

other officials from Russia, and has always provided us the insight that we needed, and like I said, that sense of perspective and timeliness as well as what our next steps ought to be. John has been to Russia and to the Soviet Union at least 27 times over the years.

I will never forget when he accompanied FRANK WOLF and I, when we went to Moscow on a very I think historic trip where we visited Perm Camp 35 where Nathan Sharansky had spent so many years of his life, John was with us on an historic trip/meeting with the Duma. Four days of talks—and did we ever need John's incredible knowledge and insight. He was amazing! So I want to thank John for his leadership for all of these years and helping us with this legislation today.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a sponsor and in support of H. Con. Res. 190, which urges the Russian Federation to "ensure full protection of freedoms for all religious communities without distinction, whether registered and unregistered, and end the harassment of unregistered religious groups by the security apparatus and other government agencies," as well as to "ensure that law enforcement officials vigorously investigate acts of violence against unregistered religious communities, as well as make certain that authorities are not complicit in such attacks."

As the Ranking House Member on the Helsinki Commission, I have seen how religious freedoms for minority religious communities throughout the Russian Federation have come under increasing pressure. Throughout that vast country, local officials and government authorities continue to harass and limit the ability of these groups to practice their faith freely. In addition, instances of violence, such as arson attacks, have been alarmingly common in recent years. The Helsinki Commission heard disturbing testimony to this effect in April of last year.

The State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2005 reported that some federal agencies and many local authorities continued to restrict the rights of various religious minorities, and the internationally recognized expert on religious liberty in Russia, Larry Uzzell, has written that even in Moscow some 10 Baptist congregations have ceased to exist because local bureaucrats refused to allow rentals or property transfers for the use of worship services.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the religious liberty picture in Russia is deteriorating at a critical time for Russia. Russia is an OSCE participating state and assumes the leadership of the Council of Europe in May of this year. Russia also chairs the G-8 this year. A nation holding such positions should not be a country where members of minority religious groups need to constantly battle with bureaucrats in order to have a place to wor-

ship, or to get permission from the local clergy of another faith in order to hold a public gathering, or to wonder if their prayer house will be the target of vandalism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 190, and I again thank my Helsinki Commission Chairman, CHRIS SMITH, for introducing this resolution, and for his tireless efforts on behalf of religious freedom and liberty around the world. I also join Chairman SMITH in commending John Finerty of the Helsinki Commission staff for his decades of service to the Commission, and I especially thank him for assisting me in my interactions with members of the Russian Duma through our OSCE Parliamentary Assembly process.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 190, urging the Russian Federation to protect and ensure religious freedom for all people in Russia.

Last year witnesses at a Helsinki Commission hearing on unregistered religious groups in Russia, provided alarming reports about the actions of local authorities towards unregistered or minority religious communities. Recurring reports of police harassment and criminal violence (that is rarely vigorously investigated) against these groups is jeopardizing the status of religious liberties in Russia.

Adding to the concerns are recent reports that the Duma is preparing legislation to regulate the activities of missionaries. Reportedly, the bill would create administrative and criminal penalties for "unlawful missionary work connected with provoking religious extremism." There was also speculation in the Russian media that the Justice Ministry was looking to tighten the rules for granting visas to foreign missionaries. Furthermore, there are also reports that the Duma is considering an amendment to existing legislation that would require re-registration of registered religious organizations.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives make evident that some people in the Russian government believe the role of the state is to control religious freedom rather than to facilitate and protect free expression. Officials know that it is very difficult for unregistered religious organizations to function effectively and freely—they know that limiting the actions of missionaries and restricting the distribution of visas would be the best option to control the growth of religious organizations.

The Congress must send a clear signal to President Putin and other Russian officials that religious freedom is a critically important issue and that we expect Russia to uphold its own constitution and its international commitments and protect the fundamental right of freedom of conscience. This resolution specifically urges Russia to fully protect religious freedoms for all religious communities, whether registered or unregistered, and to prevent the harassment of unregistered religious groups by the security apparatus and other government agencies. I strongly urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 190.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. 190.

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. SMITH of New Jersey. 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 question will be postponed.

PERMITTING USE OF ROTUNDA FOR HOLOCAUST DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 350) permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 350

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),*

SECTION 1. USE OF ROTUNDA FOR HOLOCAUST DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY.

The rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on April 27, 2006, for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust. Physical preparations for the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

One of the stated purposes of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is to provide for appropriate ways for the Nation to commemorate the days of remembrance as an annual, national, civic commemoration of the Holocaust and encourage and sponsor appropriate observances of such days of remembrance throughout the United States.

The first Days of Remembrance ceremony in the rotunda of the United States Capitol occurred in 1979, and the rotunda ceremony has since become the inspiration for similar Holocaust remembrance ceremonies that take place throughout the United States.

