

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of disappointment and concern that I rise tonight to respond to a misguided initiative that some of my colleagues in this House are involved with. Several Members of Congress have attached their names to a letter to President Clinton that makes some outrageous and false charges about recent events in India. I believe these claims cannot go unchallenged.

The letter repeats the malicious claims that the massacre of 36 Sikh villagers in Chittisinghpura, in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, was the work of Indian security forces. That massacre occurred on March 20, at the beginning of President Clinton's historic trip to India. I had the opportunity to take part in the President's trip, and this tragic and shocking massacre did cast a shadow over the trip. It left a deep sense of sadness among all of us in the American delegation and among all the people of India that we encountered. President Clinton condemned the attack in the strongest terms.

Less than a week after the attack, Indian investigating agencies in Jammu and Kashmir made an arrest in the case, apprehending one Yakub Wagey, a terrorist belonging to the Hizbul-Mujahideen. Mr. Wagey, a resident of Chittisinghpura, revealed that the massacre was the work of a group of 16 to 17 terrorists, including six militants of Hizbul-Mujahideen and 11 to 12 foreign mercenaries owing allegiance to Lashkar-e-Toiba, the LeT. Both of these terrorist organizations are on the long list of terrorist organizations that receive support from Pakistan.

This terrible incident was the first large-scale attack against the Sikh community in Jammu and Kashmir, but it is consistent with the ongoing terrorist campaign that has claimed the lives of thousands of peaceful civilians in that state. This terrorist campaign has repeatedly and convincingly been linked to elements operating within Pakistan, often with the direct or indirect support of Pakistan's government.

As I discussed in this Chamber earlier this week, the Pakistani-supported terrorist campaign has ethically cleansed Jammu and Kashmir of its indigenous Hindu community, the Kashmiri Pandits.

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The terrorists have also sought to clear out members of other Muslim sects or those Muslims who cooperate with the lawful Indian authorities of the state. And now with this incident, the ethic cleansing campaign has turned on the Sikhs.

It is no coincidence that this massacre took place during President Clinton's visit to South Asia. I believe that these terrorist groups and their supporters in Pakistan wanted an incident that would draw attention to the Kashmir issue. Pakistan has been seeking to internationalize this conflict for years.

What better time to perpetrate a high-profile atrocity like this then when the President of the United States is in the region with all the attendant diplomatic and media attention that such a visit brings with it.

What makes the claim that India was behind the massacre all the more absurd, I mean this is why it is absurd. At a time when India was before the world stage, what possible motive would there be for such an ugly incident to detract from all the positive publicity India was seeking to generate. It does not make any sense.

Mr. Speaker, this allegation really makes no sense at all when we look at the record of the two South Asian neighbors, India and Pakistan. India is a secular, pluralistic democracy that seeks to promote civil and human rights for all of its many ethnic, linguistic and religious communities. Pakistan is a military dictatorship that has a long record of fomenting instability and violence in Kashmir while denying human and civil rights at home.

One of the motives behind trying to link India to the attack against the Sikh villagers in Kashmir is to try to generate separatist sentiment against India's Sikh community. Indeed, I understand that an organization based here in this country that seeks to promote the Sikh separatist cause has lent its support to the letter circulating on Capitol Hill.

The reality is that, in India's State of Punjab, where the Sikhs constitute a majority, Mr. Prakash Singh Badal, who happens to be a Sikh, has been elected as Chief Minister of the State. The predominantly Sikh Akali Dal Party holds a majority in the State's legislature. The State government has set up the Human Rights Commission whose primary purpose is to investigate claims of human rights abuses by government security forces, just as India has done on the national level.

The democratically-elected Sikh political leaders in Punjab are not buying the claims of Indian Government responsibility for the atrocity that took place in Kashmir this past March.

Mr. Speaker, finally I want to say, India's Democratically-elected leaders will admit that there have been abuses by security forces. There is also violence between various religious and ethnic communities which is not officially condoned. In both cases, India has sought to crack down on these kinds of acts in an honest and effective way that makes it a model among the nations of Asia.

