

“(A) a licensed dealer contacts the national instant criminal background check system established under section 103 of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act;

“(B)(i) the system provides the licensee with a unique identification number; or

“(ii) 5 business days (meaning a day on which State offices are open) have elapsed since the licensee contacted the system, and the system has not notified the licensee that the receipt of a firearm by the winner would violate subsection (g) or (n) of this section; and

“(C) the individual and the licensee have verified the identity of the winner by examining a valid identification document (as defined in section 1028(d)(2) of this title) of the winner containing a photograph of the winner.

“(2) The rules of paragraphs (2), (3)(A), (4), (5), and (6) of section 922(t) shall apply to a firearm transfer assisted by a licensee under this subsection in the same manner in which the rules apply to a firearm transfer made by the licensee.”.

(b) PENALTIES.—Section 924(a)(5) of such title is amended by striking “or (t)” and inserting “, (t), or (z)”.

TRAGEDY AT THE LOWE'S MOTOR SPEEDWAY IN CONCORD, NC

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for millions of Americans who were relieved to learn that no fatalities were suffered in the tragic accident that occurred in my hometown of Concord, NC this past weekend. As many of you know, a pedestrian bridge at the Lowe's Motor Speedway collapsed injuring 107 people last Saturday night after the NASCAR Winston stock car race. In time, I hope that investigators will determine the cause of the accident. Today, however, I want to recognize the men and women who provided emergency response to the accident and prevented what could have been a substantial loss of life.

Unfortunately, two individuals remain in critical condition, and I know you will join me in praying for their swift recovery. But amazingly, the other 105 individuals treated for injury are in stable condition or have already been released from the hospital. Mr. Speaker, this kind of emergency medical response speaks volumes about the quality of our professionals who represent the EMS and law enforcement. Doctors, nurses and medics from the greater Charlotte area have not treated this many people from one serious accident in recent memory. And yet their rapid, on-site medical attention to the victims of this catastrophe demonstrated a superior degree of preparation and training.

Most of our local medical facilities were represented in this miraculous effort. We in North Carolina owe a debt of gratitude to the fine staffs of Rowan Regional Medical Center, Carolinas Medical Center, the University Hospital and Presbyterian Hospital. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize NorthEast Medical Center in Concord. It is my understanding that under the leadership of my friend Larry Hinsdale NorthEast's handling of this major emergency was flawless.

THE PUTIN PATH: ARE HUMAN RIGHTS IN RETREAT?

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, two days ago, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which I am honored to chairman, held a hearing entitled “The Putin Path: Are Human Rights in Retreat?” I was pleased to be joined on the dais by my colleagues on the Commission, Co-Chairman Senator BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, Senator TIM HUTCHINSON, Ranking House Member Representative STENY HOYER, and Representative MATT SALMON.

As part of the hearing, the Commission had also planned to feature a video-conference with Moscow-based Radio Liberty journalist Andrei Babitsky. As Members are aware, Mr. Babitsky was arrested by Russian authorities for allegedly “participating in an armed formation,” as a result of his reporting from besieged Grozny last year. Subsequently, as a civilian, Babitsky was “exchanged” to Chechen forces in return for certain captured Russian military personnel, and is not permitted to leave Moscow. Unfortunately, technical problems precluded the possibility of the videoconference, but Mr. Babitsky provided a written statement for the hearing record. Mr. Babitsky was recently awarded the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's prize for journalism, and as head of the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE PA, I hope that he will be able to attend the award ceremony at the Assembly's annual meeting in Bucharest this July.

Tuesday's hearing was one of a series of hearings the Commission has held to examine human rights issues in the States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The mandate of the Commission is to monitor and encourage compliance with the provisions of the Helsinki Accords and successive documents of the OSCE.

As I have noted on previous occasions, Russia is no longer the dictatorial, closed society that it was during the Soviet period, and certainly there are countries around the world where human rights are in much more perilous straits. I have yet to hear of a working church in Russia being destroyed by bulldozers and wrecking cranes, as was the case last November in Turkmenistan. And we know that in China religious believers of many faiths are thrown in jail for simply desiring to worship without government interference.

Indeed, under the administration of President Yeltsin, human rights activists were able to achieve significant gains in making respect for human rights, if not a standard, at least a consideration in public policy. There is growing concern, however, that Russia's development in the area of human rights is taking a turn for the worse under recently-elected President Vladimir Putin.

