

rule their country in complete defiance of the 1977 Afghanistan constitution—denying both men and women the equal rights this document specifically grants them. Under the Taliban regime, women, in particular, suffer extreme oppression.

They are isolated in their homes and barred from going to school, working, or even walking outside unaccompanied. They are required by the Taliban never to enter public places without being completely covered. The windows on their houses are also covered or painted so no one may see them. They live their lives in semi-darkness; faceless and powerless. Those who violate the rules of conduct are beaten or brutalized by roving bands of Taliban police.

This oppression of Afghan women not only compromises their value as human beings, but undermines Afghan society by denying it the talents and contributions of its women. In fact, prior to Taliban rule Afghan women were counted amongst the country's leading doctors, lawyers, teachers and political leaders. The contributions they made to their communities were invaluable.

In addition, as the primary caregivers in families Afghan women are responsible for instilling values and a sense of right and wrong in their children. By demeaning women, the Taliban regime is indoctrinating new generations of children, boys and girls alike with a belief that is counter to a set of values that we all hold dear. It is important for Afghan mothers and grandmothers to provide inspiration and hope for a better quality of life to their children, and that begins with their own fair and just treatment. If not, what message are these children being sent when their government demeans and represses those who are at the very heart of family life? What vision for the future can we offer these innocent children?

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that if we want to build a world where freedom, democracy, and equality are respected tenets, then women have to be equal partners with men in all aspects of life. Women all over the world, including Afghanistan, value the opportunity to contribute their special talents and ideas with their communities. Therefore, we should join them as allies in their struggle for a social climate where equality for both Muslim men and Muslim women is respected.

Finally, I want to clearly state that the blame for the continued discrimination Afghan women face is not in Islam, but on the non-Islamic nature of the Taliban regime. Progressive based Islamic traditions have been tossed aside by the Taliban government and replaced with an extremism that is a distortion of true Islam.

The United States Congress must condemn the treatment of women in Afghanistan in the name of justice, peace, equality and freedom. It has been too long since Afghan women have enjoyed the rights common in so many other areas of the world. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan will contribute to establishing a stable and progressive Islamic regime that values women and permits them to contribute positively and equally to a better tomorrow for the citizens of Afghanistan and future generations.

TREATMENT OF AFGHAN WOMEN

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2001

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this very urgent issue of the treatment of the women in Afghanistan.

Yesterday, on Good Morning America, several video clips flashed across the television secretly depicting the horrific and brutal treatment of women in Afghanistan.

The first clip showed a woman leaving her home dressed in her full burqa, but missing the shroud that covers her face. A man who obviously was not her husband or even relative proceeded to beat her. What was even more shocking was that passersby were not affected by the scene. Such occurrences have become part of their everyday lives. Incredibly, the beating of women for 'disciplinary' as well as entertainment reasons is a routine phenomenon in Afghanistan under the Taliban, an extremist Islamic sect.

The second clip showed the Taliban executing a woman accused of killing her abusive husband. Although the husband's family forgave the woman because she bore his seven children, a Taliban fighter was still ordered to shoot her in the back of her head with an automatic rifle because she was "too guilty to be forgiven."

How can we allow this type of treatment of women to continue?

With the coming to power of Islamic fundamentalists, women's right to fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the country was drastically curtailed and later on abruptly denied them by the Taliban.

Women are totally deprived of the right to education, of the right to work, of the right to travel, of the right to health care, of the right to legal recourse, of the right to recreation, and of the right to being human.

Some of the heinous restrictions imposed by the Taliban on women in Afghanistan include: coverage with burqa from head to toe; the whipping of women in public for having non-covered ankles; a ban on women laughing loudly; and a ban on women wearing brightly colored clothes. Women are prohibited from going outside, except for a government-sanctioned purpose.

Women's freedoms were virtually wiped out when the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996. Women became subject to a horrific system of gender apartheid whereby they are prohibited from working, attending school, and leaving their homes without a male relative and, as I described earlier, without wearing the head-to-toe burqa shroud.

Islamic fundamentalism, in essence, looks upon women as subhumans, fit only for household slavery and as a means of procreation.

This outrageous view of women was incredibly elevated to the status of official policy when the ignorant Taliban took control of 90 percent of Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul. For example, female education from kindergarten to graduate was banned; employment for women is banned.

Taliban restrictions have driven women in Afghanistan to commit suicide. An educated 20-year old woman burned herself with petrol

as a way out of all her miseries that had poisoned her for years. After being found with her self-inflicted burns, her family took her to a hospital, but the facility was lacking a physician and proper medical treatment. It was too late to save her life.

