

Washington Treaty of 1949 signifying their willingness to join NATO. Since its independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1992, Croatia has made substantial progress in attaining the necessary level of military and political reforms required for receiving an invitation to begin accession negotiations with NATO. I am pleased to say that just this past October, the European Union began negotiations with Croatia based on its assessment that Croatia met the political and economic criteria for candidacy in the European Union.

Croatia is a strong ally of the United States in the War Against Terrorism. Croatia has sent troops to Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force and has endorsed and is participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative to prevent the flow of weapons of mass destruction to that region.

Stability in South Central Europe is a very high priority, and Croatia has become a valuable, constructive partner in this delicate region. Given the potential for future regional conflicts, NATO should want to take advantage of the greater contribution that Croatia would make toward peace and stability as a full member of NATO.

The resolution before us today expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that Croatia has made significant progress since its independence in strengthening its democratic institutions and its respect for human rights and the rule of law. In addition, it commends the Republic of Croatia for the progress it has made since the end of its war for independence. Further, the Resolution commends Croatia for its progress in meeting the political, economic, military, and other requirements of NATO's Membership Action Plan, for its contribution to the global war on terrorism, and for its constructive participation in the U.S.-Adriatic Charter.

In closing Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again thank the International Relations Committee for reporting this resolution and urge my colleagues to support this resolution and approve Croatia's accession into NATO.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 529, recommending Croatia's integration into NATO. As a co-chair of the Congressional Croatian Caucus I am pleased to support this bipartisan resolution. The success to date of H. Res. 529 is due to the vision and resolve shown by members of the Caucus to effectively drive this important measure forward, in addition to the hard work of the National Federation of Croatian Americans, NFCA, and the Croatian Embassy.

The success of H. Res. 529 is yet another testimony that ongoing reforms by the Croatian Government are reaping significant rewards that are of immense benefit both domestically and internationally. This is crucial in paving the country's path towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

Voting in favor for this cause will send a very strong message that the significant progress Croatia has made to date has not gone unrecognized in Congress. More importantly, the full adoption of H. Res. 529 will officially sanction and invigorate mutually complementary U.S./Croatian strategic interests towards trans-Atlantic integration issues.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the mo-

tion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 529, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

URGING RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO WITHDRAW LEGISLATION RESTRICTING ESTABLISHMENT OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 312) urging the Government of the Russian Federation to withdraw or modify proposed legislation that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations, and activities of domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations in the Russian Federation, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 312

Whereas Russian Federation President Putin has stated that "modern Russia's greatest achievement is the democratic process (and) the achievements of our civil society";

Whereas the unobstructed establishment and free and autonomous operations and activities of nongovernmental organizations and a robust civil society free from excessive government control are central and indispensable elements of a democratic society;

Whereas the free and autonomous operations of nongovernmental organizations in any society necessarily encompass activities, including political activities, that may be contrary to government policies;

Whereas domestic, international, and foreign nongovernmental organizations are crucial in assisting the Russian Federation and the Russian people in tackling the many challenges they face, including in such areas as education, infectious diseases, and the establishment of a flourishing democracy;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has proposed legislation that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations, and activities of domestic, international, and foreign nongovernmental organizations in the Russian Federation, including erecting unprecedented barriers to foreign assistance;

Whereas the State Duma of the Russian Federation is considering the first draft of such legislation;

Whereas the restrictions in the first draft of this legislation would impose disabling restraints on the establishment, operations, and activities of nongovernmental organizations and on civil society throughout the Russian Federation, regardless of the stated intent of the Government of the Russian Federation;

Whereas the stated concerns of the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the use of nongovernmental organizations by foreign interests and intelligence agencies to undermine the Government of the Russian Federation and the security of the Russian Federation as a whole can be fully addressed without imposing disabling restraints on nongovernmental organizations and on civil society;

Whereas there is active debate underway in the Russian Federation over concerns regarding such restrictions on nongovernmental organizations;

Whereas the State Duma and the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly play a central role in the system of checks and balances that are prerequisites for a democracy;

Whereas the first draft of the proposed legislation has already passed its first reading in the State Duma;

Whereas President Putin has indicated his desire for changes in the first draft that would "correspond more closely to the principles according to which civil society functions"; and

Whereas Russia's destiny and the interests of her people lie in her assumption of her rightful place as a full and equal member of the international community of democracies; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) urges the Government of the Russian Federation to withdraw the first draft of the proposed legislation that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations, and activities of domestic, international, and foreign nongovernmental organizations in the Russian Federation, or to modify the proposed legislation to entirely remove these restrictions; and

(2) in the event that the first draft of the proposed legislation is not withdrawn, urges the State Duma and the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly to modify the legislation to ensure the unobstructed establishment and free and autonomous operations and activities of such nongovernmental organizations in accordance with the practices universally adopted by democracies, including the provisions regarding foreign assistance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 312, introduced by the very distinguished chairman of our full committee, Chairman HENRY HYDE, urging the Government of the Russian Federation to withdraw or modify proposed legislation that would have a chilling effect on civil society in that country.

