

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 749, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRACKDOWN IN CUBA

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 81) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the two-year anniversary of the human rights crackdown in Cuba.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 81

Whereas in March 2003, Cuban dictator Fidel Castro arrested more than 75 journalists, labor union organizers, civic leaders, librarians, and human rights activists as political prisoners;

Whereas the Cuban regime, after summary trials which were denounced by the international community, sentenced these innocent men and women to a total of more than 1,000 years in prison for trying to exercise their civil and political rights, many of whom are anticipated to die in prison before their sentence is completed;

Whereas the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms a commitment to fundamental human rights and to the dignity and worth of all people;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes global human rights standards, asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention;

Whereas these arrests and convictions were an atrocious attempt by the Cuban regime to crush the citizens' movements for a free and democratic Cuba;

Whereas Fidel Castro has tentatively released a limited number of prisoners from jail but these political activists are subject to arrest and imprisonment at any time pursuant to "extra penal licenses";

Whereas in 2004, the Cuban regime continued its suppression of democracy and repression of human rights activists, imprisoning a significant number of political dissidents during the year on such charges as disrespect for authority, public disorder, disobedience, and resisting arrest;

Whereas in April 2004, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution deploring the sentencing of "political dissidents and journalists" in 2003 and calling for a visit to Cuba by a Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which was later denied by the Cuban regime;

Whereas Fidel Castro continues to hold hundreds of political prisoners in his jail cells;

Whereas Amnesty International has recognized all journalists and activists who were arrested in the crackdown in March 2003 as prisoners of conscience;

Whereas the Cuban regime engages in torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrad-

ing treatment and punishment against political prisoners to force them into submission, including intense beatings, extended periods of solitary confinement, and denial of nutritional and medical attention, according to the Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights 2004;

Whereas religious freedom in Cuba is severely circumscribed, and clergy and lay people suffer sustained persecution by the Cuban State Security apparatus;

Whereas the Cuban regime denies the people of Cuba equal protection under the law, disallows them recourse for remedying violations of human rights and civil liberties, and instead enforces a judicial system which infringes upon fundamental rights; and

Whereas the United States Congress has stood, consistently, on the side of the Cuban people and supported their right to be free: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) condemns in the strongest possible terms the arrest of more than 75 journalists, labor union organizers, civic leaders, librarians, and human rights activists as political prisoners in March 2003 and the Cuban regime's continuing repressive crackdown against the brave internal opposition and the independent press;

(2) expresses its profound admiration and firm solidarity with the internal opposition and independent press of Cuba;

(3) demands that the Cuban regime immediately release all political prisoners, legalize all political parties, labor unions, and the press, and hold free and fair elections;

(4) declares the acts of the Cuban regime, including its widespread and systematic violation of human rights, to be in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(5) declares that the rule of law should replace the rule of force so that the fundamental and inalienable rights of every individual in Cuba are protected;

(6) calls for the European Union, as well as other countries and international organizations, to continue to pressure the Cuban regime to improve its human rights record; and

(7) calls for United Nations member countries to vote against the Cuban regime's membership in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the passage of a resolution at the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that holds the Cuban regime accountable for its gross violations of human rights and civil liberties.

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.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, with the world's attention riveted on Iraq, Fidel Castro ordered his feared state security apparatus to round up at least 75 of Cuba's best and bravest and brightest, prominent and even lesser-known dissidents. Among these are 28 independent journalists and 40 Varela project workers. With sickening speed, these men and women were paraded before kangaroo courts and given prison sentences ranging from 6 to 28 years; 61 remain in prison.

When the Committee on International Relations met on April 16, 2003 to decry this vile abrogation of justice, I stated at that time that "Even some of the most outspoken leftists who once saw in Fidel Castro something to admire now admit that Castro's unbridled cruelty, his thirst for blood, and extreme paranoia are indefensible." I regret to report that Castro has not given me and, frankly, he has given no one else as well, any reason to reassess that statement or those sentiments.

What were the so-called crimes that these brave men and women committed? They were advocating democracy, writing as independent journalists, and being men and women of faith.

