

every turn, we will never retreat, and we will prevail because the cause of freedom is just and righteous. As one of my heroes, President John F. Kennedy, once said, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." Today we renew this pledge.

This resolution also makes it clear that while we do not shrink from the fight against terrorism, we also recognize that this battle is one that cannot be won without diplomacy. While we declare that we will always support efforts to maintain Israel's identity as a Jewish state with secure borders, we also renew our commitment to achieving a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state living in peace alongside of the State of Israel.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we are here to speak in a united voice to support Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. We pray for their safety and we hope that they will return home soon. As we do this, we realize that the stories of these three brave soldiers are a part of a larger conflict that has taken thousands of lives and has ravaged an entire region of the world for far too long. With this resolution, we take another small step toward a future that is free of this conflict, where both Israelis and Palestinians have a place to call home and where no more lives are lost to a needless cycle of violence.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

I rise today to voice my strong support for H. Res. 107. This bipartisan resolution calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldiers held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah.

I want to thank my friend from New York, Congressman GARY ACKERMAN, for introducing this resolution.

More than 7 months have passed since July of 2006, when Hamas terrorists crossed into Israel to attack a military post, killing two soldiers and wounding and kidnapping a third, Gilad Shalit.

Less than 1 month later, Hezbollah terrorists crossed into Israel and ambushed Israeli troops patrolling the border with Lebanon, killing three soldiers and kidnapping two, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev.

These despicable acts occurred despite Israel's good faith efforts, which included its total withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May of 2000.

These two terrorist groups have withheld all information on the health and welfare of the men they have kidnapped. Defying the most basic standards of conduct, they have prevented medical personnel and members of the International Red Cross from having access to the kidnapped Israelis.

In spite of these terrorist attacks, the strength of the Israeli people has not wavered. In these difficult times, our support of Israel must not waver either.

The United States must stay committed to the welfare and survival of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic nation with secure borders.

Our Congress must stand in one voice and condemn Hamas and Hezbollah, and their primary sponsors, Iran and Syria, for these cross border attacks.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting Israel and condemning these heinous acts, and cast a vote in favor of H. Res. 107.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, it's been more than seven months now and many have forgotten about the three Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hamas and Hezbollah: Ehud Goldwasser, Eldad Regev, and Gilad Shalit. Hezbollah seems to have forgotten that last year's hostilities ended only after there were promises regarding the return of the Israeli men. This just goes to reinforce the fact that terrorist organizations cannot be negotiated with.

In 2004, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 called for Hezbollah in Lebanon to disband. Despite a half-dozen statements from the Secretary-General, they continued to occupy the border region as UN observers looked on. We don't know for sure, but these very observers may have watched Hezbollah cross the border and kidnap Goldwasser and Regev.

Security Council Resolution 170, which ended the most recent conflict, again called for Hezbollah to disarm and return of the soldiers. They remain in Lebanon and Gaza and not even international organizations such as the Red Cross have been able to see them and be assured of their fair treatment.

Israel has demonstrated its commitment to the Resolution by ceasing hostilities and pulling back its soldiers, but yet again they are dealing with opponents who show disrespect to all and whose word cannot be trusted.

We stand together with Israel to call again for the unconditional release of these three men. We pray for their safe return and for peace between Israel and its neighbors. They will not be forgotten by their families, by their nation, or by this body.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H. Res. 107, a resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldiers Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, who continue to be held by the terror organizations Hamas and Hezbollah more than 6 months after being captured. These soldiers were kidnapped on Israeli soil in two separate, but equally brazen attacks, which were acts of war.

During their time in captivity, Hamas and Hezbollah, both of whom desire to simultaneously maintain an armed wing and a political wing, have not reported on the soldiers' health and have not granted access to international organizations to check on their well-being.

In August of last year, shortly after the fighting between Israeli forces and Hezbollah stopped, I visited Lebanon and northern Israel. While in Israel, we met with the families of the kidnapped soldiers. I cannot tell you how difficult it is, especially for a parent, to know a loved one is in harm's way and there is nothing you can do to help him.

It is so important that this resolution is on the floor of the House today because we want the soldiers to know, we want their families to know, and we want Hamas and Hezbollah and the state sponsors of their terrorist activities—Iran and Syria to know that America has not forgotten the kidnappings that took place last summer. We will not forget this injustice until the soldiers are returned home to their families safe and sound.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker I rise today as a proud original cosponsor of

House Resolution 107, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah since last summer.

The critical bipartisan legislation being introduced today calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the three Israeli soldiers who were captured last summer. Ehud Goldwasser, 31, and Eldad Regev, 26, were kidnapped by Hezbollah on July 12, 2006. Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by Hamas on June 25, 2006.

