

law mandates military action against Taiwan when “the possibilities for a peaceful reunification would be completely exhausted.” In other words, whenever Beijing decides there is no longer any point in talking to Taipei, the new anti-secession law requires the Chinese military to take action against Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, the passage of the anti-secession law is a threatening move by Beijing which will undoubtedly heighten tensions across the Taiwan Strait. It will decrease the chance that either side will be willing to resolve differences peacefully. The law is reprehensible, and it should be reconsidered by the National People’s Congress in Beijing.

Mr. Speaker, both Taipei and Beijing have a paramount responsibility to maintain restraint and to avoid any action which could increase tensions across the Taiwan straits. With passage of this law, Beijing has failed this critically important duty, and it is my profound hope that China’s top leaders will find a way to repair the damage that the law’s adoption has caused.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

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

□ 1215

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a distinguished member of the Committee on International Relations, chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary, and cochair of the House Taiwan Caucus.

Mr. CHABOT. I very much thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I want to first, Mr. Speaker, commend the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), chairman of the full committee, for bringing this timely and important resolution to the floor. The so-called anti-secession legislation adopted by the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China will unilaterally change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, in direct contradiction of the policy of the United States Government.

The Taiwan Relations Act, enacted by this Congress in 1979, declares that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are in the political, security and economic interests of the United States. The legislation adopted by the Chinese People’s Congress which states that China “shall employ nonpeaceful means” in the event of Taiwan’s moving toward independence clearly threatens that peace and stability.

The people of Taiwan want peace. Taiwan’s democratically elected President, Chen Shui-bian, whom I have met with many times, has repeatedly shown his determination to maintaining peace, stability and the status quo across the Taiwan Strait, and the Beijing dictatorship has responded by pointing over 600 missiles at Taiwan,

and now by enacting a threatening anti-secession law.

The future of Taiwan should be determined by the people of Taiwan. Any effort by the Communist leadership in the People’s Republic of China to deny a free people in Taiwan a safe, prosperous and democratic future should be condemned.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue. I am very pleased that it is being taken up by the Congress here today. It deserves the utmost attention. I want to thank again the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) for bringing this forward. I also want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for whom I have great respect and has been a leader in this area for many years and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) as well.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to thank the committee members and the staff, especially Dennis Halpin, Sarah Tillemann and Peter Yeo, for their work on this resolution and Dan Freeman, who is our counsel and parliamentarian, for his work, and his expertise on this and so many other resolutions. We are so grateful for them.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my distress over anti-secession legislation recently passed by the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The new law reaffirms the PRC’s sovereignty over Taiwan and threatens peaceful and non-peaceful means to defend its “One China” policy. In passing this law, the PRC imperils the status quo and durability of the delicate cross-strait truce that has been established.

The United States has consistently maintained that differences between Taipei and Beijing should be resolved diplomatically and with the full involvement of the people of Taiwan and China. I subscribe to this position and the view that the status quo must be preserved until a peaceful resolution can be achieved. The anti-secession law disturbs the status quo and creates and unnecessarily tense situation that may lead to an escalation of hostilities.

While the anti-secession law may have originated as a reaction to political rhetoric in Taiwan, the Taiwanese government supports the status quo, further obviating the need for the anti-secession law. The new law also seems at odds with recent positive developments between China and Taiwan that seem to signal closer relations. For example, direct flights between Taiwan and mainland China were initiated during the Chinese New Year holidays and two senior representatives from the People’s Republic of China attended the memorial services for Koo Chen-fu who was instrumental in moving cross-strait dialogue forward 10 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, in light of these positive events, it is unfortunate that the PRC has chosen to take a step backwards in the effort to improve cross-strait relations. The anti-secession law has made it necessary for us today to pass this resolution, which expresses the Congress’ grave concern that China is estab-

lishing legal justification for the use of force against Taiwan. The resolution rightly urges U.S. officials, through appropriate diplomatic channels, to express our nation’s grave concern to the PRC, and it reaffirms U.S. support for fostering cross-strait dialogue in an effort to resolve this international issue peacefully.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 98, which expresses the concern of the U.S. House of Representatives regarding China’s Anti-Secession Law. This misguided law effectively authorizes use of military force against Taiwan if Taiwan moves toward formal independence.

