such as those that were mentioned by a previous speaker, that are doing business inside of Cuba are doing it with slave labor because they cannot hire a Cuban worker directly.

Those of us who stand here and are proud of our AFL-CIO voting records, are proud of standing on behalf of organized labor, are proud of the rights that working women have in this country to organize and collectively bargain and to seek a fair and decent wage on behalf of their work, those opportunities do not exist for the Cuban people, who ultimately are hired not by the companies that invest inside of Cuba, but the state sends the workers to the employer. The worker is paid with useless Cuban pesos while the state, the regime, gets paid by the foreign companies in hard dollars, and they are given a fraction of their wages which, in essence, is slave labor.

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So I hope that major league baseball understands that they are not promoting democracy inside Cuba when they go play ball. On the contrary, they are playing ball with a dictatorship.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MENENDEZ. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing up that game, and perhaps our colleagues would be interested in knowing that in fact every Cuban-born baseball player now playing on our American teams have said, "We will not go to Cuba. We do not think that this is the correct signal." Because they have been there. They know the first person to politicize this national pastime of both the U.S. and the Cuban people is Fidel Castro himself. In fact, many of these players had been banned from playing baseball because Castro did not want them to participate in that sport. He feared for their defection.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman and the engine in our Committee on International Relations and proud sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me, and I want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade of the Committee on International Relations, for having introduced this important resolution, H. Res. 99, which condemns the repressive crackdown by the government of Cuba against the internal opposition and the independent press in Cuba.

This resolution expresses our solidarity with those brave individuals and calls on Cuba to release all political

prisoners, to legalize the political parties, labor unions, the press, and to schedule free and fair elections in Cuba. And I am pleased to be among such a strong bipartisan list of cosponsors on this resolution.

East European diplomats have noted that Fidel Castro's Cuba reminds them of Stalin's Russia. And last week Fidel Castro reminded the world that they are right when a Communist court convicted and sentenced the four authors of the manifesto "The Homeland Belongs to Everyone" to hard time in prison. In a March 2 editorial the Washington Post wrote, "If the four are convicted and sentenced, it will show that the regime won't permit any opposition at all. What then will the international crowd have to say about the society-transforming power of their investments?"

The trial of these four was accompanied by the arrest of dissidents and the blocking of international access to the court.

This travesty follows closely on the heels of a so-called "Law to Protect the National Independence and Economy of Cuba." The Catholic lay group, Pax Chrsiti Netherlands, reported last month that the law "bans a broad range of civil activities, violates the right to freedom of press, assembly, opinion and expression. It brings the Iron Curtain back to Cuba. The new steps of the Cuban government shows its contempt for the numerous requests by the international community to give a clear signal of its commitment to internationally recognized human rights law and to reform the Cuban criminal code accordingly."

International reaction to the sentencing of these four dissidents has begun to take shape. Last year, during a high profile trip to Havana, Canada's Prime Minister Jean Chretien asked Castro to release the four. Last week, Canada's Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, faced sharp questions in the House of Commons with regard to this issue. Opposition leader Bob Mills demanded, "How can this government deny that its 20 years of soft power policy toward Cuba has been anything but a total failure?" And in his response, Axworthy suggested that developments like the jailing of the dissidents were "bumps on the road."

I think it is time for our Canadian and European allies to acknowledge Fidel Castro's contempt for them and to take a real stand. Their opportunity will come at Geneva sometime in early April.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The time of the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) has expired.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 2 minutes.

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 myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for our Canadian and European allies to acknowledge Fidel Castro's contempt for them and to take a real stand. Their opportunity will come in Geneva sometime in early April when the U.N. Human Rights Commission is going to consider a resolution condemning Cuba's abuses.

I hope that our allies will not only vote for a strong resolution reinstating the special rapporteur, but will also sign on as cosponsors and help with the effort to win the necessary votes for passage of that resolution.

Regrettably, last year's U.S. sponsored resolution condemning Cuba was defeated. This was a major setback which the administration vowed to reverse. H. Res. 99 has strong support from both sides of the aisle and will send a loud clear signal to back our U.S. delegation to the 55th meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

On February 7, one of the four jailed dissidents, Marta Beatriz Roque, who suffers from untreated cancer, wrote to her fellow prisoners of conscience, "My brothers, I believe we should not fear the shadows because their presence means that a light shines from a place not far away."

With the news of Cuba's best known dissidents being sentenced fresh in our minds, all eyes should be on how the community of nations conducts itself at Geneva. Let a good resolution from the U.N. Human Rights Commission provide the light that Marta Beatriz Roque invoked.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support this resolution.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 99. As one who historically has been an advocate for human rights and justice worldwide, I have serious concerns about H. Res. 99. I am fearful that this resolution, with its extreme and provocative language, will only introduce further tension into US-Cuba relations at this particularly unstable time.

