

the President invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, and other authorities, to continue the export control system, including the Export Administration Regulations.

Now, there has been a recent court ruling that calls into question whether or not the government can essentially hide behind emergency powers to revive an expired law. Specifically, the case calls into question the Commerce Department's ability to keep sensitive export information provided by exporters from public disclosure using the confidentiality provision.

We have got to pass this law to make sure that they can keep the information confidential so that the exporters will fully use the Commerce Department's assistance in exporting our products. We really do have a record trade imbalance. We need to export more. Exporting American products creates jobs for American workers.

We need to pass this law as an important part of making sure that the Commerce Department is there to provide as much assistance as possible in moving products overseas.

While we would have preferred the House-passed version, the Senate amendment we are taking up today does address this problem. It reauthorizes the Export Administration Act until October 20, 2001. By doing so, it will ensure that the Department of Commerce will be able to rely on the Export Administration Act to protect the confidentiality of the relevant documents received since 1994, as well as the documents that the Commerce Department receives between now and August 20 of next year.

Mr. Speaker, for that reason we fully concur that this bill should be passed. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5239.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation which serves to reauthorize the Export Administration Act and extend its authority over the regulation of exports of dual-use items.

This bill underscores the confidentiality provisions of the EAA and thus helps to ensure the Commerce Department's ability to keep sensitive export information confidential. For over six years, the U.S. has been operating under International Emergency Economic Powers Act rendering itself vulnerable to legal challenges. This bill helps to protect the government against these legal challenges.

Unfortunately, the legislation before us does not provide changes to our system of export controls—changes needed to address current global realities. However, it does serve to underscore the importance of the EAA and the need to have an efficient framework for the administration of export controls.

Throughout the last few years, the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade, which I chair, has held numerous sessions to investigate the areas of EAA which need reforming or re-writing. We have evaluated legislation and have approved smaller efforts to correct flaws in the current export control process.

However, more progress needs to be made if we are to bring the EAA out of the Cold War and into the present.

I hope this bill will serve as the foundation for failure legislative action by both Chambers toward the realization of this important goal.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5239, the "Export Administration Modification and Clarification Act of 2000" which provides for a simple extension of the Export Administration Act through August 20, 2001. For the past six years, its authorities have been kept in force through the provisions of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

Enactment of this measure is intended to reauthorize the existing EAA for a short period of time thereby permitting the Congress to fashion a comprehensive rewrite of this 21 year old statute.

I would point out, however, that the Senate has modified the text of the House bill which, since the lapse of the Export Administration Act in August of 1994, would have retroactively provided the Department of Commerce with authority to keep licensing information confidential under the provisions of Section 12(c) of that Act.

By adopting the Senate version of this legislation, the Congress is leaving to the courts the question whether, or to what extent, the provisions of the Export Administration Act of 1979 were extended by authorities granted under IEPPA after the expiration of the EAA in 1994.

We can say, however, with certainty that under the provisions of this measure, the Department of Commerce will be able to protect licensing information from the date of enactment through August 20, 2001.

It also provides for higher fines for criminal and or administrative sanctions against individuals or companies found to be in violation of export control regulations.

And I further point out to my colleagues that while the original text of the House bill had included even higher fines, the measure before the House today will still provide higher fines than those currently authorized under IEPPA.

In short, this measure provides a much needed stop-gap authority for our export control officials at the Commerce Department.

These are, I believe, good reasons why this measure deserves the support of all of my colleagues.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 5239.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VOICING CONCERN ABOUT SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN MOST STATES OF CENTRAL ASIA

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 397) voicing concern about serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in most states of Central Asia, including substantial noncompliance with their Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) commitments on democratization and the holding of free and fair elections, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 397

Whereas the states of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—have been participating states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) since 1992 and have freely accepted all OSCE commitments, including those concerning human rights, democracy, and the rule of law;

Whereas the Central Asian states, as OSCE participating states, have affirmed that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, expression, association, peaceful assembly and movement, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, and if charged with an offense the right to a fair and public trial;