H. Con. Res. 350 will allow for this year's national ceremony to be conducted in the rotunda on April 27, 2006. Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to go through this procedure, joint authorization by both Chambers, to use the very sacred center of the Capitol for this ceremony. The enormity of the crimes of the Holocaust, and the need to ensure they are never forgotten, make the rotunda a fitting place for this ceremony.

The theme of this year's commemoration is "Legacies of Justice" in honor of the courage of, and the precedents set by, those who testified during the trials of Nazi war criminals. The theme also pays tribute to those who work tirelessly for the cause of justice, both then and now.

This year, we mark the 60th anniversary of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, Germany. The unprecedented Nuremberg trials established a judicial process to rule on the atrocities committed by the Germans during World War II and brought to the forefront the ideas of universal justice, human rights and responsibility for war crimes. Evil persists in the world, Mr. Speaker, but our prosecution of the perpetrators of the Holocaust taught us that evil can be defeated and justice can be done, but only if we have the courage to stand up to the perpetrators. That is a vital lesson, one we must never forget, and this ceremony will help us remember it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this resolution.

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

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 350, authorizing the use of the Capitol rotunda for the days of remembrance ceremony on April 27 of this year. As in the past, Congress has always passed this concurrent resolution for the use of the Capitol rotunda as it is the sacred location of America's historic ceremonies.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR) for introducing this legislation, as well as the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), my chairman, and California's Mr. LANTOS, my friend, for co-sponsoring this bill with me.

This event will mark our country's annual commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust. As we have done nearly every year since 1979, Congress will use this historic rotunda location to reflect on the Holocaust, one of the most painful moments in our world's history.

In 1980, Congress created the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, which oversees the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and organizes the annual days of remembrance. These efforts were established by Congress to permanently honor the victims of the Holocaust. During the week of April 23, similar observances of such Holocaust

remembrance days will take place around our Nation. The days of remembrance provides Americans of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds the opportunity to reflect on the Holocaust, remind our Nation of the victims who perished, and strengthen our commitment to human rights and democracy.

Each year, the days of remembrance observes a specific theme, which highlights different events of the Holocaust. This year's theme will be commemorated in the title of "Legacies of Justice" in honor of the courage of those who testified during the trials of Nazi war criminals.

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This year marks the 60th anniversary of these Nuremberg trials, which brought to justice the unfathomable crimes committed during the Holocaust.

The International Military Tribunal held at Nuremberg, Germany, attempted to seek justice for the millions of murders, wrongful imprisonments, tortures, rapes, theft and destruction that took place during the Holocaust. The tribunal was created to bring judgment for the war crimes committed in the course of the most massive conflict the world has ever known. Six decades after IMT, the body of international law that addresses crimes against humanity has grown dramatically and relies significantly on the framework and legal standards established at Nuremberg.

In addition to honoring this watershed moment in international justice, this year's theme pays tribute to the numerous advocates who tirelessly worked for the cause of justice today. Every human being deserves to be treated with dignity, Mr. Speaker. We commend these individuals who continue to vigorously pursue justice for current victims of hatred and inhumanity. We must be reminded that such tragedies should never be permitted to occur again.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of this concurrent resolution.

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), who is the sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time, for his leadership in bringing this bill forward, as well as the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this important resolution, H. Con. Res. 350, permitting the use of the United States Capitol rotunda to observe Yom Hashoah, the Day of Remembrance, for victims of the Holocaust.

Mr. Speaker, it is our obligation to remember with great reverence and respect the victims of the Holocaust and to tell their story to all generations. It is our duty to never forget.

More than 70 years ago, a tyrant as evil as any known in the history of man rose to power preaching an agenda of hate and racial superiority. His shadow caused darkness to fall upon the Earth. He slew the innocent and pure, men, women, and children, with vapors of poison and burned them with fire. And when the light of freedom shined again, tens of millions lay dead, cities and nations lay in ruin, and a world stood awestruck at the horrors that had occurred.

Ironically, Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the Jewish holiday of Purim. On this day we read the Book of Esther, which tells of, in this case, another attempted genocide perpetrated against the Jewish people. Like Hitler, Haman wanted to annihilate the Jewish people from existence. Yet unlike the Holocaust, the Jewish people were able to rally an army and defend themselves against that attempted genocide. And on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Adar, the Jewish people take this opportunity to remember that threat and to celebrate their survival.

Sadly, today, we still face totalitarian regimes led by maniacal dictators who threaten the peace and stability of the world. The rotunda of the U.S. Capitol represents the seat of free and open discourse, the foundation of our democracy, and is an anathema to those tyrannical leaders and their regimes.

We in the U.S., the birthplace of Thomas Jefferson and Martin Luther King, enjoy a great deal of freedom. We must not take those freedoms for granted. We must not forget that genocide and human rights abuses continue to occur around the world. We must not remain silent when such atrocities occur. And we must dedicate ourselves to continuing to educate people around the globe about the horrors of the Holocaust. We must be forever mindful of the danger of such intolerance and ensure that it never happens again.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution that commemorates those victims of the Holocaust.