Prior to the Taliban regime, women in Afghanistan enjoyed equal rights with men under the Afghan Constitution. Seventy percent of the teachers in Kabul were women, 50 percent were civil servants and university students, and 40 percent were doctors.

Many organizations have been working to help these women. We as Members of Congress must find a way to restore rights and human dignity of the women of Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me this time to raise awareness on the treatment of women in Afghanistan.

NEW POTO LAW IN INDIA PERHAPS MOST REPRESSIVE EVER

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, in 1995 the Indian law known as the "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA)" expired. It was one of the most repressive laws ever put on the books anywhere in the world. It allowed people to be picked up for any reason or no reason, held without charge or trial for an indefinite period, deprived them of the right to know of the charges against them or face their accusers. The law was widely abused. When a rare TADA defendant would get released, the police would immediately pick him up again and often would file TADA complaints in more than one jurisdiction to make it impossible to contest. Despite the fact that it expired over six years ago, the Movement Against State Repression reports that over 52,000 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India, most under TADA and many of them since 1984.

India took TADA off the books under intense political pressure but continued to enforce it. Now the country that likes to boast of being "the world's largest democracy" has taken advantage of the terrorist incident that occurred in September to promulgate a law called the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) that makes TADA look mild. Twenty three organizations have already been banned under POTO, including the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), a group that has engaged in peaceful political protest for human rights and sometimes for independence for the Sikh homeland, Khalistan. This ban just goes to show that in the eyes of the Indian government, anyone who speaks up peacefully for freedom for freedom is considered a "terrorist." Oddly, it also bans the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which India today reported was a creation of the Indian government and whose leaders, according to the article, were put up in Delhi's finest hotel.

In addition, POTO provides for suppression of information, and therefore makes journalists subject to terrorism charges if they publish information unfavorable to the government. It makes the furnishing of certain information to police investigators mandatory with a prison term of up to three years for failure to tell

them what they want to hear and it allows for coerced confessions.

A respected retired Indian general, General Narindr Singh, said "Punjab is a police state." Under POTO, minorities in India will be forced to live in a police state, which is even more brutal than before. Unfortunately, the United States has been trying to strengthen its ties with India, which in the past, voted to throw the United States off the Human Rights Commission and to suppress a resolution critical of Red Chinese human-rights violations. India, a longtime Soviet ally, votes against the United States at the UN more often than any country except Cuba. According to the Indian Express, India's Defense Minister, led a meeting in 1999 with the Ambassadors of Red China, Cuba, Russia, Yugoslavia, Libya, and Iraq to set up a security alliance "to stop the U.S."

Mr. Speaker, why should a country with a long record of anti-Americanism be a recipient of U.S. aid? The obvious answer is that it should not. The hard-working, overtaxed people of this country should not be supporting this brutal, corrupt, and hostile country. We should stop all U.S. aid to India, restore the sanctions previously in place against that country, and put the Congress on record in support of a free and fair plebiscite in Kashmir, in Punjab, Khalistan, in Christian Nagaland, and everywhere that people are seeking their freedom from this brutal regime. It is our obligation to the principles that give birth to our great country.

Mr. Speaker, on October 26, the Tribune News Service in India ran an excellent article on the repressive new POTO law, which I would like to place in the RECORD at this time.

[From the Tribune News Service, Oct. 26, 2001]

CENTRE BANS 23 TERRORIST OUTFITS

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 25—The Centre today justified the promulgation of the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) saying it is the first comprehensive legal salvo against terrorism with complete safeguards to check the menace speedily and effectively. Under the ordinance, 23 organizations have been banned. Briefing newsmen here, Union Home Secretary Kamal Pande said care had been taken to ensure that the 50-page, 61-clause ordinance avoided all pitfalls and criticisms that the erstwhile Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act (TADA), which expired in 1995, had to face.

Justifying the promulgation of the ordinance, Mr. Pande said there was an upsurge in terrorist activities, intensification of cross-border terrorism and insurgent groups in different parts of the country and the existing criminal justice system was not designed to deal with the types of heinous crimes that had appeared in the country in the past 50 years.

The ordinance defines terrorist acts as those done by using weapons and explosive substances or other methods in a manner as to cause or likely to cause death or injuries to persons or loss or damage to property or disruption of essential supplies and services with intent to threaten the unity or integrity of India or to strike terror in any section of the people. It also has a comprehensive definition of terrorist organizations including in terrorist acts and provides for proscribing them under a set procedure.

A total of 23 organizations have been banned under the ordinance, which Mr. Pande said, would be placed before Parliament in the form of a Bill for approval soon.