Whereas the Central Asian states, as OSCE participating states, have committed themselves to build, consolidate, and strengthen democracy as the only system of government, and are obligated to hold free elections at reasonable intervals, to respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office without discrimination, to respect the right of individuals and groups to establish in full freedom their own political parties, and to allow parties and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process access to the media on a nondiscriminatory basis;

Whereas the general trend of political development in Central Asia has been the emergence of presidents far more powerful than other branches of government, all of whom have refused to allow genuine electoral challenges, postponed or canceled elections, excluded serious rivals from participating in elections, or otherwise contrived to control the outcome of elections;

Whereas several leaders and governments in Central Asia have crushed nascent political parties, or refused to register opposition parties, and have imprisoned and used violence against, or exiled, opposition figures;

Whereas in recent weeks fighting has erupted between government troops of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan;

Whereas Central Asian governments have the right to defend themselves from internal and external threats posed by insurgents, radical religious groups, and other anti-democratic elements which employ violence as a means of political struggle;

Whereas the actions of the Central Asian governments have tended to exacerbate these internal and external threats by domestic repression, which has left few outlets for individuals and groups to vent grievances or otherwise participate legally in the political process;

Whereas in Kazakhstan, President Nursultan Nazarbaev dissolved parliament in 1993 and again in 1995, when he also annulled

scheduled Presidential elections, and extended his tenure in office until 2000 by a deeply flawed referendum;

Whereas on January 10, 1999, President Nazarbaev was reelected in snap Presidential elections from which a leading challenger was excluded for having addressed an unregistered organization, "For Free Elections," and the OSCE assessed the election as falling far short of international standards;

Whereas Kazakhstan's October 1999 parliamentary election, which featured widespread interference in the process by the authorities, fell short of OSCE standards, according to the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR);

Whereas Kazakhstan's parliament on June 22, 2000, approved draft legislation designed to give President Nazarbaev various powers and privileges for the rest of his life;

Whereas independent media in Kazakhstan, which used to be fairly free, have been pressured, co-opted, or crushed, leaving few outlets for the expression of independent or opposition views, thus limiting the press's ability to criticize or comment on the President's campaign to remain in office indefinitely or on high-level corruption;

Whereas the Government of Kazakhstan has initiated, under OSCE auspices, roundtable discussions with representatives of some opposition parties and public organizations designed to remedy the defects of electoral legislation and now should increase the input in those discussions from opposition parties and public organizations that favor a more comprehensive national dialogue;

Whereas opposition parties can function in Kyrgyzstan and parliament has in the past demonstrated some independence from President Askar Akaev and his government;

Whereas 3 opposition parties in Kyrgyzstan were excluded from fielding party lists and serious opposition candidates were not allowed to contest the second round of the February–March 2000 parliamentary election, or were prevented from winning their races by official interference, as cited by the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR);

Whereas a series of flagrantly politicized criminal cases after the election against opposition leaders and the recent exclusion on questionable linguistic grounds of other would-be candidates have raised grave concerns about the fairness of the election process and the prospects for holding a fair Presidential election on October 29, 2000;

Whereas independent and opposition-oriented media in Kyrgyzstan have faced serious constraints, including criminal lawsuits by government officials for alleged defamation;

Whereas in Tajikistan, a civil war in the early 1990s caused an estimated 50,000 people to perish, and a military stalemate forced President Imomali Rakhmonov in 1997 to come to terms with Islamic and democratic opposition groups and agree to a coalition government;

Whereas free and fair elections and other democratic steps in Tajikistan offer the best hope of reconciling government and opposition forces, overcoming the legacy of the civil war, and establishing the basis for civil society;

Whereas President Rakhmonov was reelected in November 1999 with 96 percent of the vote in an election the OSCE did not observe because of the absence of conditions that would permit a fair contest;

Whereas the first multiparty election in the history of Tajikistan was held in February–March 2000, with the participation of former warring parties, but the election fell short of OSCE commitments and 11 people, including a prominent candidate, were killed;

Whereas in Turkmenistan under the rule of President Saparmurat Niyazov, no internationally recognized human rights are observed, including freedom of speech, assembly, association, religion, and movement, and attempts to exercise these rights are brutally suppressed;