I believe the anti-secession law is a dangerous and unnecessary escalation of tensions between China and Taiwan. The future of Taiwan should be resolved by peaceful means and with the consent of the people of Taiwan. The United States should continue to encourage dialogue between Taiwan and China. In today’s world, we should strive to ensure peace, liberty and democracy. I am proud to join my colleagues in support of this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). 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. 98.

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. 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.

EXPRESSING CONCERN REGARDING VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY SYRIA

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 18) expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian and Lebanese people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 18

Whereas the Syrian Arab Republic is governed by an authoritarian regime which continues to commit serious human rights abuses, including the use of torture and arbitrary arrest and detention;

Whereas the Department of State’s Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004 states that Syria’s “human rights record remained poor, and the Government continued to commit numerous, serious abuses”, the government “significantly restricts freedom of speech and of the press”, “freedom of assembly does not exist under the law”, and “the Government restricted freedom of association”;

Whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.";

Whereas Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.";

Whereas Syria's September 2001 press law permits the government to arbitrarily deny or revoke publishing licenses for vague reasons and compels media to submit all material to government censors;

Whereas Syrian authorities have arrested, or, in the case of foreigners, expelled journalists for writing critically about Syria's policies;

Whereas Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have reported that the security forces of Syria are targeting emerging Syrian human rights organizations, as well as their attorneys, in an apparent attempt to intimidate those organizations;

Whereas, on March 8, 2004, Syrian security forces arrested more than 30 human rights dissidents and civilians at a sit-in in front of the parliament;

Whereas a United States diplomat who was watching the peaceful demonstrations was also arrested and held for an hour in what the United States called an unacceptable violation of diplomatic practice and which the United States protested "in the strongest terms";

Whereas Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.";

Whereas the criminal law of Syria provides for reduced sentences in cases of "honor" killings, and spousal rape is not illegal;

Whereas the infringement by Syria on human rights and civil liberties extends into the Lebanese Republic, which it continues to occupy in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas hundreds of Lebanese civilians are believed to have been killed or "disappeared" by Syrian occupation forces or its secret police;

Whereas hundreds of Kurdish civilians were injured or killed in clashes with the Syrian authorities in March 2004 in Qamishli, a city in northeastern Syria, and Syrian security forces arrested and tortured Syrian Kurdish civilians from the town of Al-Malikiyah on January 9, 2005;

Whereas Syrian authorities continue their harassment of Aktham Naisse, Syria's leading human rights activist, President, and founding member of the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Liberties and Human Rights in Syria, and the 2005 winner of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, one of the most prestigious awards in the global human rights community, by charging him with spreading false information, forming an underground association with links to international human rights groups, and opposing the Baath Party;

Whereas, in November 2004, upon his release from prison, Kamal Labwani, a 48-year-old physician in Syria, stated that there are at least 400 political prisoners in Syria, 100 of whom have been jailed for at least 20 years;

Whereas Mr. Labwani urged "all defenders of freedom and human rights, whether individuals, associations, or bodies, or international, Arab, or local organizations to participate with us in this campaign to call for the immediate release of all political prisoners and detainees of opinion and conscience";

Whereas, in November 2004, Syrian journalist Louai Hussein was banned from writing by the Syrian Interior Ministry's political security office;

Whereas, in November 2004, the arrest in Germany of a Syrian embassy official for espionage and issuing threats against the Syrian opposition in Europe is evidence of a campaign reportedly launched by Syrian dictator Bashar Assad, aimed at intimidating the regime's opposition abroad;