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes to close.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a joyous event to celebrate. At the end of World War II, we realized that we had witnessed the greatest genocide in the history of this planet. I was a young lad at that time, but I thought: never again could this happen. Yet now that we know it can happen and how horrible it is, we must guard against it ever happening again.

I am sorry to say that it has happened, not on that scale, but we saw that happening in Iraq, we are seeing it happen right now in Darfur and other parts of the Sudan. The ability of humans to commit great horror against their fellow human beings has not died out.

That is why it is essential for us to engage in this ceremony and to participate and recognize that this is an ongoing battle to fight against those who would kill their fellow human beings indiscriminately at times, and at other times kill them simply because of their race or ethnic background.

I am very pleased to be here presenting this resolution, because this event is something that we should all participate in every year to remind us of what can happen if we let our guard down, and if we assume that we have conquered evil. Evil will always be with us, and we must continually fight it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 350.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EXTENDING AUTHORITY TO EXPEDITE PROCESSING OF PERMITS

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4826) to extend through December 31, 2006, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4826

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. FUNDING TO PROCESS PERMITS.

Section 214(c) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (33 U.S.C. 2201 note; 114 Stat. 2594; 117 Stat. 1836; 119 Stat. 2169) is amended by striking "March 31, 2006" and inserting "December 31, 2006".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4826, to authorize an extension

of the Army Corps of Engineers' section 214 program. Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 allows the Army Corps of Engineers to accept and expend funds provided by non-Federal public entities to hire additional personnel to process regulatory permits.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4826 is urgently needed since authority for this program expires on March 31 of this calendar year. If this program expires, the corps will have to fire some regulatory personnel, reducing its ability to process permits in a timely manner.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has heard from Members on both sides of the aisle supporting this section 214 program. H.R. 4826 is nearly identical to section 2003 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2005, which passed the House on July 14, 2005 by a vote of 406-14.

While the other body has not yet acted on the Water Resources Development Act this year, I am hopeful, in the wake of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, they will move quickly to pass the bill providing for the water resources needs of the Nation. But because the authority for section 214 program is expiring, it is necessary to move this piece of legislation separately.

I thank Representative BAIRD and our colleagues from the western United States for introducing this bill, and I urge all Members to vote in favor of H.R. 4826.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to my good friend and subcommittee chairman, Representative JIM DUNCAN, on the passing of his 89-year-old mother, Ms. Lois Swisher-Duncan. I want JIMMY and his wife, Lynn, and the entire Duncan family to know that my thoughts and prayers are with them. It is my prayer that God brings peace to each of their respective hearts during the days ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I support the passage of H.R. 4826. This bill extends through December 31, 2006, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend the funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to process permits under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899. This program is popular and well received, particularly in the northwest part of our country.

I congratulate my committee colleague, Mr. BAIRD, for his attention to this issue and for securing today's consideration of this bill. I can think of no other Member who has served his local and regional issues with more enthusiasm and effectiveness.

The language in H.R. 4826 is similar to language contained in H.R. 2864, the Water Resources Development Act of 2005, which passed the House on July

14, 2005, by an overwhelming vote of 406-14. The difference between the language contained in this bill and that contained in the comprehensive Water Resources Development Act is that this provision only extends the program for 9 months. The water resources bill is a full 12 months longer, but 9 months is all the Senate would agree to. However, this bill should likewise receive strong support.

Today's consideration of one section of the larger Water Resources Development Act should not be viewed as an indication that the larger bill will not be enacted this year. I remain optimistic that the other House of Congress will soon consider this vital legislation, particularly in light of the vital role of flood damage reduction, navigation, and storm damage reduction projects in protecting lives and property and enhancing economic well-being.

The tragic events associated with Hurricane Katrina indicate how important our water infrastructure truly is. However, the Senate is not likely to act on the broader legislation before the Secretary's authority to accept funds expires March 31, in just a little over 2 weeks from now. By providing this extension, the program can continue uninterrupted.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this bill.

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and the gentleman from Louisiana as well, and want to begin by extending my condolences to JIMMY DUNCAN and his family at the loss of Congressman DUNCAN's mother.

I rise today to support H.R. 4826, a bill to extend section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 until December 31 of this year, 2006. This is a commonsense bill that will save jobs and continue to promote economic growth.

Section 214 was enacted in WRDA 2000 to permit non-Federal public entities to contribute funds to the Army Corps of Engineers to help expedite the processing of corps permits. This provision has allowed municipalities and ports to move forward with vital infrastructure projects; and in doing so, these entities that are providing funding are given no partiality by the corps in their review of the projects. By funding additional staff to work on specific time-intensive permits, the staff in the corps' budget is freed up to work on the permit backlog.

Let me give an example of this: the Army Corps' Seattle district has been utilizing this authority very well. They have seen their total average review time per project reduced from 804 days