Whereas Turkmenistan has committed political dissidents to psychiatric institutions;

Whereas in Turkmenistan President Niyazov is the object of a cult of personality, all political opposition is banned, all media are tightly censored, and only one political party, the Democratic Party, headed by President Niyazov, has been registered;

Whereas the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), citing the absence of conditions for a free and fair election, refused to send any representatives to the December 1999 parliamentary elections;

Whereas President Niyazov subsequently orchestrated a vote of the People's Council in December 1999 that essentially makes him President for life;

Whereas in Uzbekistan under President Islam Karimov, no opposition parties are registered, and only pro-government parties are represented in parliament;

Whereas in Uzbekistan all opposition political parties and leaders have been forced underground or into exile, all media are censored, and attempts to disseminate opposition newspapers can lead to jail terms;

Whereas Uzbekistan's authorities have laid the primary blame for explosions that took place in Tashkent in February 1999 on an opposition leader and have tried and convicted some of his relatives and others deemed his supporters in court proceedings that did not correspond to OSCE standards and in other trials closed to the public and the international community;

Whereas in Uzbekistan police and security forces routinely plant narcotics and other evidence on political opposition figures as well as religious activists, according to Uzbek and international human rights organizations; and

Whereas the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), citing the absence of conditions for a free and fair election, sent no observers except a small group of experts to the December 1999 parliamentary election and refused any involvement in the January 2000 Presidential election: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) expresses deep concern about the tendency of Central Asian leaders to seek to remain in power indefinitely and their willingness to manipulate constitutions, elections, and legislative and judicial systems, to do so;

(2) urges the President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and other United States officials to raise with Central Asian leaders, at every opportunity, the concern about serious violations of human rights, including noncompliance with Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) commitments on democracy and rule of law;

(3) urges Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to come into compliance with OSCE commitments on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, specifically the holding of free and fair elections that do not exclude genuine challengers, to permit independent and opposition parties and candidates to participate on an equal basis with representation in election commissions at all levels, and to allow domestic nongovernmental and political party observers, as well as international observers;

(4) calls on Central Asian leaders to establish conditions for independent and opposition media to function without constraint, limitation, or fear of harassment, to repeal criminal laws which impose prison sentences for alleged defamation of the state or public officials, and to provide access to state media on an equal basis during election campaigns to independent and opposition parties and candidates;

(5) reminds the leaders of Central Asian states that elections cannot be free and fair unless all citizens can take part in the political process on an equal basis, without intimidation or fear of reprisal, and with confidence that their human rights and fundamental freedoms will be fully respected;

(6) calls on Central Asian governments that have begun roundtable discussions with opposition and independent forces to engage in a serious and comprehensive national dialogue, on an equal footing, on institutionalizing measures to hold free and fair elections, and urges those governments which have not launched such roundtables to do so;

(7) calls on the leaders of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to condemn and take effective steps to cease the systematic use of torture and other inhuman treatment by authorities against political opponents and others, to permit the registration of independent and opposition parties and candidates, and to register independent human rights monitoring organizations;

(8) urges the governments of Central Asia which are engaged in military campaigns against violent insurgents to observe international law regulating such actions, to keep civilians and other noncombatants from harm, and not to use such campaigns to justify further crackdowns on political opposition or violations of human rights commitments under OSCE;

(9) encourages the Administration to raise with the governments of other OSCE participating states the possible implications for OSCE participation of any participating state in the region that engages in clear, gross, and uncorrected violations of its OSCE commitments on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law; and

(10) urges the Voice of America and Radio Liberty to expand broadcasting to Central Asia, as needed, with a focus on assuring that the peoples of the region have access to unbiased news and programs that support respect for human rights and the establishment of democracy and the rule of law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the author of this resolution with whom I have worked. I appreciate his great effort.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) for yielding

me this time, and I want to thank him for his work in shepherding this resolution through his Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, and for all of those Members who have co-signed and co-sponsored this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the state of democratization and human rights in the countries of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, is a source of very, very serious concern. In 1992, these States freely pledged to observe the provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and subsequent OSCE documents. The provisions contained in the 1990 Copenhagen Document commit the participating states to foster democratization through, among other things, the holding of free and fair elections, to promote freedom of the media, and to observe the human rights of their citizens.