Amazingly, as Russia prepares to assume leadership of the G-8 and the Council of Europe next month, Russian lawmakers have been working feverishly to subordinate pockets of independent thought and action to state control. The focus of recent days has been on nongovernmental organizations, especially those working in the fields of human rights and democracy. In essence, the provisions would require all nongovernmental organizations to re-register with a government commission empowered with invasive powers to monitor NGO activities.

The Duma has passed amendments to the Law on Public Associations by a vote of 370-18, but the measure must go through further readings scheduled for next week and signed then by Vladimir Putin before it becomes law. In mid-

November, members of the Helsinki Commission, which I am cochair of, sent a letter which I will make a part of the RECORD to the Speaker of the Russian Duma, Boris Gryzlov, urging the Duma to reject the pending proposed amendments, purportedly crafted with input from Putin's advisers.

The move against NGOs, Mr. Speaker, is not occurring in a vacuum, but is calculated to move in a lead-up to the critical parliamentary elections that are scheduled for 2007 and a presidential contest the following year to replace Putin, who is prevented from seeking another term.

In response to expressions of concern from the United States and others, some modifications to the draft are apparently being considered, though it is still unclear the extent to which the amendments will be revamped. We will not have a full picture until next week. By then, it may be too late to change before landing on President Putin's desk. Thus, consideration of Chairman HYDE's measure comes at a critical time for the House to be on record opposing the burdensome compulsory registration requirements being proposed.

As originally drafted, the proposed amendments will require Russia's approximately 450,000 NGOs to re-register with a government commission under a complicated registration procedure and would expand the ability of the government to deny registration permission.

Financial auditing, a tactic currently used to harass opposition NGOs, would also become more intrusive under the bill's provisions. No doubt there would be negative impact on foreign-based organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and the Carnegie Foundation, while increasing controls over NGOs of Russian origin.

Mr. Speaker, whatever package of amendments to the legal framework for NGOs in Russia finally emerges, they must be evaluated in light of that country's commitments as a member of the Council of Europe and participating state in the Organization For Security and Cooperation in Europe. Do the proposals under consideration in the Russian Duma fully respect the right of individuals to freedom of association, or do they undermine that fundamental freedom under the guise of fighting corruption and terrorism? That is the key question. This resolution gets us on record, and hopefully it will have some sway with the Duma and with President Putin.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter I referred to earlier to the Chairman of the Russian State Duma, Boris Gryzlov.

COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC, November 18, 2005.

Hon. BORIS GRYZLOV,
Chairman, Russian State Duma, 2 Okhotny
Ryad, Moscow, Russian Federation.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As Members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, we urge you to seek rejection of the proposed amendments to the Law on Public Associations pending in the State Duma that

would have a chilling effect on civil society in the Russian Federation, including the functioning of non-governmental organizations focused on human rights and democracy.

These proposals would seriously undermine the rights of individuals in Russia to freedom of association, subordinating this fundamental right to excessive and intrusive control by organs of the state. Besides apparent conflicts with provisions of the Russian Constitution, these burdensome compulsory registration requirements run counter to numerous international commitments concerning the right of individuals to form, join and participate effectively in nongovernmental organizations, including longstanding OSCE provisions. If adopted, these proposals would jeopardize the very existence of a number of well-established human rights NGOs, cripple the non-governmental sector and undermine effective public oversight of governmental activity and policy. History has shown that a vibrant civil society and economically prosperous nation cannot long withstand such intellectual stagnation.

Under the guise of fighting corruption and terrorism, the amendments would in fact deal a potential death blow to Russian civil society, reversing important advances made since the institution of glasnost. Enhanced enforcement of the existing criminal code should suffice to address any genuine security concerns. Indeed, the pending proposals reflect an attitude toward independent political activity that is reminiscent of Russia's Soviet past. Adoption of these amendments would send a particularly negative signal at a time when Russia is preparing to assume leadership of the G-8 and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Chairman, we know that you and your colleagues aspire to a democratic and prosperous Russia, and trust that you recognize that further restrictions on civil society would lead Russia away from that goal.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
M.C.,
Co-Chairman.
SAM BROWNBACK, U.S.S.,
Chairman.
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, M.C.,
Ranking Member.
FRANK R. WOLF, M.C.,
Commissioner.
JOSEPH R. PITTS, M.C.,
Commissioner.
MIKE PENCE, M.C.,
Commissioner.
CHRISTOPHER J. DODD,
U.S.S.,
Ranking Member.
RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD,
U.S.S.,
Commissioner.
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
U.S.S.,
Commissioner.
MIKE MCINTYRE, M.C.,
Commissioner.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my good friend, the chairman of the International Relations Committee, HENRY HYDE, for introducing this resolution of which I am the principal Democratic cosponsor. I also want to thank my friend from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his strong support.