The testimony of Igor Malashenko, First Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of Media-Most and President of NTV, summarized how their offices were the target of the infamous raid by government agents on May 11 last. Mr. Malashenko described how the agents carted away documents, tapes, computer discs and equipment, and subsequently issued “contradictory and unsatisfactory jus-

tifications” for this raid. Moreover, he provided extensive information on several other less-publicized examples of violence and intimidation toward media outlets and journalists throughout Russia.

General William Odom, former director of the National Security Agency, and a man of exceptional expertise in things Soviet and Russian, noted that Russia is a “weak state” and suffers from a lack of institutions capable of providing the level of civil society and economic development that we had hoped would follow after the collapse of the Soviet Union. General Odom also suggested that the United States should not treat Russia as a major power, or think that much of Russia's internal problems can be solved by “ventriloquism” from the West.

Professor Georgi Derlugian of Northwestern University asserted that President Putin is the product of the KGB network that survived the collapse of the Soviet Union. In order to seek a distraction from the Chechen quagmire, suggested Professor Derlugian, Putin will most likely launch a massive anti-crime campaign. I would note that when Yuri Andropov and his KGB began to assume power in the twilight of the Brezhnev regime, part of the crackdown on political dissent at that time was under the guise of cracking down on corruption.

Ms. Rachel Denber, Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia at Human Rights Watch, testified that in Grozny, “the graffiti on the walls reads ‘Welcome to Hell Part Two.’ The bombing campaign has turned many parts of Chechnya into a wasteland even the most experienced war reporters we, have spoken to told us they have never seen anything in their careers like the destruction of the capital Grozny.” Ms. Denber also described summary executions of civilians, including the death of three generations of one family shot to death in the yard of their own home.

One of the brighter aspects of civil society under President Yeltsin was the expansion of NGO activity. However, Professor Sarah Mendelson of the Fletcher School of Diplomacy and Law at Tufts University noted that there is in Russia today “an atmosphere that is hostile to civil rights activists, and in fact, anyone with opinions that differ from the Kremlin's. While “the treatment of Andrei Babitsky in January and February was shocking and disturbing, and the FSB raid on MediaMost in May was brazen,” she testified, this is “part of a larger pattern of harassment that has grown steadily worse over the last year and a half.”

In this connection, I would like to point out another proposal made by Professor Mendelson in her testimony. She suggested that President Clinton, while in Moscow next month at the Summit with President Putin, should meet with activists who are promoting human rights and democracy in Russia today. This gesture, she notes, “would send a signal not only to those in Russia who care about democracy but to those in Russia who do not.” I believe this idea is right on target. In fact, Mr. HOYER and I have written to the President noting that this year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Accords. We have encouraged the President to meet with the surviving veterans of the Soviet-era human rights struggle, and with their contemporary colleagues, in both Moscow and in Kyiv, where the President plans to meet

with President Kuchma following his Moscow visit.

I hope that President Clinton will take this advice, as I believe such a gesture would give new impetus to the struggle for human rights and democracy in two pivotal nations of the international community.

In closing, I would call attention to a resolution to be introduced by our colleague Mr. LANTOS and House International Affairs Committee Chairman BEN GILMAN, regarding the issue of free media in Russia. I am pleased to join as an original cosponsor of this resolution, which among other provisions, calls upon the President, the Secretary of State, and other officials and agencies of the United States Government to emphasize to Russian government officials our concern and preoccupation that official pressures against the independent media are incompatible with democratic norms. I am pleased to co-sponsor this resolution, I hope my colleagues will join us, and I hope that President Clinton will heed this call when he meets with President Putin in Moscow next month.

COMMENDING ISRAEL'S REDEPLOYMENT FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON

SPEECH OF

HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this resolution, and I rise today in strong support of its adoption.

Earlier this week, the Israeli government completed a courageous and historic act. It removed the last of its military forces from southern Lebanon, in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425. This act was inspired and led by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, whose strategic vision has once again opened up new opportunities for a comprehensive peace in the region.

With this act, Israel has taken a brave step forward in the interest of peace for its people and its neighbors. It is now incumbent upon other parties in the region to follow Israel's lead, and to take the commensurate steps called for in U.N. Resolution 425 to further enhance security in the region. In addition to calling for an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the U.N. resolution demands "strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries." It also establishes and directs a United Nations force—known as UNIFIL—to work with the Lebanese government to restore its effective authority in southern Lebanon.

