

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

THE LIBERTY LIST ACT

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, when he presented the 2003 State Department human rights report, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, "We join in solidarity with courageous men and women all over the world who strive to advance human rights and democratic values within their own countries and throughout the international community."

Today, joined by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), I am introducing legislation that will build upon the foundation of the State Department's annual human rights report and the annual report on religious freedom. The Liberty List Act will reinforce the special significance of the central pillars of American foreign policy: freedom, democracy, and human rights.

The Liberty List will be an independent annual report issued by the State Department. It will highlight the work of individuals and organizations, including the media, that promote the development of liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights.

In addition to honoring these individuals and organizations for their important contributions to society, the Liberty List will draw attention to the conditions against which these honorees struggle and will offer some protection for honorees by identifying them to the national community.

A few individuals and groups, such as Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy, are known around the world for their struggle. Yet for every individual who is known to the international community, there are many other heroes who deserve recognition and support as they risk their lives for the improvement of others.

How many of us in this body have heard of Shirin Ebadi before she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her work on behalf of Iran's women and children? There are Aung San Suu Kyis and Shirin Ebadis working in

countless places around the world. Their struggle is our struggle; and they deserve our attention, our admiration, and support.

The Liberty List is fundamentally different from the existing State Department report on international religious freedom and the annual country reports on human rights practices. Current reports focus on the human rights records of national governments. They deal with the imposition of State power. The Liberty List in contrast will spotlight individuals and organizations who are working against that power to build freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights.

For example, a group of courageous women called Women of Zimbabwe Arise have been struggling against the cruelty of the dictatorship of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. Despite facing arrest, rape and force, these brave women have continued a peaceful struggle for a better life for all Zimbabweans.

In Uzbekistan, Ruslan Sharipov, an independent human rights activist and journalist, was sentenced to 5½ years in prison last summer. Sharipov has been a fearless critic of police corruption and human rights abuses in Uzbekistan, a nation whose human rights record has been so dismal, the United States cut off aid earlier this month.

These leaders and others like them who struggle for freedom and democracy around the world deserve recognition for their sacrifices and their struggles. It is too easy to forget that the advancement of human rights, democracy, and religious liberty is the product of individuals and small groups of people who fight to improve the lives of their family, friends, and neighbors.

The Liberty List Act will allow the United States to honor these men and women as they strive to make the world a better, safer place for themselves, their children, and ultimately for all of us.

I urge my colleagues to join as co-sponsors of the Liberty List Act.

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

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

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

There was no objection.

NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the health care crisis that continues to affect Native Americans in this country. For far too long, Native Americans have suffered from a lack of access to quality health services, resulting in increasing amounts of Native Americans that suffer from a wide range of diseases and illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, language from a report commissioned by the Federal Government in 1928, 75 years ago, to study the health status of Native Americans is just as true today as it was then. And the language states, "The health of the Indians as compared with that of the general population is bad. The existing evidence warrants the statement that both the general death rates and the infant mortality rates are high. The prevailing living conditions among the great majority of the Indians are conducive to the development and spread of disease. With comparatively few exceptions, the diet of the Indians is bad. The housing conditions are likewise conducive to bad health. The inadequacy of appropriations has prevented the development of an adequate system of public health administration and medical relief work for the Indians."

Mr. Speaker, this excerpt is from a report commissioned by the Federal Government in 1928, over 75 years ago; but to my disbelief and to the disbelief of millions of Native Americans, not much has changed. Indeed, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights just came out with a draft report studying the current status of the Native American health care system that cites similar trends from a 1928 report. The main reason why there has been such limited success in improving the health status of Native Americans is that the Federal Government has failed miserably to live up to its trust obligation to provide quality health services to American Indians.

Mr. Speaker, the United States Government has a moral and legal obligation to provide for the health of Native Americans. This Federal obligation is the result of Native Americans ceding over 400 million acres of tribal land to

the United States. In return, the Federal Government entered into a number of agreements that promised to provide health care services among many other benefits to Native Americans.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report notes that specifically Native Americans are 770 percent more likely to die from alcoholism, 650 percent more likely to die from tuberculosis, 427 percent more likely to die from diabetes, 280 percent more likely to die from accidents, and 52 percent more likely to die from pneumonia or influenza than the rest of the United States, including white and other minority populations. These statistics are appalling, and I think they are just plain heart breaking.