Moreover, my cosponsorship of this legislation follows up on the July 29, 2006 letter I wrote to American Red Cross Interim President Jack McGuire urging the American Red Cross to apply pressure to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to look into the well-being of the three Israeli soldiers. My colleague, Canadian Senator Jerry S. Grafstein, wrote a similar letter.

To date, Gilad is the only captive Israeli soldier to have been confirmed to be alive by his captors. Hezbollah has not given any indication as to whether the other two Israeli soldiers they captured are injured or even still alive. Contrary to the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, Hamas and Hezbollah have prevented access to all of the Israeli captives by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

I and all in this country, resent terrorist groups who use human life as a strategic tool to further their radical agenda. In calling for the release of these Israeli prisoners, the United States stands with Israel and sends a united message to terrorists that their fanatic behavior will be unsuccessful in deterring a Middle East peace.

I support the efforts the Israeli government has thus far made in attempting to gain the captives' release. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and her fellow ministers, as well as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, have continued to raise this issue at the highest levels in their diplomatic meetings.

These three brave soldiers have been held hostage without medical attention and without communication or access to their family for far too long. The United States Congress has not forgotten these men and will make every effort to secure their freedom. The Shalit, Goldwasser and Regev families should know that I and the United States stand by them and pray for the return of their sons.

Mr. ACKERMAN. 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 York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 107, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT BANGLADESH SHOULD DROP CHARGES AGAINST SALAH UDDIN SHOAIB CHOUDHURY

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to

the resolution (H. Res. 64) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Bangladesh should immediately drop all pending charges against Bangladeshi journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 64

Whereas Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury is a Bangladeshi journalist who, because of his beliefs in an interfaith dialogue between Jews and Muslims and criticism of Islamic extremism, is on trial for sedition, an offense punishable by death;

Whereas on November 29, 2003, Mr. Choudhury was arrested at Zia International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on his way to board a flight bound for Tel Aviv; Mr. Choudhury's passport was seized, along with considerable sums of money and several personal items; on that same day police raided Mr. Choudhury's home and newspaper offices, seizing files, computers, and other valuables;

Whereas Mr. Choudhury was detained in Dhaka Central Jail for a passport violation, then subsequently charged with sedition; Mr. Choudhury suffered harsh interrogation techniques and received no treatment for a debilitating case of glaucoma; Mr. Choudhury's incarceration lasted 17 months without legal recourse;

Whereas on April 30, 2005, after intervention by the United States Department of State and congressional offices, Mr. Choudhury was released on bail;

Whereas in the subsequent months, senior members of the Bangladeshi Government made continuous public promises that there was no substance to Mr. Choudhury's pending charges and that all charges would be dropped;

Whereas on September 29, 2005, Mr. Choudhury was awarded the "Freedom to Write Award" by PEN USA;

Whereas on May 5, 2006, Mr. Choudhury was awarded the American Jewish Committee's Moral Courage Award in absentia in Washington, D.C.; two days prior to Mr. Choudhury receiving the award, after returning Mr. Choudhury's passport and appearing to allow him to attend, senior Bangladeshi Government officials issued threats to prevent him from leaving the country;

Whereas on September 18, 2006, a judge with alleged ties to an Islamic extremist party ruled that Mr. Choudhury will stand trial for sedition; the judge made this ruling despite the Public Prosecutor's testimony in court days before that the government did not have evidence and would not object to the charges being dropped;

Whereas members of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom visited with Mr. Choudhury on their trip to Bangladesh in February and March 2006;

Whereas on October 6, 2006, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom wrote a letter to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher calling on the United States Government to strengthen the "voices of moderation" in countries like Bangladesh where the rule of law, democratic institutions, and respect for human rights are under assault by violent extremists; the Commission identified Mr. Choudhury as one of those voices that should not be silenced;

Whereas, according to the Department of State's 2005 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Bangladesh, "Attacks on journalists and newspapers, and government efforts to intimidate them, political party

activists, and others, occurred frequently"; and

Whereas moderate voices in the Muslim world must be supported and protected to advance the security of the United States and its allies: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Government of Bangladesh should immediately drop all pending charges against Bangladeshi journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury;

(2) the Government of Bangladesh should immediately return all of Mr. Choudhury's confiscated possessions; and

(3) the Government of Bangladesh should cease harassment and intimidation of Mr. Choudhury and take steps to protect Mr. Choudhury.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to commend my friend and colleague MARK KIRK from Illinois as well as that of Mrs. LOWEY of New York for their leadership on this important human rights case.

