

United States will probably be the main beneficiary of this evolution in China, but it will help the Chinese people some day join our fellowship of democratic nations with a respect for universal human rights.

# CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF IRAN REGARDING 13 JEWISH CITIZENS

**HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 6, 2000*

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage about the ongoing activities in the City of Shiraz, Iran. Thirteen Jewish citizens of Iran were arrested on Passover eve in 1999 for allegedly spying for Israel and the United States, despite adamant denials from both countries regarding these trumped-up allegations. These individuals, including rabbis, religious teachers, and community activists, have committed no crime other than openly practicing the Jewish religion. In Iran, members of the Jewish faith are prohibited from holding any positions that would grant them access to state secrets or sensitive materials; thus, there is no possibility that Israel or the United States would employ 13 Jewish individuals to be spies—particularly those living hundreds of miles from the capital city of Tehran. According to the Los Angeles-based Council of Iranian American Jewish Organizations, Iranian officials have even admitted that the charges of espionage were false. "They have never claimed there 13 people were spies. . . . They were very forthright and up front about the fact that this is part of a game, and to show that Iran will not be bullied and that they have ultimate control over their citizens."

The Iranian government's false accusations of spying and arrests of innocent individuals on these sham charges are wholly unacceptable. If these ludicrous charges are allowed to stand, these innocent individuals may be found guilty and executed. The government of Iran must know that the world community is watching and will not stand by idly and accept this treatment of our contemporaries!

Since the arrests over one year ago, the Iranian government has treated these Jewish citizens in a deplorable manner and denied them any due process. Primarily, the government detained these innocent individuals for over one year without being charged. During that time, they were barely allowed any visitors. Moreover, no attorney was allowed to visit or meet with the 13 Jewish citizens. Finally, the three youngest citizens were released on bail, but the other ten Jewish citizens are still being wrongly detained. Inherently unfair, the "judge" is also the investigator, chief interrogator behind bars, prosecutor, and jury in this sham trial. These trials are devoid of public attendance; there is virtually no information or evidence provided, only hollow conclusionary and coerced confessions without any details.

Recent actions have brought further concerns. Just before the "trial" began in early May, a leading Iranian cleric delivered a sermon over state radio declaring, "These people are spies . . . they are Jews and are . . . by nature enemies of Muslims." Most disconcerting, since the beginning of May, these Jewish citizens are beginning to "confess" to

crimes that they did not commit. Now the Iranian government is showing these alleged confessions on television. This vicious propaganda is impacting Jews negatively throughout Iran. Jews throughout the country—even Jewish children—are experiencing harassment on the street, at work, and in school. There are reports of anti-Jewish graffiti and fears of an economic boycott of Jewish-owned shops. This anti-Semitism and persecution of Jews must stop, and it must stop immediately.

The oldest Jewish Diaspora community and the biggest in the Middle East after Israel, Jews lived in peace in Iran for more than 2700 years. In 1979, there were 80,000 Jews living comfortably in Iran. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, however, the Iranian government has consistently articulated anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda. In the last twenty years, seventeen Jews have been executed on charges of spying, and Jewish property has been confiscated. Many of these executions occurred without any trials of the accused. Now, there are only 25,000–30,000 Jewish citizens, and the entire Jewish community is threatened by further state sponsored religious persecution.

In May, we in Congress took steps to emphasize how seriously this sham trial will affect Iran's status in the world community. We wrote to the World Bank and contacted nations on the bank's loan approval board to urge postponement of pending loans for development projects for Iran. Unfortunately, loans to Iran were approved for hundreds of millions of dollars. Our government—President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, rightfully indicated that the World Bank should not have made these loans to Iran at the very time that its government was conducting these sham trials. Nonetheless, Members of Congress or other world leaders will not overlook the outcome of this "trial."

In addition, I am a proud co-sponsor of H. Con. Res. 307, a critical resolution introduced by my New York colleague, Mr. BENJAMIN GILMAN. This important measure expresses the sense of Congress that the Clinton Administration should condemn the arrest and prosecution of these 13 Jewish individuals, demand that the fabricated charges be dropped and the individuals released immediately, and ensure that Iran's treatment of this case is a benchmark for determining the nature of current and future relations between the United States and Iran. We must work quickly and diligently to pass this important resolution.

I stand here to urge the government of Iran to release all 13 wrongly imprisoned citizens and drop all charges against these innocent individuals immediately. I also urge our government to continue to apply pressure to the government of Iran until this anti-Semitic behavior is terminated. We must be vigilant and work tirelessly until the government of Iran has restored freedom and respect to all its people.