Whereas thousands of Syrian citizens, along with their families, children, and grandchildren, live outside their country in forced exile, solely because of their political views, or because of the views of members of their families; and

Whereas human rights and democracy groups in Syria have sponsored a petition urging greater freedoms and the release of all political prisoners: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) condemns the consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic;

(2) calls on the international community to adopt a resolution at the upcoming session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights which details the dismal human rights record of Syria;

(3) expresses its support for the people of Syria in their daily struggle for freedom, respect for human rights and civil liberties, democratic self-governance, and the establishment of the rule of law;

(4) encourages the President and the Secretary of State to reach out to dissidents, human rights activists, and the nonviolent democratic opposition in Syria, and to assist them in their efforts; and

(5) urges the adoption and pursuit of these and other policies to seek a democratic government in Syria that will—

(A) bring freedom and democracy to the people of Syria;

(B) cease the illegal occupation by Syria of the Lebanese Republic;

(C) abandon support for terrorism;

(D) not pursue research, development, acquisition, production, transfer, or deployment of biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons, will provide credible assurances that such behavior will not be undertaken in the future, and will agree to allow United Nations and other international observers to verify such assurances; and

(E) live in peace and security with the international community.

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).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to thank the leadership for bringing up this resolution.

H. Con. Res. 18, Mr. Speaker, addresses the continued gross violations of human rights committed by the Syrian regime. The terrorist regime in Damascus is one that not only supports and facilitates terrorist attacks against innocent civilians throughout the world but also engages in a widespread campaign of terror and human rights suppression among its own people.

According to the most recent State Department Country Reports on

Human Rights Practices, the government of Syria continues to commit numerous serious abuses and remains with a poor record on human rights overall. Any activity by human rights activists and organizations is stifled and activists are sentenced to lengthy prison terms, tortured or even forced into exile, only to be harassed and intimidated in exile as well.

Domestic human rights groups cannot exist legally. According to a recent world report by Human Rights Watch, the dictatorship of Syria strictly limits freedom of expression, association and assembly and treats ethnic minority Kurds as second-class citizens. The government has a long record of arbitrary arrests, systematic torture, prolonged detention of suspects and grossly unfair trials. Women face discrimination and have little means for full redress when they become victims of rape or domestic violence.

However, Syria's deplorable human rights record is not limited to its immediate borders. The repressive apparatus also extends into neighboring Lebanon, which has been a captive nation for 25 years. Hundreds of free-thinking Lebanese civilians are believed to have been killed or disappeared because of Syrian occupation forces throughout these years. U.S. policy must support the Syrian people. It must support its dissidents, human rights activists, and the pro-democracy advocates so that they, too, can free themselves from the shackles of tyrannical rule.

This resolution also addresses, Mr. Speaker, two overarching vital U.S. national security requirements regarding the Syrian regime; that is, that Syria must immediately and unconditionally cease its support for terrorism and its development of unconventional weapons and advanced missile capabilities.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important resolution to express U.S. support for those in Syria and Lebanon who continue to toil for freedom and democracy, and ensure the regime in Damascus that we will continue to increase the pressure until these goals are met.

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

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

I rise in strong support of this resolution. I want to commend my friend from New Jersey for his leadership on this issue. The resolution before the House supports the people of Syria who live under a violent and repressive regime. The last Congress, this body passed the Syria Accountability Act with 297 cosponsors. That bill primarily addressed Syria's behavior in the Middle East, including its sponsorship of terrorist groups and its continuing occupation of Lebanon. This resolution, Mr. Speaker, focuses on Syria's domestic misbehavior for which Damascus must also be held fully accountable. After all, nobody has suffered more from the brutality of the

Syrian government than the Syrian people.

According to the State Department's annual human rights report released recently, Syria continues to commit egregious human rights abuses, including torture, arbitrary detentions of political prisoners without trial, censorship and harassment of journalists, protections for spouse-rapists, and light sentences for so-called honor killings. According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, Syria is engaged in an unceasing campaign to harass and intimidate human rights organizations.