Mr. Speaker, 8 years have passed since then, but in much of Central Asia the commitments they promised to observe remain a dead letter. In fact, in some countries the situation has deteriorated substantially.

For instance, opposition political activity was permitted in Uzbekistan in the late 1980s. An opposition leader even ran for president in the December 1991 election. In mid-1992, however, President Karimov decided to ban any manifestation of dissidence. Since then, no opposition movements have been allowed to function openly and the state controls the society as tightly as during the Soviet era.

An even more disappointing example is Kyrgyzstan. Once one of the most democratic Central Asian states, Kyrgyzstan has gone the way of neighboring dictatorships. President Akaev has followed his regional counterparts in manipulating the legal, judicial, and law enforcement apparatus in a way to stay in office, despite domestic protest and international censure. On October 29, he will run for a third term; and he will win it, in a pseudo-election from which all serious candidates have been excluded.

Throughout the region, authoritarian leaders have contrived to remain in office by whatever means necessary and give every sign of intending to remain in office as long as they live. Indeed, Turkmenistan's President Niyazov has made himself President for Life last December, and Kazakhstan's President Nazarbaev, who has extended his tenure in office through referenda, canceling elections, and staging deeply flawed elections, this summer arranged to have lifelong privileges and perks go his way.

It may sound bizarre, but it may not be out of the realm of possibility that some of these leaders who already head what are, for all intents and purposes, royal families, are planning to establish what can only be described as family dynasties.

Certainly the worst offender is Turkmenistan. Under the tyrannical

misrule of Niyazov, President Niyazov, his country is the only one-party state in the entire OSCE region. Niyazov's cult of personality has reached such proportions that state media refer to him as a sort of divine being, while anyone who whispers a word of opposition or protest is dragged off to jail and tortured.

Corruption is also rampant in Central Asia. Rulers enrich themselves and their families and a favored few, while the rest of the population struggles to eke out a miserable existence and drifts towards desperation. We are, indeed, already witnessing the consequences. For the second consecutive year, armed insurgents of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan invaded Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. While they have been less successful than last year in seizing territory, they will not go away. Impoverishment of the populace fills their ranks with people, threatening to create a chronic problem. While the most radical groups in Central Asia might have sought to create theocracies regardless of the domestic policies pursued by Central Asian leaders, the latter's marriage of corruption and repression has created an explosive brew.

Mr. Speaker, finally let me say the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan seem to believe that U.S. strategic interest in the region, and the fear of Islamic fundamentalism, will keep the West and Washington from pressing them too hard on human rights while they consolidate power. Let us show them that they are wrong.

America's long-term and short-term interests lie with democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. So I hope that my friends and colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join in backing this important resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. The post-Soviet independence of the Central Asian states has not panned out in the way that benefited the population of these countries. Instead, it created wealthy and often corrupt elites and impoverished the population.

Although all of these newly-independent states have joined the OSCE and appear, at least on paper, to be committed to OSCE principles, in reality the leaders of these countries have consistently fallen back on their OSCE commitments.

The political development reinforced the Office of the President at the expense other branches of government. Parliaments are weak and the courts are not free. Presidents of some countries, such as Turkmenistan, have pushed laws through their rubber-stamp legislatures that extend their presidential powers for life. Other gov-

ernments, like the government of Uzbekistan, have been using the justification of fighting terrorism and insurgency as a means to imprison and/or exile the opposition, censor the press, and control civic and religious activities.

On the other hand, some countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have demonstrated varying degrees of progress. Until recently, opposition parties could function freely in Kyrgyzstan, while the OSCE agreed to Kazakhstan's 1999 parliamentary election, which they found falling short of international standards but, nevertheless, an improvement over the past.

The stability of Central Asia is key to the stability of this region which borders on Afghanistan, Iran, China, and Pakistan. The governments of Central Asia cite the destabilizing influence of drugs and arms-trafficking from outside of their borders and the need to fight Islamic fundamentalism as justifications for their authoritarian regimes.