There are many reasons why this health status of Native Americans continues to be poor, such as social and cultural and structural barriers, but the number one reason why American Indians and Alaska natives suffer disproportionately from a poor health status is because the United States Government refuses to invest the funding needed to improve the health status for Native Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is willing to expend nearly twice the amount of Federal dollars to fund health care services for Federal criminals than it spends on health care services for Native Americans. How does that seem fair?

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Government can and must do better by American Indians and Alaska natives. The first step towards achieving that goal is reauthorizing the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. This legislation is designed to provide parity between Native American health care and the rest of America. The bill enjoys the support of Indian country and bipartisan support in the House and Senate. Yet it languishes in this Congress, awaiting the administration to submit its views.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to press upon the Bush administration to send its statement of administration policy to the Congress so we can pass this important piece of legislation. The longer we take, the longer Native Americans will continue to suffer.

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

(Mr. GINGREY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPUBLICANS GRILL BERGER

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, today we finally have the 9/11 Commission report; but unfortunately on the other side of the aisle, they want to focus on Sandy Berger, a former high-ranking official in the Clinton administration and his transgressions, whatever they might be. Whatever they might be, they did not kill 3,000 people. They did not destroy the World Trade Center. They did not attack the Pentagon, the United States of America, attempted to attack the Capitol and the White House, and he is not planning another attack on the United States of America, unlike al Qaeda, who is still out there planning another attack.

In fact, we have heard from the head of homeland security. It is an imminent threat of attack that will happen sometime between now and the election. And this report points to the fact that we have not taken the steps necessary to utilize and better utilize the resources of the Government of the United States of America to forestall that attack.

Now, remember, a number of us on this side of the aisle called for a Cabinet-level position to coordinate intelligence on the head of the homeland security. The President said no; but after public opinion moved against him, finally they threw out a proposal, just about 2 years ago today.

And 2 years ago today they threw out this proposal, full-blown from the basement of the White House, to create a 270,000-person bureaucracy that would be the Department of Homeland Security; but curiously enough, it did not go to the issues raised in this report, which is it did not touch the intelligence agencies, the CIA, all the intelligence agencies at the Defense Department. They were excluded from Homeland Security. It did not go to the FBI, who failed to coordinate and get the information and share information with the CIA and let people into the country who were on a terrorist watch list, but we let them into the country with visas who were some of the perpetrators of this attack.

They say we need to make major structural changes to address those deficiencies. We have not made them. The Department of Homeland Security did not do it. We created this little weeny thing called the TTIC, Terrorist Threat Information Center, where the various agencies sent over short-term detailees who have no authority, who are supposed to share; but they still do not share. They do not like to share. We have multibillion dollar intelligence agencies, and they are like 3-year-olds. It is mine; it is mine. They do not want to share. Unfortunately, people die when they do not share, and we need to break down that culture.

Now they want to go back and blame Berger and the Clinton administration.

This report says both the Clinton administration, the Clinton administration and the Bush administration are to blame, but that is history. What are we going to do today to adopt the recommendations of this report? Because they say the problems are ongoing. They are ongoing. They are still not sharing. We are still not coordinating. We are not defending ourselves to the best of our ability. They make two recommendations, a national counterterrorism center. Great idea, seems like to me. And a national intelligence director, who would be appointed by the President, based in the White House, with a large staff and would have the authority to make the intelligence agencies and the FBI share. No more 3-year-olds saying mine, mine, you cannot have it, but make them share in a meaningful way.

Put together the pieces of the puzzle. They point out here we had 10 pieces of the puzzle, but we failed to put it together. We cannot fail again, but they are saying we will. This is a non-partisan report, unanimous by Republicans and Democrats alike. Most former elected officials, Governors, Senators, Members of Congress. This should not be politicized.

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Let us not waste time down here talking about Sandy Berger. Maybe he committed a crime, maybe. Maybe he did not. Fine. They are investigating, put him in jail if he committed the crime. That is not the point. The point is there is someone out there planning an attack on the United States today which has nothing to do with what that guy might have done or not done, but it has a lot to do with what we have not done here with the inadequacies of the Homeland Security Department that we adopted 2 years ago that are ongoing.

It is all in this report. I urge people to get a copy, to read it and to demand that their Members of Congress, their Senators take meaningful action in the near future.

CELEBRATING INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I offer my warmest congratulations, to the people of India and the Indian Diaspora as we approach India's Independence Day on August 15.

On that day in 1947, India marched forward into a future of uncertainty. With a struggling economy and high illiteracy and poverty rates, many challenges lay in India's path. Now many of these challenges have been overcome and greater economic opportunities have been created every day for the people of India.

More importantly, India is our ally and a democratic friend. America is