"The ordinance, of course, will have to be passed through Parliament as it will be valid

for a maximum period of six months . . . it will be placed before Parliament," he said.

Stating that all state governments and other departments concerned were consulted twice on the various provisions of the ordinance and their suggestions were taken note of and included wherever necessary before it was promulgated, Mr. Pande said "special features/safeguards have been built in to prevent the possibility of misuse of the special power given to investigating authorities also keeping in view the observations of the Supreme Court."

Asked about the mounting criticism over the clause pertaining to "disclosure of information", which is equally applicable to journalists, Mr. Pande said the clause was in line with the provisions pertaining to suppression of information already existing in CrPC and the IPC. Section 3(8) of the ordinance places responsibility on all persons to disclose information which the person knows or believes to be of material assistance in preventing any terrorist activity as soon as reasonably practicable to the police. However, exception has been provided in case of persons engaged as legal attorney of the accused who may have acquired such knowledge for the purpose of preparing the defense for the accused.

Section 14 provides a new provision which makes it obligatory to furnish information in respect of a terrorist offense. Failure to furnish the information called for or deliberately furnishing false information to investigating officer shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or fine or both. The investigating officer can call for such information only with prior approval in writing of an officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police.

Mr. Pande said Section 32 provided for admissibility of confessions made to a police officer under certain conditions. But unlike TADA, the confession of an accused shall not be admissible as an evidence against a co-accused. Further such confessions had to be made before a police officer not lower in rank of a SP and had to be further recorded with a Chief Judicial Magistrate within 48 hours.

There is a provision to review the ban and a review committee headed by a sitting or retired judge of a high court will be constituted to hear such applications.

Financing of terrorism, possession of unauthorised arms, explosive substances or other lethal weapons capable of mass destruction and/or use in biological and chemical warfare have also been brought under the purview of this ordinance and the punishment could range from three years imprisonment to life imprisonment or fine or both and also death penalty.

Twenty-three organisations, including Deendar Anjuman, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and some of the almost defunct outfits in Punjab have been branded as terrorist organisations in the ordinance.

The hurriedly promulgated ordinance lists the Babbar Khalsa International, the Khalistan Commando Force, the Khalistan Zindabad Force and the International Sikh Youth Federation among the list of terrorist outfits.

The ordinance has also branded almost all Kashmiri and North-East militant outfits and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as terrorist organisations.

The outfits operating in Kashmir, which have been listed as terrorist organisations, are the Lashkar-e-Toiba/Pasban-e-Ahle Hadis, the Jaish-e-Mohammed/Tahrir-e-Fuqran, the Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front.

The North-East outfits which have been branded as terrorist organisations, under Chapter III of the ordinance which deals with the terrorist organisations, are the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), the Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL), the Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF), the All-Teipura Tiger Force and the National Liberation Front of Tripura. Meanwhile, the government will seek to replace three ordinances, including the controversial POTO in the forthcoming winter session of Parliament beginning on November 19.

The Union Cabinet, at its special meeting here today, decided not only on the dates of Parliament's winter session but also on seeking the passage of the three ordinances.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan said the government was confident of getting the Opposition's support on POTO, despite some of the parties having extreme reservations on it. POTO seeks to fill the void created following the lapsing of TADA.

The minister was of the view that such a law was necessary in the prevailing conditions in the country and would help the government and the police in combating terrorism. He added that the Opposition was equally concerned about terrorism.

The minister said that two other ordinances, seeking to replace the ordinance on passport and the buy-back of shares would also come up for consideration during the session, which would have a total of 23 sittings.

The Bill seeking to replace the ordinance on passport would give the government, both the Centre and state, powers to suspend the passport or the travel documents of any citizen who it may suspect to be a terrorist. The ordinance signed by President K.R. Narayanan, came into force from October 23. It seeks to make amendments to the Indian Passport Act of 1967.

The ordinance on buy-back of shares was promulgated following a long-pending demand of the industry. It will enable companies to buy-back up to 10 percent of their equity every six months against the prevailing restriction of two years.

REGARDING WORLD POPULATION AWARENESS WEEK

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2001

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into the RECORD the attached Proclamation of Bill Graves, Governor of the State of Kansas, designating October 21–27 World Population Awareness Week.

Rapid population growth and urbanization have become catalysts for many serious environmental problems, applying substantial pressures to the infrastructure of nations around the world. These pressures caused by population growth and urbanization are manifested especially in pollution, transportation, health, sanitation and public safety. Cities and urban areas today occupy only 2 percent of the earth's land, but contain half of the world's population and consume 75 percent of its resources. World population stands today at