With passage of this resolution, Congress will firmly indicate its view that the government of Bangladesh should immediately release a Bangladeshi journalist whose only apparent crime is to attempt to visit the democratic nation of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, Bangladesh has undergone great political turmoil in recent months, and the nation is now being ruled by a caretaker government. As Bangladesh moves towards a new round of elections, it is imperative that the rule of law and freedom of the press be preserved.

The current government has set out an agenda to reform Bangladesh's political system and to stem corruption. We have seen lately the arrest of many previously high-ranking government officials. It is my sincere wish that the standards of responsible governance survive under the caretaker government until free and fair elections take place, elections that I hope will happen in the near term.

In this time of great political turmoil in Bangladesh, it is truly inexplicable that the government would focus its scarce resources on prosecuting a journalist.

Mr. Choudhury believes in interfaith dialogue between Jews and Muslims as

an alternative to religious extremism, and has been commended by the international community for such bravery of thought.

Gaining the respect and concern of organizations like the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Mr. Choudhury has shown immense resiliency after facing numerous political and physical threats.

Mr. Choudhury's actions are courageous, not criminal, and it is time for the government of Bangladesh to take decisive action and drop all pending charges. The political leadership of Bangladesh should focus on getting its own house in order instead of mindlessly prosecuting someone for trying to promote international peace and stability.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the outstanding leadership of Congressman KIRK in introducing this timely resolution. It has my wholehearted support.

Mr. Choudhury is a Bangladeshi journalist and the editor of the Weekly Blitz, the largest tabloid English-language weekly in Bangladesh. He is currently facing a sedition trial for daring to reach out to Jewish and Israeli writers, as well as for speaking openly about the threat radical Islam poses in Bangladesh.

Mr. Choudhury was arrested in November 2003 when he tried to attend a conference in Israel and then was subjected to brutal treatment while in prison. Although he was released last year, in large part due to the efforts of Congressman KIRK and others, the Bangladesh government refuses to drop the charges against Mr. Choudhury, apparently trying to intimidate him into silence.

Last May, the American Jewish Committee presented Mr. Choudhury with the Moral Courage Award recognizing his efforts to promote dialogue between Muslims and Jews and his courage in speaking out against Islamic extremism.

Unfortunately, however, the authorities in Dhaka refused to permit him to visit the U.S. to receive the honor.

Mr. Speaker, Bangladesh and the U.S. have been good friends for over 35 years. Despite many handicaps, Bangladesh has made good progress in some key areas of development, including agricultural production, improved literacy rates, basic social services, and empowering women through employment and education.

As the fourth most populous Muslim country in the world, a moderate and stable Bangladesh can play an important role in regional and world affairs.

Today, however, Bangladesh is at a crossroads. National elections are being postponed amidst electoral chaos; meanwhile, the military appears

to be playing an increasingly large role within the Bangladeshi interim government.

The prospect of holding free and fair elections during the first half of 2007 appears to be much in doubt. More broadly, endemic political polarization, corruption and related governance concerns, as well as the rise of violent extremists remains substantial challenges for the Bangladeshi society.

Mr. Speaker, in this context I urge the authorities in Dhaka to send a strong signal about the importance Bangladesh attaches to tolerance and the rule of law by dropping these politically motivated charges against Mr. Choudhury. I support the resolution and urge its adoption.

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

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the author of this resolution.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution which marks this family member and what has happened to him as a prisoner of conscience in Bangladesh.

When we see what happened to him after advocating the cause of religious reconciliation between Muslims and Jews, we see the condition of Salah Choudhury after a severe beating which he was subjected to.

□ 1245

This resolution urges the government of Bangladesh to drop all charges against Bangladeshi journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury.

Mr. Choudhury now faces charges of sedition, treason and blasphemy. He faces these charges because of his belief in an interfaith dialogue between Jews and Muslims, and because of articles that he published critical of Islamic extremism. Under Bangladeshi law, sedition is a crime punishable by death.

Mr. Choudhury was detained in November 2003 at Zia International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on his way to board a flight for Tel Aviv simply to participate in the annual Hebrew Writers Conference. Mr. Choudhury's passport was seized, along with considerable sums of money and several personal items. On that same day, the police raided his home, his newspaper, and seized files, computers and other valuables.

Since Bangladeshi law currently prohibits travel to Israel, Choudhury was first cited for a minor passport violation, but he was subsequently charged with sedition and accused of espionage as an Israeli spy and incarcerated indefinitely. He was subjected to harsh interrogation techniques and received no treatment for a debilitating case of glaucoma.

