

In fact, during the past year we witnessed continued disturbing trends in the human rights situation in China. Indeed, in last week's release of the State Department's annual Country Reports of Human Rights Practices, referring to China, it notes that, "We saw backsliding on key human rights issues."

Unfortunately, there are far too many examples of their "backsliding." In January, Tibetan activist Lobsang Dhondup (Lob-sang Dun-op) was executed without due process. Arrests and harsh sentencing of democracy activists, critics on the Internet, and labor organizers continued throughout the year. And other than the lone release of Tibetan prisoner of conscience, Phuntsog Nyidrol (Putt-sok Nee-droo), last week—the day after the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices was released—there have been no recent releases of political prisoners. Further, religious adherents continue to be persecuted, and Falun Gong followers remain targeted by the government. Another area of grave concern is Beijing's forced repatriation of North Korean refugees in China and other human rights abuses directed against these refugees, including the trafficking of women and children.

Mr. Speaker, the People's Republic of China must understand that increased bilateral cooperation in other areas, including security, does not in any way negate or lessen obligations to uphold basic human rights. I encourage my colleagues to support H. Res. 530.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 530, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 530, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY OF HOUSE FOR VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE IN IRAN

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the reso-

lution (H. Res. 526) expressing the sympathy of the House of Representatives for the victims of the devastating earthquake that occurred on December 26, 2003, in Bam, Iran.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 526

Whereas approximately 40,000 men, women, and children, including a United States citizen, perished in an earthquake that occurred on December 26, 2003, in Bam, Iran;

Whereas the people of the United States immediately expressed their sincerest sympathy by sending aid to the victims of the earthquake in Iran;

Whereas 90 percent of the 2,000 year-old city of Bam was destroyed;

Whereas the magnificent buildings in Bam belonged not only to the people of Iran, but to our common world heritage;

Whereas President George W. Bush lifted sanctions on Iran temporarily in order to enable United States relief organizations to swiftly send aid to Bam;

Whereas United States aid channeled through United States-based relief organizations and charities has been warmly welcomed by the people of Iran;

Whereas United States aid workers have been received with generosity and great appreciation in Iran;

Whereas the United States generosity has confirmed that the United States holds no ill will toward the people of Iran; and

Whereas the spirit and compassionate conduct of the United States has won it tremendous goodwill among the people of Iran: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the earthquake that occurred on December 26, 2003, in Bam, Iran, and their loved ones;

(2) expresses its heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the courageous work of the United States and international aid personnel saving lives in Iran; and

(3) welcomes the President's decision to issue a general license for donations to non-governmental entities engaged in humanitarian relief activities in response to the earthquake in Iran.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Today I rise in support of House Resolution 526, introduced by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) on February 11, 2004, expressing the sympathy of the House of Representatives for the victims of the devastating earthquake that occurred on December 26, 2003, in Bam, Iran. This resolution is a reflection of the goodwill that emanates

from the people of the United States to the people of Iran during their time of great need and profound sorrow.

On that tragic day, an earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale struck the southeastern area of Iran. During the days that followed, the American people and the rest of the world watched in sympathy as helpless Iranian families tried to put the pieces of their lives back together. With approximately 40,000 people dead, 30,000 people injured, and up to 75,000 people made homeless, the U.S. Government reacted in solidarity with the Iranian people by implementing necessary measures so that millions of dollars in emergency earthquake assistance could be distributed through United States relief organizations.

Immediately, the President directed that a general license be issued to temporarily permit U.S. individuals or nongovernmental organizations to transfer funds to organizations operating in Iran to assist humanitarian aid activities. I commend the administration's handling of this tragic situation and President Bush's message that "We stand ready to help the people of Iran."

Many factors characterize the perceived power and greatness of America throughout the world. However, it is the spirit of our unconditional compassion in times like these that truly resonates in the hearts and minds of the Iranian people and communicates our real hopes and desires for them.

