

this gamble. Let's support our troops by bringing them home and letting Iraqis shoulder responsibilities which should be theirs.

HONORING ARMENIAN EDITOR HRANT DINK

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of the Armenian Turkish newspaper editor, Hrant Dink. On January 19, the legacy of the Armenian genocide continued. Hrant Dink, who was tried and convicted of “insulting Turkishness” by recognizing the Armenian genocide, unfortunately, was shot dead over a week ago.

Dink was a voice for freedom of the press, for democracy and for Armenian genocide recognition. Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman Empire led a genocide on its Armenian population, killing over 1.5 million people. Over 90 years later, the Turkish Government still refuses to acknowledge it occurred.

I told the Turkish foreign minister last year that to move forward with democratic reform, Turkey must first comes to grips with its past, just as our country had during the civil rights movement. Yesterday, I sent a letter to President Bush urging the withdrawal of the nomination of Richard Hoagland to be Ambassador to Armenia. Given the assassination of Dink, we cannot have an ambassador who refuses to acknowledge the Armenian genocide happened. It would send the wrong message.

PRESIDENT'S ESCALATION PLAN IS NOT NEW—IT'S BEEN TRIED BEFORE AND FAILED

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, in June of 2006, the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraq security forces. That plan failed.

In July, additional U.S. troops are moved in. By October, the Pentagon was admitting that the plan to secure Baghdad had failed. In the fall of 2005, the Bush administration increased troop levels by 22,000 around the time of the elections, and the escalation had little long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence.

The New York Times had a story by a young troop member in Baghdad yesterday. You need to read it, because it talked about how the snipers killed one of their buddies and how they went in to get his body out and to get his helmet, and the blood spilled down the clothing of the rescuers.

This is happening every day because we are fighting a war with an unknown enemy in the middle of sectarian violence. It must stop.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO UNITED STATES GROUP OF THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY). Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 1928a, clause 10 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

Mr. GILLMOR, Ohio
Mr. REGULA, Ohio
Mr. BOOZMAN, Arkansas
Mr. SHIMKUS, Illinois

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

ESTABLISHING THE HOUSE DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE COMMISSION FOR THE 110TH CONGRESS

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 24) establishing the House Democracy Assistance Commission for the One Hundred Tenth Congress, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 24

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

There is established in the House of Representatives a commission to be known as the House Democracy Assistance Commission (hereafter in this resolution referred to as the “Commission”).

SEC. 2. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION.

(a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be composed of 20 Members of the House of Representatives, of whom 11 shall represent the majority party and be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 9 shall represent the minority party and be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(b) TERMS OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—Each member of the Commission shall be appointed for a term that is concurrent with the Congress in which the appointment is made. Such a member may be reappointed for one or more subsequent terms in accordance with the preceding sentence.

(c) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson of the Commission shall be designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives from among the members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives under subsection (a).

SEC. 3. DUTIES.

(a) ACTIVITIES.—The Commission shall work with the legislatures of partner countries, as determined pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b), on a frequent and regular basis in order to—

(1) enable Members, officers, and staff of the House of Representatives and congres-

sional support agencies to provide expert advice and consultation to members and staff of the legislatures of partner countries;

(2) enable members and staff of legislatures of partner countries to study the operations of the House of Representatives and its support agencies; and

(3) provide recommendations to the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development regarding the provision of material assistance, such as modern automation and office systems, information technology, and library supplies, as the Commission determines to be needed by a legislature of a partner country in order to improve the efficiency and transparency of its work, and to oversee the provision of such assistance.

(b) SELECTION OF PARTNER LEGISLATURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to carry out the activities described in subsection (a), the Commission may conduct, as needed, studies on the feasibility of programs of assistance for legislatures of countries described in paragraph (2) for the purpose of strengthening the legislative infrastructure of such countries. Such studies shall assess—

(A) the independent and substantive role that each legislature plays, or could reasonably be expected to play, in the legislative process and government oversight;

(B) the potential benefit to each legislature of expert advice from and consultation with Members and staff of the House of Representatives in areas such as the development of research services and legislative information systems, legislative procedure, committee operations, budget process, government oversight, and constituent services; and

(C) the need in each legislature for material assistance, such as modern automation and office systems, information technology, and research materials, in order to improve efficiency and transparency.

(2) COUNTRIES DESCRIBED.—The countries referred to in paragraph (1) are countries that have established, have re-established, or are developing democratic legislatures which would benefit from the assistance described in this resolution.