Mr. Speaker, under Vladimir Putin, Russia is marching back towards its totalitarian past. It has rejected democratic institutions, undermined democratic procedures, and reversed the progress made as the Cold War came to an end. Not long ago, the world looked with hope and optimism towards the emergence of a truly democratic Russia, but then Putin came to power. Under Putin, the Kremlin first focused its attention on stifling independent television, restricting open, free and unrestricted news coverage. That was followed by a heavy-handed effort to intimidate the business community.

The leaders of Russia's largest, most successful and most transparent private corporation, Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev, were arrested on trumped-up charges, held in prison for many months, put in a cage and tried before a kangaroo court. Then they were sentenced to draconian prison terms and are serving as we meet here tonight in Siberia. Shades of the gulag.

The latest and in many ways one of the most insidious steps is an effort that will take Russia back to the era of the czars and the commissars: legislation was recently introduced in the Russian Duma that would severely restrict the establishment or the activities of domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations within Russia.

Mr. Speaker, in countries around the globe, civil society is promoted by nongovernmental organizations, some domestic and some international. They foster the values and the virtues that are key to any modern society, limited government, democratic elections and the rule of law and respect for human rights. They promote free association and freedom of expression. They encourage the conditions that are essential for open market-oriented economies. They promote assistance for the poor, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled. Such organizations foster political pluralism, individual liberty, and the rights of individual men and women.

□ 2215

Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are considering today was introduced by my good friend, the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE). I was pleased to join him as the principal Democratic sponsor.

Our resolution is timely, and it is important. It urges the Russian government to withdraw proposed legislation that would restrict and limit the activities of nongovernmental organizations in Russia. It is in Russia's own interest to have a vigorous and energetic civil society to contribute to the richness and to the diversity of the country.

Mr. Speaker, Russia would like to be treated and to be seen as a leading democratic nation. It wants to be considered a member of the group of industrialized democracies. Putin wants to

host the next round of meetings of the G-7 in St. Petersburg, but this is an organization to which Russia, marching towards authoritarianism, does not properly belong.

Russia is not an advanced industrial democracy. It is a resource-rich country whose economy is kept afloat by crude oil and natural gas revenues. As the actions of the Putin government continue to demonstrate, it certainly is not a democracy.

Mr. Speaker, our resolution is a warning to the government of Russia that it is taking a dangerous and counter-productive course, a course that is destructive of the goals that the government and its people seek. As the text of our resolution notes, "Russia's destiny and the interests of her people lie in her assumption of her rightful place as a full and equal member of the Western community of democracies," but the proposed NGO legislation is "incompatible with membership in that community."

Let me also add, Mr. Speaker, that just recently we were profoundly disturbed that Russia agreed to sell to Iran, clearly the number one terrorist-supporting nation on the face of this planet, sophisticated air defense equipment. This is clearly not the action of a democratic and pro-Western society.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his eloquence on this matter.

I have been to Russia many, many times, and I believe it is always in the interest of peace between our two countries for us to keep an active dialogue, even on matters that are very difficult.

H. Con. Res. 312 urges the government of the Russian Federation to withdraw or modify proposed legislation that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations and activities of foreign NGO's in the Russian Federation.

I would agree that there are many NGO's that do great work in civil society and peace and human rights, in workers rights, in the environment and in health care, but there are also some bad apples in the bunch, and we cannot ignore that. If the Russian government were, for example, to be looking at the role that the National Endowment for Democracy played in the April 2002 coup of President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, the Russian government would have good reason to oppose foreign NGO's in their country.

The State Department's Richard Boucher acknowledged that the Bush administration provided "funding to groups that promote democracy and strengthen civil society in Venezuela and around the globe." He further stated that the funds are "for the benefit of democracy, not to support any particular political faction."

According to the New York Times, the organization "funneled more than \$877,000 into Venezuelan opposition groups in the weeks and months before the recently aborted coup attempt." More than \$150,000 went to "a Venezuelan labor union that led the opposition work stoppages and worked closely with Pedro Carmona Estanga, the businessman who led the coup." That is from the New York Times.