Their real offense was to dare to question the authority of a single man: Fidel Castro. The Cuban Revolution is really about Castro's vanity and pursuit of personal power. From the beginning, Castro has shot and jailed anyone, even close friends, who have dared to get in the way of his personal ambitions.

Dictatorships, reflecting the whims of a despot, always subject their people to deprivations and absurdities. The Castro regime recently let a handful of its political prisoners out on parole, citing health reasons. The regime's callousness toward ailing political prisoners is well documented.

Now, independent Cuban journalists are reporting that Cuba's prisons have been virtually emptied of medical personnel. Why? Mr. Castro decided to send them to Venezuela and other places to advance his personal expansionist agenda.

Mr. Speaker, writing in the Spanish newspaper, *El Pais*, Nobel Prize winner Jose Saramago, a Portuguese Communist and close friend of Castro, commented after 3 alleged Havana ferry hijackers were killed by a firing squad in Cuba in May of 2003, "Cuba has won no heroic victory by executing these three men, but it has lost my confidence, damaged my hopes, and robbed me of illusions."

□ 1615

Illusions, as Castro-lover Jose Saramago has only now begun to acknowledge, often persist despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the case of Castro's Cuba.

Despite decades of credible reports of widespread egregious violations of human rights, including the pervasive use of torture and vicious beatings of political prisoners by the Cuban Government, some have clung to indefensibly foolish illusions of Castro's revolution.

Despite the fact that the Cuban Government systematically denies its people freedom of speech, press freedom, assembly and association, and severely restricts workers' rights, including the right to form independent trade unions, some have nevertheless clung to illusion.

Despite the fact that Cuba and Castro maintain an unimaginably vast network of surveillance by the thugs in his secret police and the committees for the defense of the revolution, or CDRs, neighbors spying on neighbors, some continue to embrace bogus perceptions, illusions about Castro and about Cuba.

In his book "Against All Hope," the book that I have actually read twice now, a memoir of life in Castro's gulags, Armando Valladares, a courageous and amazing man who spent 22 years in Cuban prisons wrote: "The government of Cuba and its defenders of the Cuban revolution denied that the incidents that I recount in the book ever happened." He says, "Castro sympathizers who were more subtle said the incidents that he described were exaggerations. And there were others, well meaning who simply could not bring themselves to believe that such horrors, crimes and torture existed in the political prisons of Cuba.

"My response," Armando Valladares goes on to say, "to those who still try to justify Castro's tyranny with the excuse that he built schools and hospitals, is this: Stalin and Hitler and Pinochet all built schools and hospitals, and like Castro, they all tortured and assassinated opponents. They built concentration and extermination camps and eradicated all liberties, committing the worst crimes against humanity."

Armando Valladares goes on to say: "Unbelievably while many NGOs like Amnesty International and America's Watch have denounced the human rights situation in Cuba, there has been a continuing love affair on the part of the media and many intellectuals with Fidel Castro."

Mr. Speaker, that love affair, that illusion seemed to crash and burn with the onset of the current crackdown on dissidents. The EU for its part took action in June of 2003 by limiting high-level EU governmental visits and inviting Cuban dissidents to National Day celebrations. But, sadly, their memories are short. In January of this year, at the initiative of the Spanish Government, the EU temporarily suspended these measures for a 6-month period.

Mr. Speaker, at the 61st session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, which was held this past month, the United States, I am very proud to say the United States offered a resolution on the human rights situation in Cuba. The resolution recalled the resolutions of the previous 15 years; and I would just say, parenthetically, I was there 15 years ago when Armando Valladares led the U.S. delegation, having been sent out of the government or out of Cuba by Castro, and got that body, which is dysfunctional in many ways, to finally focus on these ongoing and persistent violations of human rights in Cuba, and that was the first time.

I am glad to say that we just, at U.S. insistence, were able to get another

statement by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights focused on the ongoing abuses by Cuba. The resolution passed by a vote of 21 to 17 with 15 abstentions, but only after a full court press by the U.S. delegation led by Rudy Boschwitz, which included personal pleas from President Bush to the presidents of Ukraine and Mexico.