Currently, the people of Iran need their courage and strength to help parallel the efforts by international aid personnel in rebuilding their lives. Children who are orphaned and homeless will need guidance and direction from their elders. Elders who are grieving the loss of their loved ones will need the inspiration of their youth to go on. Through their trials and tribulations, the Iranian people have proved to be a resilient force while never losing hope for the blessings of a new day. I am convinced that through exercising their faith and reconstructing their lives a stronger and empowered community will be unearthed.

I commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) for introducing this meaningful resolution and thank him for his understanding of Iran's needs and challenges. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution and urge its passage.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) for this important resolution.

The suffering of the Iranian people from the Bam earthquake in December is incalculable. As many as 50,000 dead, countless injured. Tragic as well is the destruction of 90 percent of an historic 2,000-year-old city. This is truly a loss to all the world. The resolution appropriately expresses the heartfelt sympathy of the House for the victims of

the earthquake and for their loved ones. It also expresses gratitude for the courageous work of U.S. and international aid personnel and relief workers. It was right for the administration to temporarily lift the sanctions that otherwise would have prevented such humanitarian activities in Iran.

Relief workers in Iran came from the United States and around the world. They were ordinary people like Jim Ricci of St. Paul, Minnesota serving in the Air National Guard. Mr. Ricci, who was on his third tour of duty in the Persian Gulf, was on the last of the military's 11 humanitarian flights to Iran. Relief also came from groups like the American Refugee Committee International, headquartered in Minnesota. The American Refugee Committee helped coordinate several significant relief efforts, while donating medical supplies and nonfood items. This coordinated assistance was critical in providing the most effective aid programs possible.

Everyone in Congress is concerned by the conduct of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly by the hardliners who dominate the regime, support for terrorism, threats against Israel's existence, deceitful pursuit of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, and notorious human rights abuse. This recent stacked-deck election are cases in point. We all share the concerns about the Iranian regime, but we also know it is wrong to blame the Iranian people. I believe the vast majority of Iranian people would yearn for the freedom and the friendship with the U.S. and the world at large.

This resolution recognizes the common humanity of Americans and Iranians. Our common bond of humanity was also acknowledged by the Iranians, who held a spontaneous candlelight vigil on behalf of the victims of September 11, 2001.

The Iranian people should know they have our deepest sympathies for their terrible tragedy. I strongly support this resolution, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for an excellent statement, and I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY).

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman and also the gentlewoman for supporting this resolution. I want to particularly thank the chairman for always responding when it comes to international affairs and making our Congress proud.

Mr. Speaker, we have the support of many great colleagues, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN), the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), just to

mention a few of the cosponsors of this resolution. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for being the prime sponsor and the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) for all his support, again.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 526, which expresses the sympathy of the House of Representatives for the victims of the devastating earthquake that occurred on December 26, 2003, in Bam, Iran.

□ 1515

More than 40,000 men, women and children, including an American, were killed when the ancient city of Bam was struck by a massive earthquake. While the final toll is still being tallied, the loss of life ranks this as one of the worst human tragedies in recent memory. Aside from the unspeakable humanitarian disaster, which has been pointed out on the floor today, more than 90 percent of the 2,000-year-old city was destroyed. Indeed, in this destruction was the magnificent citadel of Bam.

Located in southeastern Iran, 200 kilometers south of Kerman, Bam was made mostly of mud bricks, clay, straw, and the trunks of palm trees. The more modern part of the city was originally founded during the Sassanian Period, around the third century A.D.

During this time of suffering, the American people immediately showed their sympathy and offered their help. Rescue teams and aid personnel from all over our Nation jumped into action as though this tragedy hit their own next-door neighbors.

President Bush was among those who acted with great speed. He temporarily lifted sanctions on Iran only 5 days after the earthquake. The President's actions enabled American relief organizations to swiftly send aid to the people of Bam. It is not inconsequential that American help was warmly received and welcomed by the Iranian people. Our workers were received with generosity and great appreciation by the Iranian people.

Teams from the Mercy Corps were among the first to arrive and worked hand in hand with local aid organizations. American and Iranian personnel rescued people from the rubble and brought much-needed supplies to very weary survivors.

