

Over 15 years ago the National League for Democracy, led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratic forces, won an overwhelming victory in free elections, 82 percent. The junta refused to accept the results or to call Parliament into session. Instead it imprisoned many activists, including Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent 10 years under house arrest. Her current house arrest is tantamount to solitary confinement. She has been cruelly kept away from her children, and her husband, who died abroad. For 15 years the junta has cynically proclaimed its intention to draft a new constitution via a national convention, with no participation by the people's democratic representatives. That national convention has again been adjourned, with no constitution, and no freedom, in sight.

Since 1999, the U.S. Secretary of State has designated Burma as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

According to the U.S. Department of State, Burma continues to be a Tier 3 Country for human trafficking, and "the junta's policy of using forced labor is a driving factor behind Burma's large trafficking problem." The ILO has condemned Burma's use of forced labor, and the ILO representative in Burma has received death threats. Burma has threatened to quit the ILO. Burma regularly prosecutes those who complain about forced labor. Last October, Burma sentenced a 34-year-old woman to 20 months in prison for "criminal intimidation" of local officials. Her offense? She had the temerity to initiate the first successful prosecution for use of forced labor in Burma. She had lodged a complaint in 2004 against local government officials over their use of forced labor on a road construction project. She exercised her right to do this under new regulations introduced by the government to appease the International Labor Organization, ILO. She is now in prison, and her appeal was summarily denied.

Burma is high on the list of uncooperative drug-producing or transiting countries, and there is evidence of military and government involvement in the narcotics traffic. Burma produces about 80 percent of Southeast Asia's heroin, and is one of the largest producers of methamphetamines in the world. It exports its illicit narcotics throughout China and Southeast and Central Asia.

And as Burma's heroin circulates through Asia, so does HIV/AIDS, which Burma refuses to take seriously as a domestic problem, although the U.N. estimated in 1999 that over half a million adults had HIV. According to one estimate, Burma spent only \$22,000 in 2004 to help AIDS victims. In 2005, the regime tightened restrictions on NGOs and U.N. agency staff providing humanitarian assistance in Burma. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria announced in August that it was terminating its \$98 million program on the ground that "its grants to the country cannot be managed in a way that ensures effective program implementation." The French contingent of medical aid group Medecin Sans Frontieres reportedly plans to withdraw from Burma because of restrictions imposed on access to villagers.

The military's self-justification for its decades of arbitrary rule is to protect Burma from "instability." Yet for 40 years it has waged endless war on the nation's ethnic minorities,

killing tens of thousands, driving hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of others into exile as refugees or within Burma as displaced persons. It has destroyed over 2,500 villages, and uses rape as an instrument of policy. And to wage these wars, it has resorted to conscription of children: more than 70,000 child soldiers may be serving, in horrible circumstances, in Burma's bloated army.

The U.N. Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Sergio Pinheiro, has not been allowed into Burma for 2 years. In January 2006, U.N. Special Envoy to Burma Razali Ismail resigned his post after nearly 5 years, since the junta has not allowed him into the country for 2 years.

With such a record, it is no wonder that the U.S. has a wide array of sanctions in place against Burma, many of which must be renewed this year. And many wonder, can any progress be made? Yet in the midst of so much darkness, there has been light this year.

In September 2005, Nobel Laureates Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former Czech President Vaclav Havel released a major report documenting Burma's human rights problems as a threat to regional peace and security.

In December, with the strong support of the United States, U.N. Undersecretary for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari, in the unusual but significant presence of Secretary General Kofi Annan, personally gave the Security Council its first-ever briefing on the situation in Burma, a possible first step towards tougher international action. He went on record that the Burmese junta imprisons dissidents, ignores basic human rights, and is steering the country "towards a humanitarian crisis."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, which Burma joined in 1997, has finally moved from a posture of "constructive engagement," without sanctions or diplomatic pressure, to a more proactive approach to promote change.

But most of all, we owe this progress to this administration. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, and even more importantly, President George Bush, have been relentless in making the world face up to the appalling disaster in Burma. We have just begun, and we have a long way to go, but we in Congress are determined to support these efforts to bring peace and freedom to the heroic Burmese people, who, in the face of so much persecution and suffering, still persist in their resolute struggle for justice.

The next logical step to take is for the U.S., which is currently President of the Security Council, to introduce a Security Council Resolution calling on Burma, in the strongest possible terms: to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners; implement a program for national reconciliation that includes the National League for Democracy; and grant immediate and unhindered access to all parts of Burma for U.N. relief agencies and other international humanitarian organizations.