I am sad to point out that China, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, South Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe all voted against the resolution, in effect putting their stamp of approval on Castro's actions.

Let me just say finally, Mr. Speaker, that this resolution we have today is a reiteration. It is a bipartisan resolution offered by my friend and colleague from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ). And I hope that every member will vote in favor of it.

Two years ago, with the world's attention riveted on Iraq, Fidel Castro ordered his feared State Security apparatus to round up at least 75 of Cuba's bravest and brightest, prominent and lesser-known dissidents. Among these are 28 independent journalists and 40 Varela project workers. With sickening speed, these men and women were paraded before kangaroo courts and given prison sentences ranging from 6 to 28 years. Sixty-one remain in jail.

When the Committee on International Relations met April 16, 2003 to decry this vile abrogation of justice, I stated at that time: "Even some of the most outspoken leftists, who once saw in Fidel Castro something to admire, now admit that Castro's unbridled cruelty, thirst for blood and extreme paranoia are indefensible."

I regret to report that Castro has given me no cause to reassess that statement.

What were the so-called crimes of these brave men and women? Advocating democracy . . . writing as independent journalists . . . being men and women of faith.

Their real offense was to dare to question the authority of a single man, Mr. Castro. The Cuban Revolution is really about Castro's vanity and pursuit of personal power. From the beginning, Castro has shot and jailed anyone—even his close friends—who has dared get in the way of his personal ambition.

Dictatorships, reflecting the whims of a despot, always subject their people to deprivations and absurdities. The Castro regime recently let a handful of its political prisoners out on "parole," citing health reasons. The regime's callousness towards ailing political prisoners is well documented.

Now, independent Cuban journalists are reporting that Cuba's prisons have been virtually emptied of medical personnel. Why? Mr. Castro decided to send them to Venezuela and other places to advance his personal expansionist agenda.

Writing in the Spanish newspaper, *El Pais*, Noble prize winner Jose Saramago, a Portuguese communist and close friend of Castro commented after three alleged Havana ferry hijackers were killed by firing squad in Cuba in May 2003, "Cuba has won no heroic victory by executing these three men, but it has lost my confidence, damaged my hopes and robbed me of illusions."

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persist despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the case of Castro's Cuba.

Despite decades of credible reports of widespread egregious violations of human rights, including the pervasive use of torture and vicious beatings of political prisoners by the Cuban government, some have clung to indefensibly foolish illusions of Castro's revolution.

Despite the fact that the Cuban government systematically denies its people the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association, and severely restricts workers' rights, including the right to form independent trade unions, some have, nevertheless, clung to illusion.

Despite the fact that Castro maintains an unimaginably vast network of surveillance by the thugs in his secret police and Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs)—neighbors spying on neighbors—some continue to embrace bogus perceptions—illusions about Cuba.

In his book, "Against All Hope, a Memoir of Life in Castro's Gulags" Armando Valladares, a courageous and amazing man who spent 22 years in Cuban prisons wrote:

The government of Cuba and defenders of the Cuban Revolution denied that incidents that I recount (in the book) ever happened. Castro sympathizers, who were more subtle, said the incidents I described were exaggerations. And there were others, well meaning, who simply could not bring themselves to believe that such horrors, crimes and torture existed in the political prisons of Cuba.

My response to those who still try to justify Castro's tyranny with the excuse that he has built schools and hospitals is this: Stalin, Hitler and Pinochet also built schools and hospitals, and like Castro, they also tortured and assassinated opponents. They built concentration and extermination camps and eradicated all liberties, committing the worst crimes against humanity.

Unbelievably, while many non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International and America's Watch have denounced the human rights situation in Cuba, there has been a continuing love affair on the part of the media and many intellectuals with Fidel Castro.

That love affair—that illusion—seemed to crash and burn with the onset of the current crackdown on dissidents. The EU took action in June 2003 by limiting high-level EU governmental visits and inviting Cuban dissidents to national day celebrations. But their memories are short. In January of this year, at the initiative of the Spanish government, the EU temporarily suspended these measures for a six-month period.