The call by some of my colleagues to declare India a terrorist nation is completely unreasonable. Indeed, following from the President's recent trip, cooperation against terrorism is one of the major areas of U.S.-India bilateral cooperation.

The idea of cutting off aid to India, an approach that has repeatedly been tried and failed here in the House, is even more absurd, seeking to send a

message by cutting vital nutrition and health care.

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. WALTER D. "WALLY" WILKERSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TOOMEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to one of my constituents, a very special man, Dr. Walter Wilkerson, Jr., who, on June 24 of this year, will be stepping down as Chairman of the Texas Board of Health.

Dr. Wilkerson was appointed to the Texas Board on June 7, 1995; and shortly after that, on September 1, Texas Governor George W. Bush named him chairman. We are fortunate in Texas that, although his term as chairman is ending, he will continue to serve on the Board of Health.

As chairman, Dr. Eriksson took on the health care needs of every single Texan, building an awareness that public health is for everyone, every day, and everywhere. He has been a listener who steered his board and agency to consensus on almost every difficult issue that came before it.

Furthermore, under his tenure, the Texas Board of Health has had a strong relationship with the Texas Medical Association, made significant strides in developing a partnership with local health directors and local health policymakers. He has made a significant effort to maintain an open and respectful dialog with the business communities. And all of Dr. Wilkerson's efforts have been designed at building a cooperative environment for the betterment of the health of every Texan.

At the beginning of his tenure on the Board, he retired from private practice in Conroe, Texas, to be joined in 1958 after graduating from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in 1955. In 1951, Dr. Wilkerson received his Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University, which I am proud to represent.

While a practicing physician in Conroe, though he sought no honors, Dr. Wilkerson was named Outstanding Citizen of Montgomery County in 1974 and in 1991 was the Texas Family Physician of the Year and named by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Wilkerson is a man of integrity and dedication; and Texas is a much better place because he agreed to answer the Governor's call and provide us leadership. I am honored to call him my friend.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IS OUT OF CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to call attention to the fact

that the Environmental Protection Agency is absolutely out of control. They have adopted a policy of any means is justified by its political ends. They seem absolutely determined to destroy the family farm as we know it today. They have completely abandoned sound science, or any science, for that matter. They pursue the idea that any regulation is a good regulation as long as it causes a lot of chaos and economic disruption.

Earlier this year, EPA attempted to regulate as a point source silviculture in this country. They have pretty well been falled by that effort. But now they are attempting, in a rather secretive way, to try to regulate aquaculture, another very important agricultural pursuit in this country.

They have absolutely no scientific data indicating that there is a problem with pollution with aquaculture industry. After all, these farmers raise fish, they do not want their produce growing in polluted water.

The Environmental Protection Agency, as part of their plan to implement their regulatory process based on the economic success of their producers, they have this form that they are asking our aquaculture producers to fill out. And if they do not fill it out, there will be a penalty and they will be in violation of a Federal law and there is a severe threat.

One of the questions they ask, and they do not ask any questions in this form, not one, about water quality or how they treat your water. What they do ask, Mr. Speaker, is, If this company borrows money to finance capital improvements, such as waste water treatment equipment, what interest rates would they pay? In the event that this company does not borrow money to finance capital improvements, what equity rate would it use? When you finance capital improvements, what is the approximate mix of debt and equity? What are your revenues from aquaculture? The revenue from other agriculture activities that are co-located with aquaculture? What are other farm facility revenues? Do you get Government payments and how much are those Government payments? Is there other non-farm income? What are the total revenues? And the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

This is not a questionnaire to help improve the water quality of this country or the areas where aquaculture is located. This is an attempt to destroy an industry, one more attempt by the Environmental Protection Agency to destroy agriculture in this country as we know it.

It is time for it to stop. Enough is enough.