In recent days, the world has focused on Syria's outrages against the Lebanese people and, indeed, another resolution we are considering today deals directly with that issue. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot credibly say we favor political reform in the Middle East if we ignore Syria's depredations against its own citizens.

Syria is certainly, and I quote, one of the world's most repressive regimes, as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has indicated. Accordingly, it is important that this Congress be on record not merely in condemning the Syrian government for its actions against its neighbors but, more importantly, to express our support for the Syrian people in their struggle to achieve the kind of government they deserve.

When I met with Syrian President Assad in Damascus, I urged him to change his government's behavior at home and abroad so that Syria could rejoin the ranks of the civilized world. This resolution is one result of his failure to heed that advice.

Mr. Speaker, a Syria that is accountable to world standards and norms, a Syria that respects its own citizens and no longer occupies Lebanon or supports terrorism against Israel must be a central goal of our project of reforming the Middle East. In the long run, a Middle East in which people are stakeholders in public life offers the greatest hope for peace and safety in the region and beyond.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 18.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield such time as he may consume to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a distinguished member of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this resolution and his leadership in bringing it forward. I am going to support the resolution. I, too, am troubled by what we have seen with the Syrian government. I am heartened by some activities in the Middle East. I think there is some real progress. But I would step back for a moment and ask us to reflect on something that has been happening that does not reflect so well on our government.

Just moments ago, the House overwhelmingly approved an amendment

advanced by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and me that dealt with making sure that money that we approved in the supplemental was not used to torture suspects of terrorism. We have this sense, and it is one that the people I represent feel very strongly about, that we have a responsibility and an obligation as the world's oldest democracy to be upholding our standards of rule of law, of due process. We have made torture illegal not just because people are concerned that it is an immoral practice, we do so because it is not a good way to get useful information.

Dictatorships torture indiscriminately, but it is not a way, as the Intelligence Community well understands, that we get good information upon which to base activities that may put our men and women at risk and to protect United States interests. Furthermore, we do not torture suspects of terror because if we do so, then any information that is gathered from that process taints any potential case and we cannot bring people to justice in a court of law.

Last but not least, we do not torture because we want a standard established where we can use our moral authority to make sure that Americans abroad are protected, whether they are in uniform or they are civilians.

There are a variety of moral, practical reasons why we are against torture. Yet I would note that there are too many press accounts for us to ignore, too many reports from nongovernmental organizations that the United States is participating in and condoning torture on behalf of prisoners that we have taken to other countries. There is a famous case that now the Canadian government wants investigated where the United States kidnapped a Canadian citizen and rendered this person to Syria where he was tortured. We have called for this Congress to get on top of what is, I am afraid, an emerging scandal, where we use extraordinary rendition, where we kidnap and transport people, where there is not effective oversight, where Congress does not know what is going on, where there are people who are not being held accountable, where there are problems that we have seen with people who have been in custody of the CIA and some of the American prisons that we have had in Afghanistan and Iraq.

□ 1230

We, as a Congress, need to be doing our job because we do not believe in torture; it is illegal; it is against international conventions; it is against the interests of the United States. And I must re-emphasize the irony when we come forward with a resolution that points out the problems, legitimate problems, the abuses in Syria, and then it appears as though the United States is willing to offer up people to countries like Syria, where we thought they are in fact going to be tortured.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that Congress gets ahead of this issue, that Congress does its job to investigate these widespread reports that are coming through now our own legal system, that are coming through the media, that are coming from nongovernmental organizations, that we exercise our oversight to make sure that we have our own house in order. There should be no prospect that we are on one hand going to be a Congress that condemns torture and abuse of human rights in Syria, and on the other hand we are going to look the other way when we may be offering up people who are suspects, not convicted of anything, to be turned over to the hands of these same torturers.