At the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva this past month, the United States offered a resolution on the human rights situation in Cuba. The resolution recalled the resolutions of the previous 15 years which the Commission had passed on Cuba, and asked that the mandate of the Personal Representative of the High Commissioner be continued. The resolution passed by a vote of 21–17, with 15 abstentions, but only after a fullcourt lobbying press by the U.S. delegation which included personal pleas from President Bush to the Presidents of Ukraine and Mexico. China, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, South Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe all voted against the resolution, in effect putting their stamp of approval on Castro's actions.

Let me mention a few of the ones who were summarily sentenced and remain in prison. Omar Rodriguez Saludes, an independent journalist known to ride his bicycle to news conferences: 27 years. Hector Palacios, one of the key figures promoting the Varela Project: 25 years. Oscar Espinosa Chepe, who wrote critical articles about the Cuban economy for the Internet: 25 years. The President of the Independent United Confederation of Cuban Workers (CUTC), Pedro Pablo Alvarez, 25 years. Journalist Raul Rivero and Ricardo Gonzalez Afonso, an editor at "De Cuba" magazine, each got 20 years. The list goes on and on.

For its part, the Bush Administration has made its deep and abiding concern for the political prisoners and the protection of elemental human rights in Cuba abundantly clear. At the time of the crackdown, former Secretary of State Colin Powell declared:

In recent days the Cuban government has undertaken the most significant act of political repression in decades. We call on Castro to end this despicable repression and free these prisoners of conscience. The United States and the international community will be unrelenting in our insistence that Cubans who seek peaceful change be permitted to do so.

In like manner, the Congress has consistently demanded the immediate release of all the prisoners and support of the right of the Cuban people to exercise fundamental political and civil liberties. H. Res. 179, a resolution offered by Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN in April 2003, passed by a vote of 414-0, 11 present. In April of 2001, I sponsored a resolution, H. Res. 91, calling on the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva to condemn Cuba's human rights abuse and appoint a Special Rapporteur for Cuba. While it passed, there were a disturbing number of negative votes. That vote was 347-44 with 22 voting present.

We have another opportunity today to move forward a resolution offered by my Colleague, Mr. MENENDEZ, to show that these prisoners are not forgotten. Fidel Castro, his brother Raul, and numerous leaders of Cuba's dictatorship, are directly responsible for crimes against humanity past—and present. Some day these oppressors will be held to account and the people of Cuba will live in freedom.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. Let me first thank my colleague, the distinguished chairman of the International Relations Committee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), for facilitating our body's consideration of the resolution so expeditiously. And let me thank my two friends on the other side, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for their indefatigable fight for all human rights issues globally. I also want to thank my friend, the ranking Democratic member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), for his ongoing battle for human rights in Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, it is inexcusable that 2 years after 75 Cuban lovers of freedom

were tried in kangaroo courts in Havana, sentenced to prison terms ranging from 6 to 28 years for a total prison term of a thousand years and imprisoned in rat-infested dank cells, Castro's totalitarian machine is still trying to crack the backs of that Caribbean island's internal opposition by continuing to lock up some of its most distinguished civic and human rights leaders.

These political prisoners, Mr. Speaker, are suffering unspeakable horrors at the hands of Cuban police agents simply because they dare to articulate their disagreement with Castro's Communist government; because they dared to share their personal book collections with their friends and neighbors; because they dared to advocate for labor unions; and because they refused to compromise their journalistic integrity.

These soldiers of freedom, Mr. Speaker, who stand shoulder to shoulder in spirit with the likes of Poland's Lech Walesa and the Czech Republic's Vaclav Havel, were thrown behind bars because they practiced their professions or attempted to exert their political rights and civil liberties without the blessings of Castro's oppressive regime.

Many of those arrested were supporters of the so-called Varela Project, a grassroots, nonviolent citizens' movement in Cuba that seeks fundamental political change on the island by petitioning the Cuban Government for a referendum on reform.