The Environmental Protection Agency should be the premier scientific agency of this Nation. And yet, it has turned itself into nothing more than a political yardage to pursue perfectly legitimate and harmless industries.

#### NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the federal government's commitment for increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). My colleagues and I have urged the appropriators since 1998 to double NIH's budget over 5 years. The distinguished gentleman from Illinois, Chairman PORTER has been an avid supporter of these requests and as a result, the budget has seen the appropriate increases each year.

As a member of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus, Alzheimer's Task Force, Biomedical Research Caucus and Working Group on Parkinson's Disease, I have met with countless individuals who ask each year that Congress invest more money into research funding at NIH. And each year I am proud to be able to report back that the House has been able to fulfill this request. More than half of my constituents who visit my office each year, come to discuss research funding and the budget request for NIH. Scientists are confident that with recent dramatic developments in technology over the past decade, that they are on the verge of making significant discoveries for both cures and vaccines for a number of diseases from diabetes and cancer to AIDS and Parkinson's.

With the continued support from this Congress by way of dollars for research, NIH will be able to continue making advances toward the eradication of countless diseases that afflict millions of Americans and countless others around the world. I am pleased to report back to my constituents that this Congress is continuing its support of medical research and I look forward to continue the fight for NIH and its committed scientists and doctors.

#### CALLING ON GOVERNOR BUSH TO SUSPEND TEXAS EXECUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today and last week, I sent a letter to Governor Bush asking him to suspend executions in Texas and to form a commission to review the administration of the death penalty.

The moratorium would give the commission time to review the adequacy of both legal representation, the advances in DNA technology, and the possible biases in the capital sentencing process.

The support of the use of the death penalty, in appropriate cases, I support totally. But we must make sure that we impose the capital punishments fairly and without bias. That is basic to our sense of justice.

In light of recent events, I am no longer confident that we in Texas are administering the death penalty with the highest standards of justice in mind. We should not tolerate the possibility of executing an innocent person, especially when we have the means to avoid it.

Recent reports in the media, other reports and studies that have been conducted, have highlighted the mistakes made in capital cases both in Texas and throughout the country and in other States around the country.

As my colleagues well know, concerns with the administration of death penalty and the adequacy of legal representation prompted Governor George Ryan of Illinois to declare a moratorium on executions.

We have asked Governor Bush and I am pleased that Governor Bush recently made a decision to pardon a man wrongly convicted of being sentenced for 99 years in prison. His release came, however, after he had served 16 years and was determined that he had been innocent after DNA studies had been conducted.

With recent efforts to expedite executions and remove many cases for appeal, it is possible that similar convictions in Death Row equally might be innocent. These executions could be postponed so that we would be able to assess those three specific areas that I have mentioned. And that is to make sure that we have had adequate legal representation for these individuals; secondly, to make sure that, with the new technology and with the new advances in forensic technology, the DNA analysis in particular, that we have the best opportunity in our history to rule out or, at least, to have serious doubts, concerns, and possibilities that the defendant or convict in fact committed the specific crime in question.

As we look in terms of the situation where we find ourselves in, I ask the Governor to help out in the process of asking the Board of Pardon and Paroles to seriously look at assessing our process in Texas. And yes, we might have a great operation in San Antonio, but I know that each county and each community operates differently.

I know that a large number of cases in Houston, over 70, that a particular district attorney used to brag about the number of people that he was sentencing into Death Row. Those types of things need to be questioned.

We have had specific situations where psychologists have utilized stereotypes and racial profiling to determine some of those decisions. So those biases need to be looked at very carefully. Not to mention, and I stress the importance of the technology that we have before us, and especially in those cases that there is some sufficient DNA that is available where we can go to reaffirm our decision to make sure that in those cases we will not be making a mistake.

I fully understand the plea of victims for the swift administration of justice, but justice requires that we know for sure that we are applying the ultimate earthly penalty fairly and properly. I am not sure that we are doing this at the present time.

I, therefore, call upon the Governor to help and assist on the Texas Board of Pardon and Paroles to look at a