(3) ADDITIONAL PARTNER LEGISLATURES.—From any countries studied in accordance with paragraph (1), the Commission may select one or more legislatures to receive assistance under the provisions of this resolution, subject to a written expression of interest from the highest ranking office within the legislature of a selected country.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31, 2007, and each December 31 thereafter, the Commission shall prepare and submit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, appropriate House committees, the Office of Interparliamentary Affairs of the House of Representatives, and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, an annual report on the Commission's activities, including a review of the activities of the Commission in the current year and a proposal for the activities of the Commission in the upcoming year, as described in subsection (a).

(2) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate House committees” means the following committees of the House of Representatives:

(A) The Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(B) The Committee on Appropriations.

(C) The Committee on House Administration.

(D) The Committee on Rules.

SEC. 4. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall carry out the duties described in section 3

using the staff and resources of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, including the use of consultants or temporary employees, such as individuals with expertise in development of democratic parliaments, legislative systems management, legislative research, parliamentary procedure, related legislative matters, and technology systems management, as appropriate.

(b) PARTICIPATION OF LEGISLATIVE BRANCH EMPLOYEES.—At the request of the Commission, the head of any office of the House of Representatives or any congressional support agency may assist the work of the Commission by—

(1) detailing personnel to the staff of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or another standing committee of the House of Representatives; or

(2) authorizing personnel to participate in activities of the Commission.

SEC. 5. TRANSITION FROM FORMER COMMISSION.

(a) CONTINUATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS.—The Commission may continue programs of assistance with legislatures of partner countries which were initiated by the former Commission.

(b) TRANSFER OF AUTHORITIES AND RESOURCES.—Any authorities and resources of the former Commission which remain available as of the day before the date of the adoption of this resolution, including unobligated funds, shall be transferred and made available to the Commission.

(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the “former Commission” means the House Democracy Assistance Commission established under the House Democracy Assistance Commission Resolution (House Resolution 135, One Hundred Ninth Congress, agreed to March 14, 2005).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may 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 California?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

When the Berlin Wall fell, I was there with other congressional colleagues. We experienced firsthand the exuberance of the people of East Germany and across the newly liberated region.

But to sustain the momentum of that unique instant in history to commitment on both sides of the Atlantic, commitment not just to elections, but to the development of permanent, democratic institutions that permeate society. Madam Speaker, I vividly recall how excited we in Congress were when we first provided assistance to our new colleagues in democratically elected parliaments across Central and Eastern Europe.

That is why I strongly support the resolution before the House today, which reestablishes the House Democracy Assistance Commission. This important body plays a critical role in ensuring that the new generation of emerging democratic institutions get desperately needed assistance.

In the 109th Congress, the House created this commission to enable members and staff to assist their counterparts in the parliaments of new democracies around the globe. With our help, they will build strong, independent legislatures.

The commission has been led by two steadfast and consistent supporters of democracy promotion, DAVID PRICE, our colleague from North Carolina, and DAVID DREIER, my fellow Californian. I want to offer my sincere gratitude to both of them for their efforts.

Under their leadership, the commission took congressional delegations to six new or reemerging democracies and hosted six visiting parliamentary delegations here in Washington.

The commission also offered material assistance to several legislatures through USAID, most notably a project to furnish and equip and train staff of the parliamentary library of East Timor with the invaluable assistance of our own Library of Congress.

Pending the passage of this resolution by the full House, the commission in 2007 plans to assist the legislatures of Afghanistan, Colombia, East Timor, Georgia—not our own Georgia, but the former Soviet Republic of Georgia—Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia and Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, in 1918, President Woodrow Wilson expressed the idea that it is in our national interest to encourage free and open and democratic governments. Over the past nine decades, the United States has sustained and expanded this important commitment. The Price-Dreier Commission is an important part of this tradition, and it deserves our continued support.

I urge all of our colleagues to participate in the House Democracy Assistance Commission and to support this most important legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I also rise in strong support of House Resolution 24, reestablishing the House Democracy Assistance Commission for this 110th Congress. I was an enthusiastic cosponsor of the legislation creating the commission in the year 2005, and I am proud of what it has accomplished during these years.

Our colleagues, as Mr. LANTOS mentioned, Mr. DREIER and Mr. PRICE, deserve our thanks for their hard work and identifying candidate legislatures in emerging democracies to receive commission assistance. The 12 partner countries selected so far include na-

tions of strategic importance to all of us, such as Afghanistan and Lebanon. They include the largest Muslim majority nation on Earth, Indonesia, which has emerged from authoritarian dictatorship to become the world's third largest democracy.

