

Now, let me ask each Member of Congress, is there any connection between high oil prices and the growing monopolies within the energy industry? The fewer oil companies we have it seems the prices keep going up and up.

Now, what are the oil companies afraid of? They are afraid of alternative energy. They are afraid of energy from the sun, from wind, geothermal, biomass, green hydrogen, because the oil companies know that it will cut into their profits. So, naturally, the oil companies want to keep on drilling. They so badly want to keep on drilling that they are going to drill in Alaska, or in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, if the Defense appropriations bill passes.

Every American should know that that is not going to mean lower oil prices; it is going to mean higher oil prices because it will once again show the domination of the oil companies on our political process.

We could talk about our economy, and we should. High oil prices are bad for our economy. Is that not a message that we should be going towards alternative energy? Reliance on nonrenewable resources inevitably will lead to war. Is that not an argument for renewable energy? Is that not an argument for breaking up the energy monopolies? Oil companies do not want alternative energy. They want us to keep on drilling. They want to grab access to oil whether it is in Iraq or ANWR or anywhere else.

□ 1400

Wherever we are depending on more oil, they get more profits.

This is a time for us to take a direction towards conservation. In that way I consider myself a conservative. Waste not, want not. It is time for us to take a stand for protection of the environment. The administration has spurned any efforts to cause America to join with the world community in signing the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty, and at the same time we see billions of dollars wasted because of the tremendous suffering that has been caused in our gulf coast region, but I would say that we have wasted the gulf coast region because we did not have an alternative energy policy years ago. We act like there is no connection between climate change and our energy consumption patterns.

Wake up, America. Understand that all these things are interrelated, that we are interdependent and interconnected, that the choices we make today on our energy policy will echo through the years as to the direction the country will go in.

It is time for us to take a stand today for the protection of human rights. The Gwich'in Tribe is this humble tribe that depends on the porcupine caribou for its subsistence, and drilling in that Alaskan refuge is going to destroy the calving grounds of the porcupine caribou.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, while I would love to engage the gentleman in

his theory that big oil companies caused Hurricane Katrina on the rule about consideration of legislation on the same legislative day, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I urge my colleagues to reject this blanket martial-law rule. Members should have adequate time to review the bills before they vote for them.

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

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, these are unusual times as we struggle through the important deliberations of this Congress to make sure that our troops are cared for through the Department of Defense appropriations process and that our gulf coast friends and neighbors receive the assistance that they need and have been promised and are owed by their countrymen in the wake of the devastation wrought by these hurricanes.

This rule lays the foundation for us to move that important legislation in a timely way. And martial law around the world means troops on the streets, tanks on the streets, the military setting mandatory curfews where people cannot act in a free and virtuous way.

Only in America would the opportunity for 535 elected representatives to come from around the country to haggle and debate and fight and compromise over ways to help their fellow countrymen and move forward with an agenda for liberty and prosperity and security, only in America do we take for granted our liberties such that we would call such a process "martial law."

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. MATSUI. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF THE HOUSE ON ARREST OF SANJAR UMAROV

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 545) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives on the arrest of Sanjar Umarov in Uzbekistan.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 545

Whereas the United States supports the development of democracy, free markets, and civil society in Uzbekistan and in other states in Central Asia;

Whereas the rule of law, the impartial application of the law, and equal justice for all courts of law are pillars of all democratic societies;

Whereas Sanjar Umarov was reportedly arrested in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on October 22, 2005;

Whereas Sanjar Umarov is a businessman and leader of the Uzbek opposition party, Sunshine Coalition;

Whereas Sanjar Umarov was reportedly taken into custody on October 22, 2005, during a crackdown on the Sunshine Coalition that included a raid of its offices and seizure of its records;

Whereas Sanjar Umarov was reportedly charged with grand larceny;

Whereas press accounts report that representatives of Sanjar Umarov claim that Mr. Umarov was drugged and abused while at his pretrial confinement center in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, but such accounts could not be immediately confirmed, and official information about the health, whereabouts, and treatment while in custody of Mr. Umarov has thus far been unavailable;

Whereas the United States has expressed its serious concern regarding the overall state of human rights in Uzbekistan and is seeking to clarify the facts of this case;

Whereas the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have expressed concern about the arrest and possible abuse of Sanjar Umarov; and

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan is party to various treaty obligations, and in particular those under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which obligate governments to provide for due process in criminal cases: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the law enforcement and judicial authorities of Uzbekistan should ensure that Sanjar Umarov is accorded the full measure of his rights under the Uzbekistan Constitution to defend himself against any and all charges that may be brought against him, in a fair and transparent process, so that individual justice may be done;

(2) the Government of Uzbekistan should observe its various treaty obligations, especially those under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which obligate governments to provide for due process in criminal cases; and

(3) the Government of Uzbekistan should publicly clarify the charges against Sanjar Umarov, his current condition, and his whereabouts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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 Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 545 regarding the arrest of Uzbek opposition leader Sanjar Umarov.