# TRIBUTE TO ROBERT FOSTER, CLIFTON OPTIMIST YEAR 2000 FRIEND OF YOUTH AWARD

**HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 6, 2000*

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the deeds of a remark-

able person from my district, Robert Foster of Clifton, New Jersey, who was recognized on Friday, May 12, 2000 at the Optimist Dinner because of his many years of service and leadership. The Clifton Optimist Year 2000 Friend of Youth Award was conferred upon him at a dinner held at the Clifton Boys and Girls Club. It is only fitting that he is honored, for he has a long history of caring, generosity and commitment to others.

Robert was recognized for his many years of leadership in Clifton, which I have been honored to represent in Congress since 1997, and so it is only fitting that these words are immortalized in the annals of this greatest of all freely elected bodies.

Each year the Clifton Optimist Club recognizes a special person for his work with youth. This year the award is bestowed upon Robert, Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton. He is an excellent choice for this honor because he embodies the theme "Friend of Youth" with his dedicated service and affiliations involving the children of the City of Clifton.

Robert is a graduate of Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Leisure Services from the school in 1980.

From the time of his graduation, twenty years ago, until the present day, Robert has worked at the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton, Inc. improving the lives of young people. He began his career as the Teens/Social Recreation Director of the club. In January of 1986 he became the program director for the organization. This change brought him a greater range of responsibility. The time spent working as the Teen/Social Recreation Director instilled in Robert the attributes necessary for him to become a stellar force in the community. It was the small steps in the beginning of his career that taught him the fundamentals that would make him a role model to the youths that he now serves.

Known for a questioning mind and an ability to get things done, Robert was promoted to his current position of Director of Operations in September of 1991. He is responsible for the daily operations of the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton. The club currently serves 2,200 youths from the ages of two and a half to seventeen.

Robert continually touches the lives of the people around him. This is exemplified by his club affiliations. He is a member of the Clifton Optimist Club and is a Clifton Stallions Soccer Club Trustee. In addition, he is a member of the Clifton Board of Recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, Robert's family and friends, the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton, the City of Clifton and me in recognizing the outstanding and invaluable service to the community of Robert Foster.

# TRIBUTE TO GEORGE STRAFACE— FORMER DISTRICT 51 SUPER- INTENDENT

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 6, 2000*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to thank George Straface for the time he spent as Superintendent of District

51 in western Colorado. George Straface truly had a passion for education and it was evident in the effort he put forth. George dedicated nearly 20 years of his life to District 51, six of them acting as Superintendent. His presence will surely be missed.

George brought to the District an ability to balance all of the difficult tasks that are required of a superintendent. He did his job to the best of his ability and influenced all of the educators around him. His abilities to listen to and motivate people distinguished him in his leadership role. Not only was George able to accommodate the many needs of parents, teachers, and students, but also George's strong vision helped make the District a reputable model for others around the state.

Mr. Straface will continue his pursuit of furthering education as he has agreed to take the position of Head of Schools in Westminster, Colorado. I am sure that he will continue to put education as the first priority on his agenda and continue to encourage educators to assist students in furthering their learning endeavors. I wish him the best of luck and thank him for his dedicated effort.

REMARKS OF RABBI IRVING GREENBERG AT THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE COMMEMORATION

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 4, Members of Congress joined with representatives of the diplomatic corps, executive and judicial branch officials and hundreds of Holocaust survivors and their families to commemorate the Days of Remembrance in the Great Rotunda of the United States Capitol. The theme of this year's commemoration was "The Holocaust and the New Century: The Imperative to Remember."

Even after more than half a century, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we continue to commemorate the horrors of the Holocaust in order to honor the memory of those victims of Hitler's twisted tyranny. We must also mark this catastrophe because mankind still has not learned the lessons of this horror, as evidenced most recently by the mass killings in Kosovo.

Mr. Speaker, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, the newly designated Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, delivered a moving address at this year's Day of Remembrance ceremony. Rabbi Greenberg was appointed Chair of the Holocaust Council on February 15 of this year. He previously served as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council's founding board from 1980 to 1988 and again as a member of the board since 1997. He is a pioneer of Holocaust remembrance and education in the United States and in the Jewish-Christian dialogue that has sought to revise theology in light of the Holocaust. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, he is the President of the Jewish Life Network in New York, and from 1974 to 1997 he served as the founding President of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. He also was executive director of President Jimmy Carter's Commission on the

Holocaust. He and his wife, Blu Grenauer Greenberg, have five children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Rabbi Greenberg's excellent remarks at the Days of Remembrance ceremony in the Capitol be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give them thoughtful consideration.

RABBI IRVING GREENBERG'S REMARKS: DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE—MAY 4, 2000

"Behold I place before you today [for your choice] life and good, death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15)

And again: "I call heaven and earth to witness to you: [the choice of] life and death I have placed before you, the blessing and the curse; choose life so that you and your children may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

These biblical words are more than sacred scripture. They are the wisdom of living.