It includes countries that have overcome Soviet-era communism such as Georgia, Mongolia and Ukraine. They include one of the world's newest nations, East Timor. It also includes important neighbors in the hemisphere such as Colombia and Haiti and friends in Africa, among many others. To these nations, the commission provides not only technical support, but moral support as well.

Many of us have heard of how much democratic reformers and parliamentarians overseas appreciate the formal relationships with the House provided by this commission. All of us here know democracy is more than just about holding an election. It is also about building responsive institutions that can earn the public trust and the public's allegiance.

To be effective in a democratic context, legislatures must have the independent capacity for research, for analysis and for legal drafting. So the expanding programming that the commission plans to undertake during this Congress is vitally important, Madam Speaker.

I have no doubt that the commission will continue to do great things with the limited resources that it shares with our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

It represents a modest investment in sharing with the people of the world one of our most treasured legacies, government of the people, by the people, for the people. For these reasons, Madam Speaker, this resolution before us deserves our unanimous support.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to my good friend and our distinguished colleague from California (Mrs. CAPPS), a member of the commission for the 109th Congress.

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this bipartisan resolution to continue that good work of the House Democracy Assistance Commission. As a member of the commission, I want to thank our cochairs, Representatives DAVID PRICE and DAVID DREIER, for the excellent job that they have done in leading us.

I want to thank our current and former staff, John Lis, Tommy Ross, Lara Alameh and Robert Lawrence, who have worked very hard to make the commission successful with its work.

Madam Speaker, the House Democracy Assistance Commission was established in the last Congress as an instrument for this House to share some of

the lessons we have learned over 200 years about making democratic government work.

The commission has tried to impart these lessons to countries around the world now embarking on this hopeful path. Members of the commission have visited a number of countries struggling to find their way in a more open system of government, eager to have our partnership with them in this endeavor. We have hosted representatives from many of these same countries here in Washington and in some of our congressional districts.

For example, I hosted members of the Indonesian delegation in my district, and I have traveled there, and to East Timor, to Macedonia, to Afghanistan. During these visits, we discussed with our counterparts the basic workings of government, everything from the importance of constituent relations to the value of setting budgets, from the roles of minority and majority parties to the importance of public health programs.

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We don't tell them how they should make their governments work, but we do try to explain how we have made it work in this country; and we have done so in a bipartisan and really even non-partisan manner.

Madam Speaker, this year the House will have before it many important tasks. I believe very few are as important to the well-being and future of our country as helping to establish stable democracies around the world. The House Democracy Assistance Commission will try in its small way to advance that goal, to bring us a more peaceful and just, well-governed world.

I urge the House to pass this legislation and let us continue our work.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), one of the co-authors and co-creators of this commission.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to my very good friend from Miami (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN); and of course my great pal from California (Mr. LANTOS), my classmate and neighbor, who, as soon as I took the well, decided to walk off the floor, but he is still here for a moment. And I do appreciate the fact that in a bipartisan way we have taken on what is one of the most interesting and fulfilling challenges that I have faced in the many years that I have been privileged to serve here in the Congress.

And, of course, as I look around the Chamber and see colleagues like LOIS CAPPS and, of course, the man with whom I served as a partner in a bipartisan way on this, DAVID PRICE from North Carolina; on our side of the aisle, JEFF FORTENBERRY and JOHN BOOZMAN,

who are among the Members to serve on this commission, it is very, very important today that we reauthorize this effort.

As we look at our quest to prosecute the global war on terror, it is obvious that many things need to be done. We obviously need to have the military wherewithal to do everything necessary to make sure that as we face terror attacks and other military conflicts that we are able to successfully take that on. But, similarly, it is important for us to look at other ways in which we can do everything possible to help people who are struggling.

And I forgot to mention Ms. SCHWARTZ, who I had not seen because my peripheral vision wasn't that great; so I am happy that she is here, another very able and hardworking member of our commission.

But, Madam Speaker, as I was saying, as we look at this challenge not only dealing with the military challenge, it is important for us to work to build democracies and those institutions that relate to it and the rule of law and political pluralism and self-determination, as I like to always say, those things that we have a tendency to take for granted here in the United States but are so important.

And this commission was specifically built on something that we did about 15 years ago following the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet Union, that being our effort to let Eastern and Central Europe know that as they work to claw their way from totalitarianism that we would do all that we could to help build their parliaments. And, Madam Speaker, that is exactly what we have now been able to do so far in six countries and we have six other countries with which we are working very closely, assuming that we reauthorize this effort here.

