

113th shuttle mission to date. Its mission was to provide 70 international scientists access to both the environment of space, and set of seven human researchers for 16 days. The astronauts on board worked 24 hours a day in alternating shifts, to carry out important experiments in the areas of astronaut health and safety, advanced technology development and Earth and space sciences. The work the astronauts were doing included experiments to help further progress in combating prostate cancer, to develop techniques to improve efficiency of anti-cancer drugs, to strengthen construction techniques for structures in areas where earthquakes are common, testing technology to recycle water, and to improve crop yield.

On February 1, 2003, we began the day awaiting the return of the *Columbia* shuttle. We could not wait to congratulate the crew of seven on their performances and achievements. These men and women made an excellent effort on this extremely important mission. They made America proud. We all held our breaths when we lost contact with the shuttle, and then watched in disbelief and horror when we saw the remnants of the shuttle over the skies of Texas.

I support this Resolution, which reminds us all of what a difficult job astronauts have, and the sacrifices their families make. I am proud to honor the lives lost, as well as those who continue to work tirelessly and courageously, as well as their families. The prayers of the Nation are with our lost seven and their families.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE TO THE FAMILIES OF THE CREW OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE "COLUMBIA"

SPEECH OF

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2003

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, the tragic loss of the Shuttle *Columbia* is a sobering reminder of the risks of space exploration. We mourn the loss of the dedicated crew, but are grateful for their courage and commitment to exploring new frontiers.

As we search for answers, we must keep in mind that the U.S. space program has had many successes. In little more than a generation, we have pursued some of humankind's grandest dreams.

Space exploration has always been a source of excitement and awe. It has allowed us to marshal our Nation's determination, resources and tremendous talents—nowhere more so than in Southern California's South Bay, which I proudly represent.

Thousands of scientists, engineers, technicians and others in my district have dedicated their lives—first to President Kennedy's goal of sending a person to the moon and back—and then to the myriad of inhabited-flight, satellite and space exploration programs.

Having dedicated such talent and ingenuity, my constituents are all the more heartbroken when the space program suffers such a shocking and sudden loss. Poignant is the fact that one of the astronauts aboard the ill-fated *Challenger* in 1986 was a resident of Hermosa Beach, in my district. Such events make the sky a lot darker.

Shakespeare wrote in "Romeo and Juliet:"

When he shall die take him and cut him out
into stars
and he shall make the face of heaven so fine
that all
the world will be in love with night and pay
no worship
to the garish sun.

The Shuttle *Columbia* astronauts undoubtedly would have urged us to carry on—neither disheartened nor undaunted. To their family, friends and space community colleagues, my staff and I extend our heartfelt condolences. In the same spirit in which they carried out their mission, we rededicate ourselves to the goal of the peaceful exploration of space—to the technological and intellectual challenge it presents—and to the benefits such adventure brings all human kind.

TRIBUTE TO CLINTON PAUL MACOUBRIE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 7, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Clinton Paul Macoubrie, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 120, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Clinton has been very active with his troop, participating in such Scout activities as Camp Geiger and CosmoSphere. Over the 8 years he has been involved in Scouting, he has held numerous leadership positions, serving as patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader and junior assistant scoutmaster. Clinton also has been honored for his numerous Scouting achievements with the award of the Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say Award.

For his Eagle Scout project, Clinton constructed an ornamental garden and flower bed at the main entrance of Simpson Park in Chillicothe, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Clinton Paul Macoubrie for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT HARASSES WEBSITE THAT EXPOSED CORRUPTION

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 7, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, in 2000, the website www.tehelka.com exposed the fundamental corruption of the Indian government. They did a video expose showing high-ranking government officials, including the Defense Minister, as well as the President of the ruling BJP, taking bribes. At that time, it was recording 30 million hits a week. It was quite embarrassing for the Indian government.

On January 6, The Guardian reported that the Indian government has struck back at tehelka.com. It has harassed their contribu-

tors. It sent its agents to investigate [tehelka](http://tehelka.com), searching its offices and harassing its workers. The website has had to reduce the staff from 120 people to four. All the office furniture has been sold and the site is scraping for money. Clearly the government has set out to destroy tehelka.com, and it appears to be succeeding. Meanwhile, the corrupt officials they exposed are still in their posts.

This shows that India is intolerant of free speech and free journalism. It reminds me of the old joke; "You have every right to your own opinion as long as it agrees with mine." That's the state of free speech and the free press in India. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are cornerstones of a democracy, along with the right to self-determination. The government campaign to shut down tehelka.com is another piece of evidence that India, despite its claims, is not a democracy but an authoritarian police state.