The government of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have already been battling with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a United States-recognized terrorist group. However, some have charged that the oppressive measures of these regimes may have driven their impoverished and marginalized population into the arms of terrorists.

Although the Central Asian states do not have a strong tradition of democracy, free press, and free and fair elections, it is, however, important that our government and Congress continue to press for greater democratic reforms in these countries within the OSCE framework and on a bilateral basis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Resolution 397.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) on her comments, as well as the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, for his comments and his work on this legislation.

□ 1500

Mr. Speaker, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, five independent States in Central Asia came into being, we have heard about them here today, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The deserts, the mountains, the steppes and the river valleys in this region are home to 50 million people. State borders, which were imposed by Stalin, artificially partition and breed resentments among various large ethnic groups, principally Russians, Uzbeks and Tajiks.

Since achieving their independence, the Central Asian Republics have operated with little or no international

scrutiny. In effect, Central Asia has been relegated to an international policy backwater. However, given the geostrategic significance of the region, and given the region's vast wealth of natural resources, such an oversight is risky. This body ignores the region at its peril, as does our country.

Regrettably, the nations of Central Asia appear to be moving along the path of authoritarianism. In recent months, each of the five countries has conducted general elections. These elections varied in the degree of electoral freedom; however, in no case did any of these elections meet internationally accepted norms. Indeed, most remain reminiscent of Soviet-style elections.

There has been decertification of opposition parties and, in some cases, the apprehension of opposition leaders.

The State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1999 concludes that presidential power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan overshadows legislative and judicial power, and that Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan have lost ground in democratization and respect for human rights. This continual decline is very disturbing and raises questions about the ability of the United States to successfully encourage true democratic institutions and the rule of law.

In some ways, this is a difficult resolution. There are five countries in Central Asia. Each has unique characteristics. Some enjoy certain socioeconomic advantages over the others. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan allow a relatively greater, but still limited, degree of political participation.

The ruler in Turkmenistan has developed a cult of personality so deep that he has changed his name so that he is, quite literally, "Father of the Turkmen"; in other words, Turkmenbashi.

Tajikistan has suffered from a severe civil war throughout the 1990s. But the common theme throughout Central Asia is governmental abuse of human rights, basic human rights. Opposition leaders who appear to be gaining influence are dealt within a decisive, anti-democratic manner.

Now, it is certainly true that most, if not all of these countries, face armed insurgencies. There are all-powerful tribal warlords in Tajikistan. In Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, there are armed religious extremists. Indeed, as we meet, there are Taliban-backed insurgents fighting Uzbek military forces. I think we are going to hear about that in a few minutes from the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER). These Islamic militants are decidedly antidemocratic.

In Kazakhstan, there have been efforts by pro-Moscow elements to overthrow the government. It is entirely appropriate that the governments of the region deal with such threats. However, it is one thing to campaign against armed insurgents. It is quite another to use the insurgency as an ex-

cuse to suspend international law and crack down on the legal political opposition. Unfortunately, in some instances, that is what has been done.

H. Con. Res. 397 speaks to the very real abuses that have occurred in each of the Central Asian Republics, and puts these nations on alert that the House of Representatives is deeply concerned about the ongoing abuses of power. The resolution urges the Nations to come into compliance with their OSCE commitments and calls upon the President and the Secretary of State to raise human rights concerns when meeting with representatives of these governments.

Again, this Member congratulates the resolution's author, the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), for holding hearings on this subject as a part of his efforts and introducing the resolution. The language he has crafted accurately reflects the serious democratic shortcomings throughout the region.

This Member appreciates the willingness of his staff to work with the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific to craft a resolution that all in this body can support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for H. Con. Res. 397.

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), the distinguished member of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 347. Let me just say that it is sad that we must recognize today the chaos and turmoil that is found in Central Asia, the chaos, the turmoil, the repression, the dictatorship, the heartache, the torture, the things that could have been avoided, in a part of a world that showed such promise, such promise 10 years ago.

Upon the fall of the Soviet Union, everyone expected Central Asia to emerge as a shining light of commerce and progress. Instead, what we see is Central Asia falling into a pit, a dark pit of repression and despair.