H. Con. Res. 331 addresses each element of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, and calls for swift action by Israel's neighbors to demonstrate their own commitment to the terms of the U.N. resolution and to peace in the region. With adoption of this resolution, the House of Representatives will make clear what we expect to occur, now that Israel has withdrawn from Lebanon:

First, we expect the United Nations to swiftly verify and endorse Israel's withdrawal, in full compliance with U.N. Resolution 425.

Second, we expect the United Nations to move swiftly in conjunction with the Lebanese government to assert control over southern Lebanon.

Third, we expect Hezbollah and other groups in southern Lebanon to be disarmed in order to prevent terrorist activities originating from that area against the State of Israel and its people.

Fourth, we expect the Syrian government to follow Israel's lead and remove its own forces from Lebanese territory.

And finally, we expect all parties to use this historic opportunity to resume negotiations aimed toward a comprehensive peace for all of the people of the Middle East.

Israel has shown today that it can—and will—take risks for peace. America stands by Israel in its courageous action, and shares its commitment to peace in the region. I call on Israel's neighbors to demonstrate similar commitments in the days and weeks ahead.

AUTHORIZING EXTENSION OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT (NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS TREATMENT) TO PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to passage of the PNTR bill before the House of Representatives today.

Passage of this legislation would recognize China as a permanent trading partner as opposed to reviewing our trade relationship with China on an annual basis.

The key word in this debate is permanent. Why would the United States want to move from an annual review process to recognizing China as a permanent trading partner? China continues to make the world a more dangerous place by its cooperation with rogue states and China's ongoing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Normally, individuals and countries are rewarded because of their improvements or achievements. In this case, we would be recognizing a country that has violated every single trade agreement that they have signed with the United States. While proponents of this legislation may be correct in asserting that corporate America and our economy might benefit from this agreement, what message are we sending to the Chinese government, Chinese workers and the rest of the world.

Permanent recognition of China would tell the Chinese government and the rest of the world that when it comes to corporate profits and the almighty dollar the United States will throw in the towel on the very issues that the American people and our country have stood for from the beginning. This is of course not to mention the tens of thousands of jobs that will be lost in the United States as a result of this agreement.

The Chinese government continues to sit by idly while workers are paid 25 cents an hour, forced to work 12 to 14 hour days and are forced to work 7 days a week.

If a person is as bold as Zhang Jingheng and attempts to organize employees into a

union, they in fact can be jailed and sent to prison. Mr. Jingheng in fact was sentenced to a 13-year prison term—and he is not alone.

In addition to a deplorable record on human rights, the Chinese people have limited freedom to assemble, limited freedom to express and practice their religious beliefs and there is limited freedom of the press.

I do not believe that United States firms are creating new markets in China—or new opportunities for Chinese workers. Instead, I believe they are creating new maquiladoras where products will be made for slave wages in horrible working conditions that will be sold to our consumers here in the United States for huge profits.

This is not the time to throw in the towel and grant permanent trading status to China. We should hold firm and review our trading relationship with China on an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, for the above reasons, I strongly oppose PNTR and ask my colleagues to join me in voting "no."

INTRODUCTION OF TUBEROUS SCLEROSIS AWARENESS RESOLUTION

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Tuberous Sclerosis Awareness Resolution. Tuberous Sclerosis is a common genetic disorder that remains poorly understood. Even though 1,000,000 people worldwide are affected with the disease, few are even aware of it.

Tuberous Sclerosis is a genetic disorder that causes benign tumors to form in any of the vital organs—including the brain, eyes, heart, kidneys, and skin. It is often first recognized because of epileptic seizures and/or varying degrees of developmental delay. But, too often Tuberous Sclerosis goes undetected or is misdiagnosed because its symptoms are similar to those of more well-known diseases, such as epilepsy or autism. However, more recognition and early diagnosis is desperately needed. Infants and children too often spend their lives being misdiagnosed, possibly leading to irreparable brain damage, kidney failure, and even premature death. With a variety of treatments currently available to ease symptoms and improve the quality of life for people with Tuberous Sclerosis, diagnosis is critical.

Mr. Speaker, as May is Tuberous Sclerosis Month, I urge my colleagues to join me in bringing awareness to a devastating disease that affects at least one child born each day. By helping America to learn about and understand Tuberous Sclerosis, we will help to improve the quality of life for many children.

HONORING HEAR O'ISRAEL

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a valued organization within the Houston community, Hear O'Israel, which is sponsoring