Our brave aid workers dispelled misconceptions about America that pervade the Middle East. They showed the real essence of our great Nation and of our people, one of generosity and one of compassion.

Mr. Speaker, the leadership that President Bush has shown in exempting humanitarian aid from U.S. sanctions on Iran will go a long way towards improving understanding by the people of Iran, the Mideast and America towards each other. The President's actions have shown that two societies can work with each other in a time of great need and in a time of great trauma and strife.

I ask that the Congress join me in expressing our heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the Bam earthquake and our gratitude and appreciation for the courageous work of the American aid personnel.

By passing this important resolution, we will commend President Bush's decision and this Congress' support to temporarily make aid organizations exempt from the sanctions on Iran, and we will continue to show that the compassion and generosity that has kept America the world's leader in humanitarian missions still continue to this day.

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

Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to express my sincere support for this resolution. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) for bringing this forward, and our distinguished chairman on the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), for making sure for the people of Iran that we stand with them during this terrible loss of life.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a heartfelt supporter of H. Res. 526 which expresses the sympathy of the House of Representatives for the victims of the devastating earthquake that occurred in Bam, Iran on December 26, 2003. It is important that we as a body stand united on issues that may not directly affect us but that are nonetheless very important. I am proud to say that members of this body and this nation as a whole stood up to support our brothers and sisters in Iran when this great tragedy occurred.

The numbers attributed to this earthquake are staggering. In a city with 100,000 residents at the time of the earthquake approximately 40,000 men, women, and children lost their lives due to this disaster. I have heard from many constituents in my district who told me they lost family members in Iran. I was told of some families who even lost as many as thirty-three members of their family. I'm sure this kind of heartbreak was felt throughout the entire Iranian American community.

While the human toll was immense, the sheer destruction of the city of Bam was truly tragic. It is estimated that a full ninety percent of the city was completely destroyed. Unfortunately the historical value of a 2,000 year old city is lost to us forever.

We must take more than sadness away from this tragedy; we must now focus our efforts on how to prevent the deadly effects of future disasters. The amount of casualties in this disaster were far too high. To demonstrate the effect of the quake on this region—as compared to other regions, an earthquake of 6.2 magnitude in Los Angeles on December 23 left a casualty of only two persons as compared to approximately 40,000 in Iran. The number of casualties was so high particularly because of the quality of the local building material consisting of mudbricks, and construction techniques using little reinforcements. We must study ways to protect people throughout the world from being involved in a tragedy like the one in Bam. This is why I have joined the Iran Earthquake Task Force initiated by the Iranian Medical Relief Foundation (IMRF). I

urge all Members of this body to follow suit and pursue actions that will facilitate greater protection from the effects of natural disasters.

We must show the world that we stand with them when tragic natural disasters occur. I was proud to see that so many U.S. based charities and organizations joined the world community to care for those affected by the earthquake. I commend the efforts of so many who took their time and effort to search through the rubble. Their heroic efforts may not have been able to reverse the tragic disaster, but the world realized that we as a nation stand by our humanitarian obligations. I hope we will continue this proud practice whenever events such as this occur.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 526.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. HYDE. 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.

DESIGNATION OF AND TERMINATION OF DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES AS BENEFICIARY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 108-166)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"), I am writing to inform you of my intent to designate Algeria as a beneficiary developing country and to terminate the designation of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bahrain, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia as beneficiary developing countries for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

I have considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the Act. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to Algeria. I have also determined that Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and Bahrain have become "high income" countries, and I there-

fore terminate their designation as beneficiary developing countries effective January 1, 2006. Furthermore, consistent with the Act's prohibition on designation of European Union member states as beneficiary developing countries, I am terminating such designation for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia when they become European Union member states.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 1, 2004.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3752, COMMERCIAL SPACE LAUNCH AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2004

Mr. REYNOLDS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-430) on the resolution (H. Res. 546) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3752) to promote the development of the emerging commercial human space flight industry, to extend the liability indemnification regime for the commercial space transportation industry, to authorize appropriations for the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on two motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 3769, by the yeas and nays;

House Resolution 526, by the yeas and nays.