I believe one of the primary reasons for this huge part of the world falling into despair has something to do with the policies right here in Washington, D.C. The Clinton administration has, more than any other administration in the history of this country, lowered the priority for human rights as an international goal.

During the Ronald Reagan years, when we were in the middle of a Cold War, Ronald Reagan made human rights a priority. We established the National Endowment for Democracy. We talked about it. We negotiated about it. It became preeminent among our demands when we were talking to

the governments like that of the Soviet Union.

It worked. Because we stressed human rights and democracy, the world has a much greater chance for freedom and democracy but also a much greater chance for peace.

Unfortunately, that great gift to mankind was squandered by this administration which, as I say, not only made human rights not a priority, but just took it off the list of which we were negotiating, especially with the Communist Chinese.

What has this lack of priority, what has this lack of concern for human rights done in Central Asia? We have seen these regimes in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and others which had such promise turn into a cesspool of repression and torture.

We have seen election fraud in countries like Uzbekistan where they had such a great chance, a great opportunity to have free elections. In Azerbaijan, military takeovers of a democratically elected regime. In Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, countries that had a chance, the ruling elite there just turned their back on this opportunity. Why? Because this administration did not place any priority or value on the discussion of human rights or democracy when they met with the leaders of these countries.

Well, there can be no peace without freedom and human rights. That is what we are finding today. Because what has happened now in Central Asia is there has been a new cycle of violence that has been set on its way, a cycle of violence that we do not know where it will stop. A cycle of violence in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and Tajikistan and, yes, in Azerbaijan as well where they have been unable to settle their problems there and which will probably reach Kazakhstan with their corrupt government.

What is that cycle of violence? What we have is people who are demoralized by the fact that there is no democratic alternative in these Central Asian republics turning to radicalism. This year and at this time the face of radicalism is Muslim extremism, the fundamentalist movement, what they call it in that part of the world.

Well, of course, decent, honest, people will turn to these radical alternatives if they are given no alternative at the ballot box, if their friends and relatives or their sons and daughters are arrested and brutally tortured for simply complaining about the government. Of course, Islamic fundamentalists are going to find that their ranks are bolstered with volunteers when they have governments like this.

On top of that, there is one other factor that needs to be looked at about what is creating the cycle of violence which will lead to such turmoil. That is what? American policy towards Afghanistan.

This Member, and anyone who is in the Committee on International Relations will testify, for years I have been warning what the results of this administration's policy towards Afghanistan would be. Years, I predicted over and over again that, unless we did something in Afghanistan to change the situation, that we would end up with Afghanistan as a center of, number one, terrorism, a base for terrorism for the Central Asia but also for the world; that it would be repressive and have one of the most repressive and fanatic regimes and anti-Western regimes on the planet; and, number three, it would be the center for the growth of heroin and that it would put all of the resources that, the billions of dollars one receives from the growth of one-third of the world's heroin in the hands of these religious fanatics. That is exactly what has happened.

Yes, it is heroin money in the hands of the Taliban leaders that are fanning this, the flame of discontent and violence in Central Asia that takes advantage of the dictatorships. The dictators should not just focus, however, on trying to wipe out their opponents and wipe out these fundamentalist movements. They should focus on trying to create a democratic alternative so that people in those countries once be attracted to this type of fanaticism.

Even the people of Afghanistan are not attracted to the fanaticism of the Taliban. The Taliban have an iron-fisted control there and have steadily refused to have democratic elections.

It is my sad, sad duty to, again, repeat the charge on the floor of the House of Representatives, as I have on numerous occasions in the Committee on International Relations, that this administration, not only has discarded human rights and democracy as a priority but has a covert police of supporting one of the worst governments and oppressive governments in the world; and I am talking about the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

I have tried to investigate this for years, and I have been repeatedly cut off by the State Department from receiving the documents that would disprove, and I would like to disprove this charge, because it is a shame for any American to think that our government would be supporting this regime.

But I can testify here today that, every time the opposition to the Taliban has had a chance of dislodging the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, this administration has run to their rescue time and time again.