The National Endowment for Democracy, over the years, has actively worked to destabilize governments in Central America and Eastern Europe. According to a book by former State Department employee, William Blum, entitled, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, the NED "played an important role in the Iran-Contra affair of the 1980s, funding key components of Oliver North's shadowy Project Democracy network, which privatized U.S. foreign policy, waged war, ran arms and drugs, and engaged in other equally charming activities."

So we in the United States have legitimate complaints about a variety of conditions in the Russian Federation and in other countries around the world, but I question whether we have the right to encourage the channeling of funds into NGOs who work as instruments of U.S. foreign policy. I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to present this.

I have been to Russia many, many times and I believe it is always in the interest of peace between our two countries for us to keep on active dialogue.

H. Con. Res. 312, which urges the Government of the Russian Federation to withdraw or modify proposed legislation that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations, and activities of domestic and foreign NGOs in the Russian Federation.

While there are many NGOs that do great work in civil society, in working rights, in peace, in environment, in human rights, in health care, there are some bad apples of the bunch and we cannot ignore that. If the Russian government were to look at, for example, the role that the National Endowment for Democracy played in the April 2002 coup of President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, the Russian government would have good reason to oppose foreign NGOs in their country.

The State Department's Richard Boucher acknowledged that the Bush administration provided "funding to groups that promote democracy and strengthen civil society in Venezuela and around the globe." He further stated that the funds "are for the benefit of democracy, not to support any particular political faction."

According to the New York Times, the organization "funneled more than \$877,000 into Venezuela opposition groups in the weeks and months before the recently aborted coup attempt." More than \$150,000 went to "a Venezuelan labor union that led the opposition work stoppages and worked closely with Pedro Carmona Estanga, the businessman who led the coup."

The National Endowment for Democracy, over the years, has actively worked to destabilize governments in Central America and Eastern Europe.

According to a book by former State Department employee, William Blum, entitled *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower* the NED "played an important role in the Iran-Contra affair of the 1980s, funding key components of Oliver North's shadowy Project Democracy network, which privatized U.S. foreign policy, waged war, ran arms and drugs, and engaged in other equally charming activities."

So we in the United States have legitimate complaints about a variety of conditions in the Russian Federation and in other countries around the world, we do not have the right to channel funds into NGOs who work as instruments of U.S. foreign policy.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time, I strongly urge all of my colleagues to vote for this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), this is a Hyde-Lantos bill, for his leadership on this bill.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support and as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 312, to urge the Russian Government to alter or withdraw the proposed legislation affecting nongovernmental organizations, NGO's, operating in Russia. The Russian legislation would severely restrict foreign assistance to NGO's in Russia and would also force existing Russian NGO's to reregister with the government.

The draft Russian bill raises a number of serious concerns, and may violate Russia's commitments to the OSCE. Several hundred thousand nongovernmental organizations currently operate in Russia, representing all sections of society. By forcing all NGO's to reregister, the Russian Government will have the power to subjectively deny registration to some organizations and limit the activities of others. This legislation strikes at the heart of basic democratic freedoms: the right of individuals to freely associate and participate in society. Some of the provisions in this bill would also increase the oversight of financial auditing of NGO's, which the government could use to place restrictions on opposition groups.

Just months ago, the Russian President Vladimir Putin outlawed any foreign funding of political parties in Russia. This legislation goes further and affects human rights groups and other NGO's who are only seeking to improve the nature of Russia's civil society. Foreign organizations would be required to register as legal Russian entities, seriously hindering their attempts to promote democracy and accountability in Russia. Many organizations which have conducted prominent and important human rights work in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union would see their activities curtailed under the Russian bill, which may lead to the partial or complete closure of critical offices inside of Russia.

Last month, the State Duma in Russia approved the first reading of the bill by 370 to 18 votes, despite more than 1,000 NGO's appealing for the Duma to reject it. This Friday, December 16, the Duma has scheduled a second reading of the bill. As the ranking member of the Helsinki Commission, I have worked closely with Commission Cochairman CHRIS SMITH in opposition to this bill. The Helsinki Commission sent a bipartisan, bicameral letter

in November—which I cosigned—to the Chairman of the Russian State Duma urging the rejection of this legislation. In particular, the letter emphasized the importance that nongovernmental organizations play in civil society and in fulfilling Russia's obligations as a democratic state and member of the international community.