The resolution will do nothing to improve the lives of the Cuban people and it will do nothing to improve relations between our two countries. It is more of the "tit for tat" policy that has been the map of failure in the past and represents more of the same for the future.

No one can justify or condone human rights violations anywhere in the world. Certainly, Cuba's recent crack down on its independent journalists and dissidents provokes serious concerns and criticism here and within the international community. However, like other nations, we need to take a rational approach to the current situation in Cuba, rather than support the extremist language in this resolution.

Since this resolution addresses the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, it is also important to recognize that last year, for the seventh year in a row, the UN General Assembly condemned the US economic embargo on Cuba by a vote of 157-2 and called on Washington to end its sanctions. Instead of discussing more legislation which increases the hostility between the US and Cuba and further isolates us from the United Nations and the rest of the world, we

should be discussing legislation which addresses human rights for Cubans in total. This would include addressing one of the most egregious human rights offenses: the US's denial of food and medicine to the Cuban people.

If we are truly serious about assisting the Cuban people, we need to cultivate a sphere of influence on the island and a diplomatic relationship with the Government of Cuba. The unreasonable language in this resolution will only exacerbate hostility and further anti-American sentiment in Cuba, which will get us nowhere.

We should listen to Elizardo Sanchez, Cuba's leading human rights activist as he states: "The more the US pressures and threatens the Cuban government, the more defensive and recalcitrant it becomes. This is not the way to encourage an atmosphere that favors change."

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to talk about human rights. Not only in Cuba, but also in this country.

I believe in civil rights for all people, here and abroad. However, I want to caution my Colleagues who have come to this floor today to "Condemn Castro's Cuba" for his human rights record and remind my colleagues that we have yet to pass a resolution on the human rights of those victims of police brutality.

I ask my colleagues why it is so easy to "beat up" on Cuba and yet at the same time grant mainland China most favored nation status.

There is no doubt that Cuba needs improvement in realizing economic, social, civic, political and cultural rights. However, I remind my colleagues of the phrase, "those who live in glass houses . . ."

Furthermore, I ask my colleagues how this condemning resolution and how American hostility will actually help Cuba realize a better human rights record. How does that embargo assist Castro in realizing civil liberties of its citizens?

For the record, I want to make it clear that Human Rights Violations in this country are just as threatening to democracy as those in Cuba or anyplace else on the face of the earth.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 99, 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.

COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 56) commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 56

Whereas April 10, 1999, will mark the 20th anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan

Relations Act, codifying in public law the basis for continued commercial, cultural, and other relations between the United States and Taiwan;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act was advanced by Congress and supported by the executive branch as a critical tool to preserve and promote ties the American people have enjoyed with the people of Taiwan;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act has been instrumental in maintaining peace, security, and stability in the Taiwan Strait since its enactment in 1979;

Whereas when the Taiwan Relations Act was enacted in 1979, it affirmed that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China was based on the expectation that the future of Taiwan would be determined by peaceful means;

Whereas officials of the People's Republic of China refuse to renounce the use of force against democratic Taiwan;

Whereas the defense modernization and weapons procurement efforts by the People's Republic of China, as documented in the February 1, 1999, report by the Secretary of Defense on "The Security Situation in the Taiwan Strait", could threaten cross-Strait stability and United States interests in the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act provides explicit guarantees that the United States will make available defense articles and services necessary in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability;

Whereas section 3(b) of the Taiwan Relations Act requires timely reviews by United States military authorities of Taiwan's defense needs in connection with recommendations to the President and the Congress;

Whereas Congress and the President are committed by Article 3(b) of the Taiwan Relations Act to determine the nature and quantity of Taiwan's legitimate self-defense needs;

Whereas it is the policy of the United States to reject any attempt to curb the provision by the United States of defense articles and services legitimately needed for Taiwan's self-defense;

Whereas it is the policy set forth in the Taiwan Relations Act to promote extensive commercial relations between the people of the United States and the people of Taiwan and such commercial relations would be further enhanced by Taiwan's membership in the World Trade Organization;

Whereas Taiwan today is a full-fledged multi-party democracy fully respecting human rights and civil liberties and serves as a successful model of democratic reform for the People's Republic of China;

Whereas it is United States policy to promote extensive cultural relations with Taiwan, ties that should be further encouraged and expanded;

Whereas any attempt to determine Taiwan's future by other than peaceful means, including boycotts or embargoes, would be considered a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific and of grave concern to the United States;

Whereas in the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act, which encourages the future of democratic Taiwan to be determined by peaceful means, Taiwan has engaged the People's Republic of China in a cross-Strait dialogue by advocating that peaceful reunification be based on a democratic system of government being implemented on the mainland; and

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act established the American Institute on Taiwan