House Resolution 530 will be voted on tomorrow.

Each electronic vote today will be conducted as a 15-minute vote.

BEN ATCHLEY POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of sus-

pending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3769.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3769, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 383, nays 0, not voting 50, as follows:

[Roll No. 32]

YEAS—383

Abercrombie	Davis (FL)	Houghton
Ackerman	Davis (IL)	Hoyer
Akin	Davis (TN)	Hulshof
Alexander	Davis, Jo Ann	Hunter
Allen	Davis, Tom	Hyde
Andrews	Deal (GA)	Inslee
Bachus	DeFazio	Isakson
Baird	DeGette	Israel
Baker	Delahunt	Issa
Baldwin	DeLauro	Istook
Ballance	DeLay	Jackson (IL)
Ballenger	Deutsch	Jackson-Lee
Barrett (SC)	Diaz-Balart, L.	(TX)
Bartlett (MD)	Diaz-Balart, M.	Jefferson
Barton (TX)	Dicks	Jenkins
Bass	Dingell	John
Beauprez	Doolittle	Johnson (IL)
Becerra	Doyle	Johnson, E. B.
Bereuter	Dreier	Johnson, Sam
Berkley	Duncan	Jones (NC)
Berman	Dunn	Kanjorski
Biggert	Edwards	Kaptur
Bilirakis	Ehlers	Keller
Bishop (GA)	Emanuel	Kelly
Bishop (NY)	Emerson	Kennedy (MN)
Bishop (UT)	Engel	Kennedy (RI)
Blackburn	English	Kildee
Blumenauer	Eshoo	Killpatrick
Blunt	Etheridge	Kind
Boehlert	Evans	King (NY)
Boehner	Everett	Kirk
Bonilla	Farr	Klecza
Bonner	Fattah	Kline
Bono	Feeney	Knollenberg
Boozman	Ferguson	Kolbe
Boswell	Flake	LaHood
Boucher	Foley	Lampson
Boyd	Forbes	Langevin
Bradley (NH)	Ford	Larsen (WA)
Brady (PA)	Fossella	Larson (CT)
Brady (TX)	Frank (MA)	Latham
Brown (OH)	Franks (AZ)	LaTourette
Brown (SC)	Frelinghuysen	Leach
Brown, Corrine	Frost	Lee
Brown-Waite,	Gallegly	Levin
Ginny	Garrett (NJ)	Lewis (CA)
Burgess	Gephardt	Lewis (GA)
Burns	Gerlach	Lewis (KY)
Burr	Gibbons	Linder
Buyer	Gillmor	Lipinski
Camp	Gingrey	LoBiondo
Cannon	Gonzalez	Lofgren
Cantor	Goode	Lowe
Capito	Goodlatte	Lucas (KY)
Capps	Gordon	Lucas (OK)
Capuano	Goss	Lynch
Cardin	Granger	Majette
Cardoza	Graves	Maloney
Carson (IN)	Green (TX)	Manzullo
Carson (OK)	Green (WI)	Marshall
Carter	Greenwood	Matheson
Case	Grijalva	Matsui
Chabot	Gutknecht	McCarthy (MO)
Chandler	Hall	McCarthy (NY)
Clay	Harris	McCollum
Clyburn	Hart	McCrery
Coble	Hastings (FL)	McDermott
Cole	Hastings (WA)	McGovern
Collins	Hayes	McHugh
Conyers	Hayworth	McInnis
Cooper	Hefley	McIntyre
Costello	Hensarling	McKeon
Cox	Hill	McNulty
Cramer	Hinchey	Meehan
Crane	Hobson	Meek (FL)
Crenshaw	Hoefel	Menendez
Crowley	Hoekstra	Mica
Cubin	Holden	Michaud
Culberson	Holt	Miller (FL)
Cunningham	Honda	Miller (MI)
Davis (AL)	Hostettler	Miller (NC)