And we are going to be doing so, I know, under the very able leadership of my colleague Mr. PRICE, and I am going to be working on our Republican side with members. And, again, I was very privileged to serve as chairman that we did this as a partnership. It was not only a partnership in a bipartisan way between Democrats and Republicans here, but it also has been a very important partnership in working with nongovernment organizations, with the Department of State, with the National Endowment for Democracy, with the International Republic Institute, with the National Democratic Institute, and a wide range of other entities out there that recognize that building these parliaments that will have the ability to engage in oversight of their executive branch, to put into place a budget process to make sure that they have the kind of constituent service that is very important for them, these are the kinds of things that this commission has worked on so effectively.

A couple of quick examples from the missions that we have been on so far: one of the things that we found in

Kenya when we visited there was that it was essential for us to help them build up their budget process and their committee process there as well, and we were able to provide through our commission great benefits for them. And, frankly, when we were on our mission there in Nairobi, Kenya last July, we went to the site of the former U.S. embassy. And we all know back in 1998 that our embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya were attacked by al Qaeda, and now for us to see the role that we are playing in helping to build this democracy in and the fledgling parliament in Kenya has been a very important thing, especially in the light of the fact that most recently we have seen an effort supported by the Kenyan Government and the Ethiopian Government in liberating the Somalians from the hold of those Islamic extremists. So we are seeing a real tangible benefit in this war on terror from the work of this commission.

Similarly, in the Balkans, in Macedonia, on our mission there most recently just over the Thanksgiving break, we were able to do a great deal in helping with the building of their committee process there, and our commission has worked long and hard on that.

So, Madam Speaker, I am going to quote my friend DAVID PRICE because my feeling is virtually identical to that. When we think about the important work that we do with the privilege that we have of serving as Members of the United States Congress, there is nothing that is more fulfilling and rewarding and tangible for us to see than the opportunity to participate in this very important work on the commission.

So I express my appreciation again to Chairman LANTOS and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and all of the members of this commission, and we look forward to reporting back to our colleagues here in the House of Representatives, Madam Speaker, on the very important success that we are going to be having in the months and years to come.

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

Before yielding to my good friend from North Carolina, let me pay tribute to the two DAVIDS who have done an extraordinary job in the last session and, in fact, should be called two Goliaths of legislative accomplishment across the globe.

I could not think of a person more qualified than my friend DAVID PRICE of North Carolina to chair the House Democracy Assistance Commission. DAVID PRICE is a legislator's legislator. His understanding of the legislative process as a distinguished academic political scientist and his practice as one of the most outstanding legislators in the history of the Congress uniquely qualify DAVID PRICE to chair the House Democracy Assistance Commission.

Under his leadership, this body will take to many parts of the world not

only the principle but the practice of the democratic process.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride I yield such time as he may consume to my friend DAVID PRICE.

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from California for those very generous and indeed extravagant words. Coming from him, they mean more than I can say.

Mr. LANTOS. It was an understatement.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Thank you.

And we do thank the chairman and the ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for scheduling this resolution so promptly, so that the House could act on this and our commission could get on with its work.

I also want to acknowledge the previous speaker, Mr. DREIER, the previous chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission, who did a wonderful job in getting this commission launched in its first 2 years. As he said, we have operated every step of the way on an open and bipartisan basis; and so as we swap roles, with my assuming the chairmanship and his being the ranking member, I am very hopeful that this will be a seamless transition, and that this cooperative way of operating will continue. Indeed it should, as we work together in this body to take the message and the practice of democracy to our partner legislatures around the world.

House Resolution 24 would reauthorize the work of the commission. This is a body that was inspired by the work of the Frost-Solomon Task Force back in the early 1990s. We worked then with states in Central and Eastern Europe as they were emerging from communism.

Our commission has undertaken this same kind of work. We are building the institutional capacities of legislatures in emerging democracies. We are working with them to develop their research and budget analysis, oversight, legislative drafting, and other capabilities.

There is a difference, though. In contrast to the Frost-Solomon effort, our scope is not just Central and Eastern Europe, although some of our partner countries are still in that region. We are undertaking around the world to work with partner legislatures. In the commission's first 2 years, we have worked with legislatures in 12 nations. Many of these countries are of key strategic import for our own Nation, and all are enthusiastic, worthy, and willing partners: Afghanistan, Colombia, East Timor, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia, and Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, we view our work as a small but important niche in the United States's mission to spread democracy around the world. We do this

not in the sense that we have all the answers about how to promote democratic rights and governance. The commission's work is rooted in the fundamental realization that the heart of democracy is not found just in elections but between elections. Between elections, that is when a nation's ability to govern itself in a way that is responsive to its citizens and representative of its citizens is established. What happens between elections, establishing representative institutions of governance, is just as important as the nation's free determination of who will govern.