Every moment of living is a moment of choice. From the time we are born, we start to die. Unless we choose to live, unless we choose to love, to create children, to build society, then death will win out finally. No action is neutral. The next food we choose to eat is a choice of health and life or it is harmful and a choice of death. The next word we speak is a word of love, of healing, of encouragement and hope, or it is a word of stereotyping and degradation, of dismissal and death of the soul. The next act we do builds society and repairs the world; or, it is an act of vandalism, of environmental degradation, of breaking down the world and death.

As it is with individuals so it is with societies and nations. There are forces that can be deployed for human dignity and freedom and life or these same forces can be deployed to degrade and enslave, that is in the service of death.

Sixty to seventy years ago, in a tragic process we now call the Holocaust, nations and individuals made a series of decisions that in sum added up to the choice of death for millions and millions.

Panicked by economic depression and fear of social instability, millions of German voters chose to undermine democracy. They voted for a politician promising to restore them by removing the conflicts and risky choices of modern society, by concentrating power and by excluding foreigners and strangers and Jews. Thereby they unleashed a force of death. Fearful of making hard choices and of confronting an extremist, political leaders chose to make a pact with the devil and brought Adolf Hitler to power. Then legislators elected to go along with concentrating that power. Then the Nazis chose to suppress democracy, to crush the unions and the socialists and to exclude and isolate the Jews. Then jurists opted to go along with perverted justice and bureaucrats decided to classify and discriminate. These were all choices that brought death to power. These were the choices of death.

Two thousand years earlier, a great world religion had chosen to pursue its own encounter with God and salvation and its message of love. But those great people chose to express their spiritual liberation in the form of a religious monopoly and asserted that Christianity had superceded the mother religion, Judaism. This claim was followed by stereotyping and devaluation of the carriers of the ancestral religion, the Jews. Thereby Christians set the Jews up in isolation, as targets of hatred and stereotyping. In the 20th century, in the hands of new pagans, new secular racists, even anti-Christians, these attitudes were turned into lethal decisions to rain death and destruction on the Jews.

In the Holocaust, whole societies chose death. Generals in the German Army chose

to set up killing squads. Businesses competed to build gas chambers and crematoria and supply poison gas. Corporations elected to use slave labor and work people to death.

Democracies chose to close their doors to refugees and to remain indifferent and inactive in the face of the anguished cries for help of the victims. Hundreds of thousands of professionals and workers exercised their career choices to seek out and deliver Jews to their cruel fate. Millions of neighbors chose to remain silent or to look the other way or even to actively cooperate with despoliation and death.

Unchecked by counter choices, the forces of death and degradation always spread their focus. The Nazis set up a machinery of oppression so millions of Poles were enslaved and persecuted and whole cadres were seized and killed. Roma/Gypsies were rounded up and tens of thousands were killed. Millions of Russian POW's were starved and brutalized and executed.

Worldwide, Jewish leadership failed to grasp the enormity of the catastrophe and to risk all their standing to goad or dragoon the world into acting to save lives.

These were all choices of death. In a cascade of such choices, humanity abandoned millions of humans. Death reigned supreme and the forces of hatred killed and degraded millions.

After the war, banks chose to deny the survivors the return of their own bank accounts, and insurance companies rejected paying for life insurance policies they had issued. Others opted to reject responsibility for this catastrophe or for healing its survivors. Others choose to this day to deny that this tragedy even happened.

Thus in the 20th century, a realm of death was created. A decision to kill a whole people—every last person—was made by a government and six million Jews died in the Shoah. When humanity looked into the abyss and realized that it now had the power of technology and human nature had the capacity for evil to the point of unlimited murder and the death of life itself.

It would appear that the world failed to stop the triumph of death. But death and evil did not have the final word.

Then the survivors arose. They chose not to revenge, not to hate, not to give up in despair and go silently to the grave. They chose life. They chose to love, to marry, to have children, to make new lives in new places. The Jewish people arose and rebuilt its life; it created the State of Israel where 250,000 survivors and millions of refugees created themselves anew. Jewry took power to protect itself. Throughout the world, millions, then hundreds of millions learned the lesson: NEVER AGAIN should people of any religion, of any race or color, be vulnerable and dependent for their dignity on the arbitrary power of others. National liberation and the demand for self-determination spread worldwide. Then outsiders, and second-class citizens, and second-class genders and sexual orientations learned the lessons of the Holocaust and determined to be free and equal by right. They chose to work for a world where human dignity would be universal and human life supported by political/cultural/legal structures by right. And traditional groups shifted from passive acceptance to activity to insure that their values be heard and their dignity upheld.

For decades now, more and more people have awakened to the need to learn the lessons of this catastrophe. Out of love of life, they determined to preserve the memory of the victims, of their lives, of their dignity and courage in their struggle for existence, of their worlds that were destroyed. Thus they chose to reaffirm the value of life. More and more religions chose to confront the