Russia has made great strides since the end of the Cold War. There were serious concerns that Russia would not have a smooth transition to a fully functioning democracy. I am gravely concerned about recent developments in Russia. President Putin himself has said that "modern Russia's greatest achievement is the democratic process (and) the achievements of civil society". I therefore call on President Putin and the State Duma to be true to their word and reject this bill, to reaffirm their commitment to the democratic process and civil society.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT). 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 concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 312, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. LANTOS. 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. Con. Res. 312.

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

There was no objection.

CONDEMNING THE LAOGAI

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 294) calling on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 294

Whereas the Laogai is a vast prison labor system in the People's Republic of China and consists of a network of more than 1,000 prisons, camps, and mental institutions in which detainees must work at factories, farms, mines, and other facilities;

Whereas the two major aims of the Laogai are to generate economic resources for the

state through free labor and to "reform criminals" through hard labor and political indoctrination;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China relies on the Laogai as a tool for political suppression of pro-democracy activists, Internet dissidents, labor activists, and religious and spiritual believers, including Han Chinese, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians, and "house church" Christians;

Whereas, while the Soviet Gulags no longer exist, the Chinese Laogai is still fully operational, subjecting most of its three million prisoners to forced labor by threatening torture;

Whereas fifty million people have suffered as prisoners in the Laogai since its inception;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are deprived of religious freedom and forced to give up their political views in order to become a "new socialist person" and uphold communism and the Chinese Communist Party;

Whereas in recent years, more than 100,000 religious believers have been unjustly and illegally imprisoned in one Laogai camp alone, where they have been beaten, tortured, and often killed;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are forced to work long hours in appalling conditions, including mining asbestos and other toxic chemicals with no protective clothing, tanning hides while standing naked in vats filled with chemicals used for softening of animal skins, and working in mining facilities where explosions and other accidents are a common occurrence;

Whereas it is documented that China's national policy since 1984 has been to extract organs from executed prisoners without prior consent of the prisoners or their family members, setting China apart from every other country in the world;

Whereas there are more than 1,000 instances in which organs are harvested from executed Chinese prisoners every year;

Whereas both Chinese and foreign patients from around the world receive organs transplanted from executed Chinese prisoners;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are required to make confessions of their wrongdoings, which include political and religious views that the Chinese Communist Party wishes to suppress;

Whereas Chinese citizens are not guaranteed due process of law nor even a right to trial;

Whereas many individuals are often convicted and sentenced with no trial at all, or they are convicted with "evidence" extracted through torture;

Whereas in one part of the Laogai system known as the Laojiao, or reeducation-through-labor, Chinese citizens can be detained for up to three years without any judicial review or formal appearance in the judicial system;

Whereas goods produced by forced labor in the Laogai system continue to be exported to the United States and the world;

Whereas the Chinese Government has continuously encouraged the export of goods produced through the Laogai prison system and relies on forced labor as an integral part of its economy;

Whereas forced labor and torture practices carried out in the Laogai violate international laws, standards, and treaties to which China is party, including the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and

Whereas China, a member State of the International Labor Organization, also violates many agreements regarding labor conditions and the rights of workers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) calls on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government;

(2) calls on the Government of the United States to fully implement United States laws that prohibit the importation of forced labor products made in the Laogai;

(3) calls on the Government of the United States to take actions to review the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Prison Labor in 1992 and the Statement of Cooperation in 1994 with respect to the Laogai;

(4) will undertake efforts to join with the European Parliament to urge the introduction of a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemning the Laogai and the human rights situation in China;

(5) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the Laogai, including the total number of Laogai camps and prisoners throughout China, the exact locations of the camps, and the business production activities taking place at the camps;

(6) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the number of executions of prisoners at the camps that are carried out every year, and the extent of the harvesting and transplantation of organs of executed prisoners;

(7) urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to allow unrestricted visits by international human rights inspectors, including United Nations inspectors, to Laogai camps throughout China; and

(8) urges the Congressional-Executive Commission on China to continue to investigate the Laogai system in China and to make recommendations for United States policy that will help protect human rights for Chinese citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution which calls for the condemnation of the vast Laogai labor system of more than 1,000 prisons, camps and mental institutions maintained by the government of the People's Republic of China, and of the use of forced labor as an integral part of China's economy.

I would note parenthetically that, back in 1992, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and I gained access to one of those prison camps, Beijing Prison Camp Number 1, a horrible place where 40 Tiananmen Square activists were being punished for their peaceful activities. Hundreds of others were also imprisoned there for political, religious and other alleged crimes. The place reeked of cruelty and sadness and was a nightmarish insight into the dark soul of the Chinese Communist dictatorship. Today, sadly, the Laogai continues its cruelty unabated.

Indeed, the continued operation of this network of Stalinist camps within