Mr. Speaker, it is painfully clear that Castro still does not grasp what has become obvious to many leaders of isolated countries, that the ideological contest between democratic liberty and totalitarian suppression was won over a decade ago. There is no question today, as there was during World War II or throughout the long years of the Cold War, that systems and individuals who seek to repress and terrorize their people ultimately will not prevail.

It is only a matter of time before the Communist government of Cuba will realize that the choice before it is not whether the cronies of Castro will be able to maintain power, for the answer to that question is a clear and resounding no; but rather whether they want to participate constructively in a process that will surely transition Cuba to a future of freedom, democracy, and economic opportunity for all.

Mr. Speaker, recently, the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere convened a remarkable hearing at which members of the internal opposition spoke via telephone from Havana, despite placing themselves at risk of state persecution. These courageous political dissidents forcefully argued that we in Congress should call upon the international community to denounce Cuba's human rights record at every opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, here in this House we may disagree on how best to bring about change in Cuba. But we stand to-

gether in steadfast solidarity with those who endure the depths of human depravity solely because they strive each day to loosen the shackles of communist repression for themselves and their fellow countrymen and women.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 81, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am greatly humbled to follow such internationally recognized human rights leaders as the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), my good friend, and my equally wonderful friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH). I am honored to be in their presence.

And we stand here today, Mr. Speaker, 2 years after a cruel, despotic, and vicious act by one of the most cowardly and evil men in the world, Fidel Castro, the unlawful arrest of over 70 peaceful dissidents on the island of Cuba.

The arrest of these innocent men and women are promulgated by a culture of fear, Mr. Speaker, one that has banned libraries, one that has banned books, one that maintains a system of remote and unmonitored gulags for prisoners of conscience, one that forbids independent labor unions, one that causes the systematic mistreatment of religious believers, one that mandates the summary execution of independent journalists and conscientious objectors.

This important resolution before us demands that the Cuban regime release all political prisoners, legalize all political parties, labor unions and the press, and hold free elections. In other words, to be afforded their basic freedoms.

Further, it calls for the European Union, as well as other countries and international organizations, to pressure the Cuban regime to improve its deplorable human rights record.

As we convene in this great Hall of democracy, many in Cuba continue to be dragged down stairs, strapped to chairs and beaten for wanting one thing and one thing only, freedom, and with that, the freedom to express their thoughts and their ability to exercise their basic universally held human rights.

In passing this legislation, Mr. Speaker, we are once again in the Congress reaffirming our commitment to the brave people of the island of Cuba, especially those 75 men and women who were cruelly arrested for advocating peacefully in favor of freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights.

I commend my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH),

for this bill, and wholeheartedly support this legislation. And I ask my colleagues to vote in favor of it today.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 81, a resolution which condemns the crackdown on political dissidents that was orchestrated by the regime of Fidel Castro two years ago. Through this remarkable violation of human rights, the Cuban government arrested more than 75 journalists, labor union organizers, civic leaders, librarians, and human rights activists, and took them as political prisoners. On this occasion, it is important that we keep in mind the struggle in which our brothers and sisters in Cuba continued to be engaged—that is, the struggle for freedom and true democracy.

One of the many dissenters arrested in March 2003 was Mr. Jose Daniel Ferrer Garcia, a pro-democracy activist in Cuba who has been jailed for his outspoken leadership in the Cuban democracy movement. Mr. Garcia is the regional coordinator for the Christian Liberation Movement in Santiago Province. Through this leadership position, he has mobilized many Cuban youth for democratic change, and has focused on accomplishing the movement's chief objective: to unite citizens that are willing to defend and promote human rights and achieve changes in the Cuban society through peaceful means. Because of the efforts of determined individuals such as Mr. Garcia, the struggle for democracy in Cuba continues, and we should keep this in mind when considering any potential changes in United States policy towards Castro's regime.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 81, and continue to voice their solidarity with Mr. Garcia and all other pro-democracy activists in Cuba as they continue their push for true freedom.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker. A todos mis hermanos y hermanas quienes sufren en las cárceles de Castro bajo su régimen, a sus familias y amistades aquí en los Estados Unidos y en Cuba, les digo que el pueblo americano está con ustedes. Y, aquí en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, vamos a defender su libertad y ganar la lucha contra la brutalidad y la opresión.