Such a resolution should include a timeline for compliance and punitive sanctions if the SPDC fails to comply.

We heard testimony from Assistant Secretary of State Barry Lowenkron, of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. It was Mr. Lowenkron's first time before this House, and we look forward to a very fruitful collaboration on the vital issues he promotes.

His Bureau has kept attention focused on Burma when most have forgotten it. We also heard testimony from Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who is the chief executor of our President's policy to change Burma. Additional witnesses included: Mr. Bo Kyi, of the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners, a former political prisoner himself, who described his own torments, and the ongoing struggles of democracy activists in Burma and in exile; Naw Win Yee, a leading member of the Shan Women's Action Network, an organization comprised of refugee women living in Thailand that works for human rights, freedom and democracy in Burma and also works to elevate the roles of women in Burmese politics and society. SWAN produced a ground breaking report on the military regime's use of rape as a weapon of war in Burma that was subsequently corroborated by the U.S. State Department; Mr. Tom Malinowski, the Washington Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch, who urged the U.S. to keep the pressure on the Burmese regime; and Ms. Anastasia Brown, the Director of Refugee Programs, Migration and Refugee Services for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, who had just returned from a visit to the Burmese refugee camps in Thailand, and made an urgent and eloquent plea for quick action to resolve the problems of the resettlement of Burmese refugees. All the witnesses provided strong confirmation that Congress needs to stay closely involved in the ongoing human rights tragedy in Burma.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF ELI SEGAL

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my dear friend Eli Segal. I offer my sincerest condolences to his wife of 40 years, Phyllis, his brother, Alan, and his children, Mora and Jonathan. We have lost a tremendous political mind, tireless social advocate, a loving husband and father, and a selfless friend who, as President and Senator CLINTON said, "lived his life as a man for others."

Eli was born in Brooklyn in 1942, headed to Massachusetts for undergraduate work at Brandeis University, and graduated from the University of Michigan's law school in 1967, making an impact at each stop along the way. Washington, DC, though, is where Eli's footprint is most clearly visible.

Eli's work as a campaign strategist is well documented, from his time on the late Eugene McCarthy's staff in 1968 through his work for General Wesley Clark during the 2004 election. It was during George McGovern's campaign, though, that Eli hired a young man named William Clinton to run the campaign's Texas operations, and I am extraordinarily thankful that Eli made that decision. If not for that particular hire, I probably would not have had the chance to work so closely with Eli during the Clinton administration, and I would not be fortunate enough to count myself as one of the thousands of people whose lives were touched by Eli. Then again, if President Clinton had not hired Eli to help run his campaign

in 1992, it is entirely possible that none of us would have worked in the White House anyway.

Following his work on the campaign trail for President Clinton, Eli became an incredible asset to the administration, creating the AmeriCorps program and heading the Welfare to Work Partnership. These and other accomplishments are why he received the Presidential Citizens Medal for service to the Nation in 2000 and the respect of his peers long before then.

It was during this time that I came to know Eli well. The common bond of working together in the White House was obviously a contributing factor, but Eli and I became friends not because of circumstances, but because of character. He truly was an incredible person, and I consider myself to be privileged to have worked with him in the Clinton Administration. I consider it to be an even greater honor that we continued to be friends after our time in the White House.

Mr. Speaker, all of us who knew Eli Segal will always remember his warmth, compassion, and insight. Eli was taken from us too early, and we surely will miss him, but we were fortunate to have him in our lives while we did. Neither he nor his impact will be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO EAST GARY MEMORIAL AMERICAN LEGION POST 100

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I wish to congratulate the members of the East Gary Memorial American Legion Post #100 as they celebrate their 75th Diamond Jubilee Birthday. To commemorate this special occasion, Post #100 will be having an anniversary dinner on Saturday, March 11, 2006 at the Post #100 American Legion Hall in Lake Station, Indiana.

The East Gary Memorial American Legion Post #100 was chartered in 1931. Since its inception, the members of Post #100 have dedicated themselves to the mission of serving veterans and the community. Post #100 members go above and beyond to serve veterans, as evidenced by their continued work with the Indiana Veterans Home in Lafayette, Indiana; the Knightstown Soldiers and Sailors Home in Knightstown, Indiana; and the Hines VA Hospital in Hines, Illinois, where they provide visitation and assistance to veterans in need. In addition, Post #100 has always been very active in various POW/MIA programs. Post #100 has also taken an active role in promoting local public service by sponsoring a law enforcement officer/firefighter/EMT competition, of which present Commander John Wrolen serves as District Chairman and State Co-Chairman.