I would sincerely hope that we will have activity on the part of all of us to make sure the many committees in Congress do their job to provide this oversight and that we are not relying on the media, nongovernmental organizations, and what trickles through the legal system to do a job that we should be doing.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, while I rise in support of this resolution, I do so with serious concerns.

Torture is a crime and a vile human rights abuse. Syria should be condemned in the strongest possible terms for committing acts of torture against detainees and prisoners. This is why I support the resolution. Yet, the fact that our government has sent detainees to Syria knowing that these individuals would be tortured and abused is morally repugnant and violates international, as well as U.S., law.

The practice of extraordinary rendition—our government's practice of outsourcing torture to countries like Syria must also be condemned, repudiated and immediately ordered stopped by President Bush. Human Rights Watch, which is frequently cited as an authoritative source in this resolution, has stated that the U.S. policy of "denouncing torture in Syria, and then handing over prisoners to Syrian torturers sends the ultimate mixed message."

Syria is a notorious violator of human rights that should be condemned. The hypocrisy of our government using Syrian torturers as a subcontractor to immorally and illegally commit human rights abuses is shamefully absent from this resolution.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 18 to express Congress' concern about the treatment of the Syrian and Lebanese people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. I want to thank my colleagues from Florida and New York for introducing this resolution and bringing it to the floor today.

Earlier this body considered H. Con. Res. 32, which expresses support for the liberation movement in Lebanon. Now, under this second resolution, we take into consideration the effect of Syrian rule of its own people. The Syrian Arab Republic is governed by an authoritarian regime which continues to commit serious human rights abuses, including the use of torture, arbitrary arrest, and detention.

Within Syria both freedom of speech and freedom of the press has repressed through systematic intimidation. Syrians are prohibited to publicly assembling in order to express discontent of any kind. Political prisoners are

known to have been held in detainment for up to twenty years. Ruling authorities continue to allow honor killings. In the North, Syrian forces have attacked unarmed Kurd populations with live ammunition. Human rights organizations working in opposition these injustices are targeted by Syrian authorities with intimidation tactics.

The Syrian government's treatment of its people can no longer be tolerated. I encourage my colleagues to pass the resolution in question and in doing so condemn the Syrian government's gross human rights violations upon its own people and support the Syrian people's struggle for a free and democratic government.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). 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. 18, 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. 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. 18, the concurrent resolution just considered.

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

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN OF CONGRESS REGARDING OCCUPATION OF REPUBLIC OF LEBANON BY SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 32) expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the occupation of the Republic of Lebanon by the Syrian Arab Republic, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 32

Whereas since its invasion of the Lebanese Republic in 1976, the regime of the Syrian Arab Republic has implemented a systematic policy of occupation over Lebanon that has transformed the political, social, and economic character of Lebanon;

Whereas on July 20, 1976, President Hafez al-Assad of Syria stated that "Syria and Lebanon were one state and one people";

Whereas, on October 13, 1990, the Syrian occupation of Lebanon was complete, when Syrian troops launched aerial and ground attacks and occupied the Lebanese presidential palace and the Ministry of Defense, ousting the constitutional government of Prime Minister Michel Aoun of Lebanon;

Whereas the Syrian regime appointed their own proxy government and president in occupied Lebanon, and started a large-scale persecution operation against the Lebanese people by arresting, abducting, torturing, and killing opponents of the occupation;

Whereas, on May 22, 1991, following the occupation of Beirut, Lebanon, Syria concluded the Brotherhood Treaty for Coordination and Cooperation with Lebanon;

Whereas this treaty solidified the integration of the two countries in matters of security and intelligence, finance and trade, and industry and agriculture, by establishing the mechanism for Syrian command under the cover of "joint" decisionmaking;

Whereas the Syrian regime has continued to employ a wide range of policy means to transform Lebanon into a "client state" and a Syrian political satellite;