Por eso, junto con mis otras colegas en el Congreso, escribí esta resolución que condena la ola represiva contra los disidentes que hizo la régimen Castro hace dos años y que declara que la gente cubana debe tener los derechos humanos y la libertad—la libertad de expresión y de asociación—y el derecho de tener elecciones libres.

To all my friends here today who don't speak Spanish, don't worry, I won't spend the rest of my time speaking in Spanish. But I did want to take a moment to speak directly to the Cuban people to let them know that we stand with them in their fight for freedom and human rights.

We are debating this resolution today under the shadow of the 2nd anniversary of the crackdown on dissidents in Cuba. We often think of an anniversary as a moment to celebrate—but clearly we have nothing to celebrate today. Instead, we use this anniversary to mark a tragedy in the lives of the Cuban people and to the lives of all those who support democracy and human rights in the hemisphere.

The whole world was horrified as more than 75 journalists, human rights activists, and op-

position political figures were arrested, given summary trials, and then sentenced to prison terms of up to 28 years. Many of the prisoners, along with other prisoners of conscience, spent over a year in solitary confinement. Some have been deprived of adequate medical treatment and reports from Cuba detail beatings and harassment.

I am not fooled by the recent release of a number of dissidents, by this attempt to trick the international community. I am not fooled because I know that when they released those dissidents, who should never have been in jail in the first place, they also arrested new dissidents. I am not fooled because I know that they only released these dissidents on "parole," meaning that they could be arrested again at any time.

Hundreds of political prisoners remain in Castro's jails today. Clearly, the Castro regime has no respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in Article 4 that, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." And the world has recognized these injustices. The State Department calls this wave, "the most despicable act of political repression in the Americas in a decade."

Castro's human rights record has been condemned by Amnesty International, Freedom House, and other human rights groups.

In a statement, Amnesty International said that these "prisoners of conscience" should be immediately released and called on the Cuban regime to, "comply with the principles laid out in international rights standards for the treatment of prisoners."

Freedom House included Cuba in its report entitled, "The Worst of the Worst, The World's Most Repressive Societies, 2004." And the House of Representatives has condemned Castro's human rights record as well, in multiple resolutions. This year, on the two-year anniversary, we are here to pass a resolution that condemns Castro's brutal crackdown and demands that the Cuban regime immediately release all political prisoners, legalize all political parties, labor unions, and the press, and hold free and fair elections.

Today is a time for all of us to come together, from both sides of the aisle, to stand together for a universal cause: human rights.

Today, in voting for this resolution, we will celebrate the strength and perseverance of the Cuban people.

Today, we will vote for the universal values which we all share.

So I call on all of the Members of the House of Representatives to join me in the fight for human rights and democracy for the Cuban people.

Now is the time for us to stand together against brutality, torture and dictatorship.

Now is the time for us to stand together for freedom, for the right to free speech and free association, and for human rights in general.

Now is the time for us to stand together as we call on the Cuban regime to immediately release these prisoners of conscience, who were jailed for standing up for democracy and human rights against a brutal dictatorship.

To my brothers and sisters who suffer in Castro's jails, to their families and friends both here in the United States and Cuba, and to the Cuban people, I say that Castro will not succeed in his vain attempt to suppress the spirit of the Cuban people. I look forward to the day, which is coming soon, when we will

all celebrate a free and democratic Cuba. It is the spirit of the Cuban people and their courage that will ultimately be Castro's downfall.

So, I ask each of you to join me in voting yes for this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). 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. 81.

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. 81.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1630

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 1268, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND TSUNAMI RELIEF, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1268) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, to establish and rapidly implement regulations for State driver's license and identification document security standards, to prevent terrorists from abusing the asylum laws of the United States, to unify terrorism-related grounds for inadmissibility and removal, to ensure expeditious construction of the San Diego border fence, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, disagree to the Senate amendments, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?