After being denied due process, Choudhury languished in jail for 17

months until one tireless human rights champion, and my constituent, Dr. Richard Benkin, began a personal odyssey to free Shoaib Choudhury. Dr. Benkin met Mr. Choudhury through a pro-Israel Internet Web site, and Dr. Benkin brought this situation to my attention and now before the House. All together, we sought for his freedom, and shortly thereafter, we did succeed in getting Choudhury's release from jail, finally reuniting him with his wife and two children.

Following Shoaib's release, a senior Bangladesh government official made numerous public pledges that all pending legal action against Mr. Choudhury would be dropped. Nevertheless, the government pressed forward with formal sedition charges.

Mr. Choudhury has won the recognition of international human rights and freedom of expression organizations for his courage. He was honored by PEN U.S.A.'s Freedom to Write Award and was presented with the American Jewish Committee's prestigious Moral Courage Award in absentia in Washington, D.C. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom intervened and wrote a letter to Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher calling on the U.S. Government to strengthen the voices of moderation in countries like Bangladesh where the rule of law, democratic institutions, and respect for human rights are under assault by violent extremists. The commission identified Mr. Choudhury as one of those voices.

But despite such international attention, the persecution of Choudhury has persisted. Mr. Choudhury's newspaper offices were bombed by Islamic extremists in July 2006, and he was attacked by a mob in his office on October 5, 2006, where this very picture was taken. A judge with alleged ties to Islamic extremist groups then ruled that Choudhury must stand trial for his life for sedition.

Bangladesh today is at a crossroads. Much-anticipated elections were postponed due to irregularities, and a state of emergency was declared. In a country with 150 million people packed into a land mass smaller than Iowa, 85 percent of whom are Muslim, it is critically important for Bangladesh to demonstrate its commitment to democratic institutions, to religious freedom, and to human rights. For his message of moderation and interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Jews, Mr. Choudhury is facing unjust criminal charges in an effort to silence him. The House of Representatives sends a clear message today that we will not allow an outspoken advocate for religious freedom to be quelled by intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in this resolution and would like to thank Chairman LANTOS for his friendship and support in bringing this up and for his tireless advocacy on behalf of human rights of all as co-chairman of the Human Rights Caucus. I

also want to thank Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for her support on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I would like also to thank our ambassador to Bangladesh, Patricia Butenis, for her outstanding work at Embassy Dhaka. Her team has been vigorously monitoring this case, attending Mr. Choudhury's legal proceedings, and making strong public statements on his behalf.

I also want to thank Dr. Richard Benkin, sitting in the gallery today, for his unrelenting pursuit of justice on behalf of Shoaib Choudhury. I am proud to join Dr. Benkin in this endeavor and look forward to one day when we may even host Shoaib Choudhury in our very own Mount Prospect, Illinois.

Lastly, I want to thank the best congressional human rights staffer that I have ever had: Jeff Phillips had worked tirelessly on behalf of an African prisoner of conscience for months until he finally won his release. Now he has seized on Shoaib's case and made it a cause in the United States, in Canada, in Europe, and the subcontinent. He, we, have all been inspired by Shoaib and Dr. Benkin, and we hope by this resolution this case and a potential death sentence against Shoaib can be lifted. Shoaib is not a criminal, and he should not become a martyr. He is a model for interfaith tolerance and discussion between all of those of different faiths in the world.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members of the House are reminded to refrain from bringing to the attention of the House occupants of the galleries.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as she might consume to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), the distinguished Chair of the appropriations subcommittee on Foreign Operations and the cosponsor of this resolution before us.

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank my distinguished colleague from New York for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 64, a resolution expressing the sense of the House that the Government of Bangladesh should drop all charges against Bangladeshi journalist, Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury. I want to thank my colleague from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for his leadership on this issue.

In May of 2006, the American Jewish Committee awarded Mr. Choudhury the Moral Courage Award. Unfortunately, he was not there to receive this honor because more than 2 years earlier he was arrested while attempting to board a flight from Bangladesh to Tel Aviv. Mr. Choudhury's passport was confiscated, his house and possessions were raided, and he was first cited for a passport violation because Bangladeshi law prohibits travel to Israel. Subsequently, he was charged with sedition, accused of espionage, and imprisoned for 17 months.

What is his crime? Mr. Choudhury spoke up for interfaith dialogue, he published articles critical of Islamic extremism, and he appealed for greater religious tolerance and freedom. For these "crimes" he is charged with sedition, an offense punishable by death.

Mr. Choudhury has already been harassed and subjected to harsh interrogation techniques in prison. His newspaper offices were bombed by Islamic extremists in July of 2006, and he was physically attacked in October of 2006.