Whereas Syria clearly tampered with the Lebanese parliamentary elections of 1992, 1996, and 2000, by amending electoral laws which delineated voting districts and laid down intricate procedures for the elections, which were rigged in a way to guarantee results favorable to Syria;

Whereas Syrian-backed ad-hoc modifications to the Lebanese constitution extended by three years the presidential tenure of Lebanese president Elias Harawi, allowed Emile Lahoud, commander of the Lebanese army, to become president, and extended Lahoud's term in contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559;

Whereas Lebanese judicial institutions have been utilized and mobilized to impose Syrian control, including the routine issuance of death sentences *in absentia* against expatriates and opposition leaders;

Whereas Lebanese Broadcasting Law No. 382 of 1994 provided the legislative framework for controlling and restricting Lebanese radio and television;

Whereas the restrictions on the free flow of information and opinion in Lebanon is in sharp contrast to the legacy of journalism in that country;

Whereas it is widely reported that Syria has utilized the practices of kidnapping and arresting Lebanese citizens, using torture against them, and causing their virtual disappearance;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reported that in November 1999 Syrian authorities in Damascus, Syria, offering no explanation whatsoever, returned to his family the dead body of Lebanese citizen Adel Khalaf Ajouri, aged 52, who had "disappeared" in 1990;

Whereas within Lebanon itself, Syria reportedly operated detention facilities in Tripoli, Beirut, Shtaura in the Bekka Valley, and Anjar on the Lebanese-Syrian border;

Whereas "Syrian order" in Lebanon was institutionalized when Damascus led the process of disarming the Lebanese militias, except for Hezbollah, which Syria retains as a terrorist proxy engaged against the State of Israel;

Whereas Lebanon, under the control of Syria, continues to serve as a major training center for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command;

Whereas a number of Lebanese government officials have actively facilitated and con-

tributed to the Syrian occupation and its activities, thereby threatening regional and global security;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 calls for the "strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon", the withdrawal from Lebanon of "all remaining foreign forces", "the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias", and "the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory";

Whereas, on February 14, 2005, a bomb exploded in Beirut, Lebanon, killing at least 15 people, including Rafik Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, and wounding approximately 100 other innocent victims;

Whereas after the bombing, President George W. Bush stated during an address in Brussels that "Our shared commitment to democratic progress is being tested in Lebanon, a once-thriving country that now suffers under the influence of an oppressive neighbor", called on Syria to "end its occupation of Lebanon", and reiterated the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559;

Whereas Lebanese opposition leaders gathered after Hariri was killed and issued a statement demanding Syrian troop withdrawal from Lebanon within the next three months, calling for the resignation of the current Lebanese cabinet, and declaring that "we will fight the current regime and demand our right for a neutral government that makes sure Lebanon steps forward from being a captive state to regaining its full independence and sovereignty"; and

Whereas the ongoing mass demonstrations by the Lebanese people resulted in the dramatic resignation of the Lebanese Cabinet on February 28, 2005: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Lebanese Republic is a captive country;

(2) the occupation of Lebanon represents a long-term threat to the security of the Middle East and United States efforts to promote political and economic liberalization in the region, and this issue should be raised by the President and the Secretary of State in all appropriate bilateral and multilateral forums;

(3) the President should direct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to present and secure support for a United Nations Security Council Resolution classifying Lebanon as a captive country and calling for the immediate release of all Lebanese detainees in Syria and Lebanon;

(4) the President should freeze all assets in the United States belonging to Lebanese government officials who are found to support and aid the occupation of Lebanon by the Syrian Arab Republic;

(5) all countries should fully and immediately implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559;

(6) it should be the policy of the United States to—

(A) support independent human rights and pro-democracy advocates in Lebanon; and

(B) seek the full restoration of sovereign democratic rule in Lebanon; and

(7) the United States should provide assistance through the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative for broadcasts and civil society efforts to assist individuals, organizations, and entities that support Lebanese sovereignty and the promotion of democracy in Lebanon.