Mr. Umarov is a businessman and a leader of the Sunshine Coalition, an Uzbek opposition party that was formed in April in the wake of a popular uprising in neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

The group quickly gained recognition after its condemnation of the severe military crackdown on demonstrators in the eastern city of Andijon earlier this year.

On October 22, 2005, the Uzbek authorities launched a crackdown against the Sunshine Coalition that included a raid of its offices and a seizure of its records. Sanjar Umarov was then charged by the Uzbek regime. Press reports have alleged that Mr. Umarov was drugged and abused while at his pretrial confinement center.

The State Department has expressed its serious concern regarding this case, and last month the Senate passed a companion resolution regarding Mr. Umarov's case. The Congress remains deeply troubled about the overall state of human rights in Uzbekistan, as that regime has become one of the world's most repressive.

Freedom House and our own State Department rank Uzbekistan among some of the world's most notorious human rights violators. As an important first step toward addressing these underlying issues, this resolution calls on the Uzbek authorities to ensure that Mr. Umarov is accorded his full rights under Uzbek law and Uzbekistan's international obligations.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

I first would like to commend my good friend and colleague ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for introducing this important measure relating to human rights in Uzbekistan.

Mr. Speaker, the dissolution of the Soviet Union marked an historic triumph for freedom, democracy, and openness throughout the former Soviet realm. Millions of oppressed citizens of the former Soviet Union, from the Baltics to Georgia and Armenia, finally

won the right to choose their leaders freely and openly and to speak publicly their minds about the future of their nation. This historic movement towards freedom and democracy was not uniform, and pockets of despotic totalitarianism remain within the realm of the former Soviet Union. The Central Asian nation of Uzbekistan is one such authoritarian pocket.

Since Uzbekistan won its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, it has been ruled with an iron fist by Islam Karimov. Karimov came to power in 1991 in elections that our State Department characterized as "neither free nor fair," and I fully agree. His term in office has been repeatedly extended through sham referenda and actions taken by his rubber stamp parliament.

During Karimov's brutal tenure, there has been absolutely no progress towards democratic reform. The government has severely limited freedom of speech and the press, and few reporters there write articles critical of the government for fear of being tossed in jail. Independent human rights organizations are denied registration by the government, and their activities are severely limited.

It is in this context that Sanjar Umarov, a successful business leader in Uzbekistan, decided to form an opposition movement. His Sunshine Coalition raised questions about the lack of true democracy and freedom in Uzbekistan and the Uzbek government's abysmal performance running the nation. Umarov's party offices were raided in October. He was charged with grand larceny, following the Russian example of concocting alleged business crimes to justify the imprisonment of key opposition leaders. There have been reports that Mr. Umarov has been tortured while in custody and that his lawyer found him naked in his cell, covering his face with his hands, rocking back and forth.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before the House has a simple message: It urges the government of Uzbekistan to accord Mr. Sanjar Umarov the right to defend himself in court according to the rights provided to him by the constitution of Uzbekistan and that the charges against him be publicly clarified and his whereabouts announced.

Mr. Speaker, the government's continued imprisonment of Mr. Umarov is yet another black eye for Uzbekistan internationally. I strongly urge the Uzbek government to reconsider their unwise action and release Mr. Umarov from jail immediately.

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

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to work with my good friend from California, Mr. LANTOS.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree the resolution, H. Res. 545.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO THE 2005 ELECTIONS IN EGYPT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 284) expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections in Egypt, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 284

Whereas promoting freedom and democracy is a foreign policy and national security priority of the United States;

Whereas free, fair, and transparent elections constitute a foundation of any meaningful democracy;

Whereas Egypt is the largest Arab nation comprising over half the Arab world's population;

Whereas Congress has long supported Egypt as a partner for peace and stands ready to support Egypt's emergence as a democracy and free market economy;

Whereas a successful democracy in Egypt would definitely dispel the notion that democracy cannot succeed in the Arab Muslim world;

Whereas in his 2005 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush stated that "the great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East";

Whereas in her June 20, 2005, remarks at the American University in Cairo, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated: "[T]he Egyptian Government must fulfill the promise it has made to its people—and to the entire world—by giving its citizens the freedom to choose. Egypt's elections, including the Parliamentary elections, must meet objective standards that define every free election.";

Whereas on February 26, 2005, Egyptian President Mubarak proposed to amend the Egyptian Constitution to allow for Egypt's first ever multi-candidate presidential election;

Whereas in May 2005, President Bush stated that Egypt's presidential election should proceed with international monitors and with rules that allow for a real campaign;

Whereas Egypt prohibited international monitoring in the presidential election, calling such action an infringement on its national sovereignty;

Whereas domestic monitoring of the election became a major point of contention between the government, the judiciary, and civil society organizations;

Whereas in May 2005, the Judges Club, an unofficial union for judges, took the provisional decision to boycott the election if their demand for a truly independent judiciary was not met;