Mr. Speaker, why are U.S. taxpayers—your constituents and mine—being asked to pay taxes to support this kind of radical, fundamentalist tyranny? We should stop our aid to India until real freedom exists there, including the right of a free press, the right to freely practice any religion a person chooses without the threat of being killed by the government and without anti-conversion laws, and the right of all the peoples of the subcontinent to decide their futures in a free and fair vote. We should work for self-determination, which is a basic right, by promoting a plebiscite on the question of independence in Christian Nagaland, Muslim Kashmir, the Sikh homeland of Punjab, Khalistan, and wherever else it is sought. And we should demand the release of all political prisoners in India and an end to its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism. America is a free country. We seek freedom not just for ourselves, but for all people of the world. These measures will help secure the blessings of liberty to all the people of the world's most troubled region and allow them to enjoy the glow of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I am inserting the Guardian article on the [tehelka](http://tehelka.com) situation into the RECORD at this time.

[From the Guardian, Jan. 6, 2003]

WEBSITE PAYS PRICE FOR INDIAN BRIBERY EXPOSE

(By Luke Harding)

Tarun Tejpal is sitting amid the ruins of his office. There is not much left—a few dusty chairs, three computers and a forlorn air-conditioning unit. "We have sold virtually every thing. I've even flogged the air conditioner," he says dolefully.

Twenty months ago Tejpal, editor in chief of tehelka.com, an investigative website, was the most feted journalist in India. He had just broken one of the biggest stories in the country's history—an exposé of corruption at the highest levels of government.

His reporters, posing as arms salesmen, had bribed their way into the home of the defence minister, George Fernandes, and handed over £3,000 to one of the minister's colleagues. The journalists found many other people prepared to take money—senior army officers, bureaucrats, even the president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata party, who was filmed shovelling the cash into his desk.

The scandal was deeply embarrassing for the BJP prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Mr. Vajpayee sacked Mr. Fernandes and ordered a commission of inquiry.

The scandal promoted a mood of national catharsis, and congratulations poured in

from ordinary Indians tired of official corruption. Tehelka, which had only been launched in June 2000, was receiving 30 million hits a week. But the glory did not last.

"I had expected a battle. But we had not anticipated its scale," Tejpal said yesterday. "The propaganda was started the next day."

Nearly two years later, he has been forced to lay off all but four of his 120 staff. He has got deeply into debt, sold the office furniture and scrounged money from friends. "They drop by for dinner and leave a cheque behind."

The website, which once boasted sites on news, literature, sport and erotica, is "virtually defunct". George Fernandes, meanwhile, is again the defence minister.

The saga is a depressing example of how the Kafkaesque weight of government can be used to crush those who challenge its methods.

In the aftermath of the scandal, the Hindu nationalist-led government "unleashed" the inland revenue, the enforcement directorate and the intelligence bureau, India's answer to M15, on Tehelka's office in suburban south Delhi.

They did not find anything. Frustrated, the officials started tearing apart the website's investors. Tehelka's financial backer, Shanker Sharma, was thrown in jail without charge. Detectives also held Aniruddha Bahal, the reporter who carried out the exposé, and a colleague, Kumar Badal. Badal is still in prison.

"It got to the stage that I used to count the number of booze bottles in my house to make sure there wasn't one more than the legal quota," Tejpal recalls.

The government commission set up to investigate Operation West-End, Tehelka's sting, meanwhile, started behaving very strangely. "The commission didn't cross-examine a single person found guilty of corruption. It was astonishing," said Tejpal. Instead, it spent its days rubbing Tehelka's journalistic methods.

The official campaign of vilification against the website has attracted protests from a few of India's prominent liberal commentators, such as the veteran diplomat Kuldip Nayar and the respected columnist Tavleen Singh. Tehelka's literary supporters, who include Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and VS Naipaul, Tejpal: Kafkaesque situation have also expressed their outrage. But in general, India's civil society has reacted with awkwardness and embarrassment to the website's plight.

"I read all of Franz Kafka when I was 19 and 20, but I only understand him now," Tejpal wrote in a recent essay in the magazine Seminar. "He accurately intuited that all power is essentially implacable and malign."

The treatment of the web-site's investors has scared away anybody else from pumping money into Tehelka. The company owes £620,000.

Mr. Vajpayee's rightwing government has bounced back from the scandal and is ex-

pected to win the next general election in 2004. Last month, it won a landslide victory in elections in the riot-hit western state of Gujarat after campaigning on a virtually fascist anti-Muslim platform.

The murky world of arms dealing goes on. Tony Blair and his ministers are still trying to persuade the Indian government to buy 77 British-made Hawk jet trainers, but the billion-pound deal remains mysteriously stuck over the price.

Tehelka's exposé was not about "individuals", but about "systemic corruption", Tejpal insists. He admits that his sting operation would have gone down badly with any government, but says that the BJP's response was venomous.

"The degree of pettiness has been extraordinary. They have a crude understanding of power and a lot of that stems from the fact they are in power for the first time. Our struggle is emblematic of a wider issue: can media organizations be killed off when they criticize governments."

The gloomy answer appears to be yes.

Last night Balbir Punj, a leading BJP member of parliament, claimed the government had nothing to do with the website's collapse. "Just because you do a story exposing the government doesn't mean the gods make you immortal," he said. "Many other [internet] portals have closed down. The boom is over."