Now, people do not know, even in this body, do not know the details, much less the American people. But those are the facts, and I can verify that over and over again.

We must have a policy that champions human rights and democracy in Afghanistan and Central Asia. This is what will bring peace to the world. Otherwise, there will be conflict, there will be bloodshed, there will be tyranny. It is a result of a lack of commit-

ment here on our part in the United States to the ideals that our Founding Fathers thought we would support.

So today I support H. Con. Res. 397 because it states very clearly that we in Congress believe that the ideals of democracy and human rights should be brought to bear in Central Asia, including Afghanistan, but especially the Central Asian republics, and that that should be the policy of the United States Government.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) for his eloquent statement. I do urge support, again, for H. Con. Res. 397.

As I close my comments, I want to recognize the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BARRETT), who is presiding, who has been presiding over so many sessions and Suspension Calendars over the years. He has given 10 years of distinguished service to this body and to our State. I will have a chance to say more about that later this week. But in the course of doing that, he has presided over many suspensions from the House Committee on International Relations. So we thank him for his patience and his evenhandedness in that capacity and the many hours he has spent in presiding over this body.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 397, a resolution voicing concern about serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in most states of Central Asia, including substantial non-compliance with their Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) commitments on democratization and the holding of free and fair elections.

I would like especially to draw the attention of my colleagues to the section of the resolution dealing with Kazakhstan. This oil rich country is riddled with corruption, and its dictator, President Nursultan Nazarbayev, has become increasingly repressive and appears determined to leave no stone unturned in his quest to silence the press, eliminate the opposition parties, and plunder every dime of profit that the country has earned from its oil and mineral wealth.

Mr. Nazarbayev is reportedly the eighth richest person in the world; yet more than one-third of the population of Kazakhstan are below the poverty line as defined by the World Bank. The German-based organization, Transparency International, recently surveyed corruption in 96 countries and rated Kazakhstan as the 12th most corrupt country in that group. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Justice recently launched an investigation into bribes allegedly paid by U.S. oil companies to President Nazarbayev and his cronies.

But even worse than the corruption is the attempt by Nazarbayev to snuff out every vestige of democracy and freedom of expression in Kazakhstan. In January 1999, he called a snap presidential election and ensured his own re-election by having his main opponent, former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, disqualified and driven into exile. Both this election and the parliamentary elections that followed in October 1999 were denounced as unfair by the OSCE. To make sure that these

and other anti-democratic actions are not criticized, the Nazarbayev regime has virtually silenced the independent media by intimidation, arrests and seizure of presses.

In an effort to reverse the repressive trend in Kazakhstan, H. Con. Res. 397 calls upon the government of Kazakhstan and other governments in Central Asia to engage in a serious and comprehensive "national dialogue" with opposition and independent forces, "on an equal footing, on institutionalizing measures to hold free and fair elections," Last December, former Prime Minister Kazhegeldin of Kazakhstan proposed a detailed vision of what a "national dialogue" should entail, and it serves as a model for all of Central Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H. Con. Res. 397 and urge its adoption. The resolution forthrightly exposes the trends of increasing repression in Central Asia and proposes a solution in the form of a genuine "national dialogue" between the governments of the region and the opposition political parties and independent organizations that speak for the peoples of Central Asia. This is a wonderful message of hope and support for this House to send as it winds up its work in the 106th Congress.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 397, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1515

ACKNOWLEDGING AND SALUTING CONTRIBUTIONS OF COIN COLLECTORS

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 154) to acknowledge and salute the contributions of coin collectors.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 154

Whereas in 1982, after a period of 28 years, the Congress of the United States resumed the United States commemorative coin programs;

Whereas since 1982, 37 of the Nation's worthy institutions, organizations, foundations, and programs have been commemorated under the coin programs;

Whereas since 1982, the Nation's coin collectors have purchased nearly 49,000,000 commemorative coins that have yielded nearly \$1,800,000,000 in revenue and more than \$407,000,000 in surcharges benefitting a variety of deserving causes;

Whereas the United States Capitol has benefitted from the commemorative coin surcharges that have supported such commendable projects as the restoration of the Statue