Currently, Post #100 and its members also support the following youth programs: American Legion Baseball, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, the Special Olympics, and several programs that focus on patriotism and American government. In particular, they are active in Hoosier Boys' and Girls' State, a program that aims to educate high school jun-

iors on the structure of American government and its processes. Post #100 also provides flag etiquette classes for grade-school children and sponsors the Americanism in Government program, as well as oratorical programs. These competitions test the knowledge and public speaking abilities of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students, allowing the winners to advance to compete at district, State, regional, and national levels.

Throughout the past 75 years, American Legion Post #100 has installed 37 commanders, 4 of which have gone on to serve as first district commanders. These men are: Ralph Bechtel (1934), Jay Hott (1968), Hank Cook (1992), and John Wrolen (2001). At their 75th anniversary celebration, Post #100 will honor all living past commanders for their service. They are: Robert Pifferitti, Albert Kinsey, Alfred Hanson, Jr., Robert Wilson, John Wrolen, Terry Szostek, Richard Davies, Ronald Blaney, and Evin Eakins. All of these past commanders and district commanders should be honored for their service and dedication to veterans and the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating the members of the East Gary Memorial American Legion Post #100 on the 75th anniversary of their noble organization. These giving and selfless individuals continue to dedicate their time and unrelenting efforts to serve local veterans and their community. I am proud to represent them in Congress.

RECOGNIZING JOSHUA CARPENTER, EDEN'S "YOUTH OF THE YEAR"

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Joshua Carpenter, a young man who was named town of Eden 2006 "Youth of the Year."

Josh has demonstrated leadership and outstanding service to his school, community, and at the Boys and Girls Club of Eden in particular. Joshua became an active member of the Boys and Girls Club the year of its inception in 2002. He and his peers benefited from the experiences they shared at the club; therefore, Joshua decided that he would like to work at the Boys and Girls Club to share these experiences with other young members. He brings energy and enthusiasm to each activity and acts as a mentor for others.

In addition to the work he does with the Boys and Girls Club, Carpenter is actively involved in the community where he lives. He participates in the ICC Church Youth group and volunteers at the PTA-sponsored festivals as well as at family events that are held at the school.

Joshua is an outstanding Eden High School senior. He has a keen interest in learning about other cultures and expands his awareness through his participation in the Model United Nations Club. He was named to the National Honor Society during his junior year and remains active in several NHS-sponsored programs. Additionally, Josh is a leading member of the tennis team.

I am proud to honor Joshua Carpenter today, an outstanding young man and an

emerging leader in the community. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to highlight the achievements of Joshua Carpenter and I am pleased to join with members of the community to congratulate him on being named the 2006 "Youth of the Year." I wish him continued success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF ELLA BRIDGES STEGMAIER

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to congratulate Paige and Christian Stegmaier of Chapin, SC, on the birth of their new baby daughter. Ella Bridges Stegmaier was born on February 16, 2006, at 3:10 p.m., weighing 7 pounds and 8 ounces and measuring 20 inches. Ella has been born into a loving home, where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. Her birth is a blessing.

THE INTERNET IN CHINA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I chaired a hearing on the Internet in China regarding an issue that is deeply troubling to me, and I believe, to the American people: that American technology and know-how is substantially enabling repressive regimes in China and elsewhere in the world to cruelly exploit and abuse their own citizens.

Over the years, I have held 25 hearings on human rights abuses in China, and while China's economy has improved somewhat, the human rights situation remains abysmal. So-called economic reform has utterly failed to result in the protection of freedom of speech, expression, or assembly. The Laogai system of forced labor camps is still full with an estimated 6 million people; the Chinese government permits a horrifying trade in human organs; the PRC's draconian one-child-per-couple policy has made brothers and sisters illegal and coerced abortion commonplace; and political and religious dissidents are systematically persecuted and tortured.

Similarly, while the Internet has opened up commercial opportunities and provided access to vast amounts of information for people the world over, the Internet has also become a malicious tool: a cyber sledgehammer of repression of the government of China. As soon as the promise of the Internet began to be fulfilled—when brave Chinese began to e-mail each other and others about human rights issues and corruption by government leaders—the Party cracked down. To date, an estimated 49 cyber-dissidents and 32 journalists have been imprisoned by the PRC for merely posting information on the Internet critical of the regime. And that's likely to be only the tip of the iceberg.

Tragically, history shows us that American companies and their subsidiaries have provided the technology to crush human rights in