This resolution calls on the Government of Bangladesh to immediately drop the charges against Mr. Choudhury, to return his confiscated property, to stop intimidation tactics against him, and to protect him from future harassment.

Mr. Choudhury advocates peace and tolerance. It is time that Congress sends a strong and clear message: we are watching, and we will not allow Mr. Choudhury and others like him to be silenced.

I hope you will join me in strongly supporting H. Res. 64.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the gentleman for yielding; and, Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and Mrs. NITA LOWEY for their hard work in bringing this thoughtful resolution to the House floor today.

I was in Bangladesh about 3 weeks ago where I had the opportunity to meet with the new caretaker government, that leadership, as well as the leaderships in the two main political parties that are vying for power and have held power the last several decades. In fact, I met with our ambassador and members in the business community.

But one of the highlights and I think the most significant thing that I had an opportunity to do was to meet with the gentleman, Shoaib Choudhury, who is a journalist, and we have heard much talk about his situation this morning. But I think the gravity of it is significant, and I think it is important that this House is taking this action today.

Mr. Choudhury is a journalist in Bangladesh, known for his viewpoints which are favorable to expanding dialogue between Muslims and Jews and Christians and for developing ties with Israel. As was indicated, he was actually arrested on his way to Israel at the airport, and he is also trying to have more equality relative to religion and especially his observance and opposition to Islamic extremism, which unfortunately is on the rise in Bangladesh and in a number of regions.

Just as Islamic extremism and fundamentalism have been a danger in other areas of the world, it is a real problem in Bangladesh, and he has had the courage to speak out on this important issue.

Unfortunately, in a place where journalists are not necessarily given broad

freedom of speech as our media would have here in this country, Mr. Choudhury was arrested and charged with sedition and accused of espionage and unjustly incarcerated for 17 months during which he received less than adequate treatment for glaucoma and other conditions from which he suffers. He is now facing charges which could bring the death penalty under Bangladesh law.

Now, several government leaders indicated that they do not intend to pursue the death penalty in this particular case; but when one considers the actions for which Mr. Choudhury was charged, this is not a person that should be jailed in the first place. This is a person who should be honored, as he has been around the world. You have to admire his strength and his resilience.

I asked him how he was being treated and spoke with him about the prospects for his trial. His next trial appearance was supposed to be February 28. At the time of my visit, Mr. Choudhury was encouraged by recent government assurances that his charges might be dropped or that they did not intend to go forward with the death penalty; but as it turns out, a radical Islamist-affiliated judge recently signed an order forcing the trial and the court proceedings to proceed. He is being accused of a threat to the security of Bangladesh. So much for a fair trial and just treatment.

This is something that really should get the attention not only of this House but the world.

This bipartisan resolution on the floor today urges the Bangladeshi Government to drop all charges against Mr. Choudhury. The United States Congress should show Mr. Choudhury that he can count on our full support and that the success of fledgling democracies such as Bangladesh lies squarely on the very freedoms that Mr. Choudhury embodies.

I am glad to be a cosponsor of this important resolution. I thank the Speaker for recognizing this and urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, again in closing, I want to thank the chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee, Mr. ACKERMAN, for bringing this forward. Certainly we want to thank Mr. KIRK for his hard work and then Mrs. LOWEY for making this a very bipartisan effort, and I would urge all of my colleagues to support this.

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

□ 1300

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude to Mr. BOOZMAN, the gentleman from Arkansas, for his expeditious handling of this on the floor. I want to thank both Mr. KIRK and Mrs. LOWEY for bringing this resolution to our attention and to also note the great spirit of nonpartisanship

that we have on this matter and hope that that could splash over and spill over and overwhelm some prevailing attitudes on both sides so that we might bring this kind of approach and dedication to all of the legislation that we have before us this session.

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 York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 64, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KIRK. 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.

RECOGNIZING THE 186TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE AND CELEBRATING GREEK AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 228) recognizing the 186th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 228

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that "it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you";

Whereas Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through such bravery as was shown in the historic Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war with its first major setback, setting off a chain of events that significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas the price for Greece in holding our common values in their region was high, as hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in Greece during World War II;

Whereas throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of only three countries in the world, other than the former British Empire, that allied with the United States in every major international conflict;

Whereas President George W. Bush, in recognizing Greek Independence Day, said, "Greece and America have been firm allies in the great struggles for liberty. Americans will always remember Greek heroism and Greek sacrifice for the sake of freedom . . . [and] as the 21st Century dawns, Greece and America once again stand united; this time