Our commission works with partner legislatures to support development of the tools legislators need to establish responsive, effective government. We carry on our work in the sure realization that we do not have all the answers. We know that our own democracy is a work in progress. We do think we have an important story to tell. But we approach each of these legislatures in a true spirit of partnership, learning from them as they learn from us.

We also don't have a corner on the market of democracy promotion, and we coordinate closely with USAID, with the State Department, with other actors in the field to ensure that our efforts complement and enhance theirs.

We have high expectations for the program which we hope to implement in 2007 with the support of this body. During the last 2 years, our focus has been on assessing candidate legislatures and seeking to establish partnerships. Now we plan to move toward consolidating these relationships by expanding and focusing our programming. We plan to conduct advanced seminars on critical legislative capabilities, to enable sustained communications between members and staff of our legislatures, to identify and support pro-democracy reformers in partner legislatures, and to provide small-scale material assistance in cases of significant need.

So, Madam Speaker, let me close by again thanking my colleague Representative DAVID DREIER, the founding chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission, thanking him for his leadership. He has led us with vision and with an inclusive spirit. I also want to thank Speaker PELOSI, past Speaker HASTERT, Majority Leader HOYER, Chairman LANTOS, Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN, and many others who have supported the commission and helped bring forward quickly this resolution to get our work going.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution, which offers Members of this body a promising opportunity to directly contribute to the important work of championing democracy around the world.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY), one of the founding members of the commission and who is staying on to make

sure that we have a successful commission once again this year.

□ 1300

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her leadership on the Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as our chairman, Mr. LANTOS, for your support of the resolution today.

Madam Speaker, I would like to add my voice to those who have commented on the leadership of Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. DREIER of California, as well as the excellent service that the dedicated staff has provided in the formation of the House Democracy Assistance Commission.

Madam Speaker, I was very pleased to receive an appointment to the commission during the last Congress, because I recognized its potential to help legislators around the world who are struggling to give representative democracy a chance. By supporting this program we can provide direct help to build effective legislative institutions worldwide. Through the work of the House Democracy Assistance Commission we bring the best of our practical experience in running this Congress to emerging democratic societies, where people are longing to experience robust institutional systems that value the just principles of self-determination.

Last Congress, the commission selected 12 parliaments from Afghanistan to East Timor for participation in its technical assistance program. Logistical challenges notwithstanding, the commission's dedicated professionals and committed members reached out to help replicate this institution's success stories in legislatures throughout the world.

In reauthorizing the House Democracy Assistance Commission, we can continue to help other countries place their people's aspirations within reach. In helping them to succeed, we can play a direct role in laying the foundations for a more stable and peaceful world.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution today.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my good friend from Pennsylvania, Congresswoman ALLYSON SCHWARTZ, a distinguished member of the commission.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Thank you, Mr. LANTOS. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the floor this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, I was honored to serve on the House Democracy Assistance Commission during the 109th Congress, and I was privileged to travel on the commission's first trip to Indonesia and East Timor in February of 2006. I too want to thank the commission's chairman, Congressman DAVID PRICE, and the ranking member, former chairman, Congressman DAVID DREIER, for their hard work and their leadership on this important initiative.

I also want to acknowledge the commission's staff, John Lis, in particular,

the director, and the rest of the staff who worked hard in advance of our trips and continued to work hard in preparing for the designation of certain emerging democracies and our trips abroad as well to bring some of those members here.

The last few years have borne witness to a number of encouraging events in emerging democracies around the world, as well as a number of discouraging setbacks. One thing that has become clear is that to help advance democracy, transparency and the rule of law abroad, the United States can and must do more than just support elections. We must support the establishment of strong, independent democratic institutions, which provide the backbone of viable democracy. So in addition to elected executives, we must, and indeed it means, help legislative and judicial branches of government have the authority, the autonomy and the continuity that they need.

As Members of Congress, Members of the oldest directly representative democratic institution in the world, we are in a unique position to reach out to our counterparts in fragile democracies to help build relationships and to learn from each other.

The House Democracy Assistance Commission has conducted legislative strengthening programs with our counterparts in Indonesia, East Timor, Georgia, Macedonia, Kenya and Afghanistan; and these legislators face enormous challenges. For instance, in East Timor, where I traveled, only two of their legislators had legislative experience prior to serving in their parliament. They have almost no support staff and few resources.

Their constitution provides for a substantive parliamentary role; however, lack of experience and lack of infrastructure have severely limited their role, leaving the executive to control most of their legislation. Nonetheless, the members that we met with are deeply committed to their role as representatives and to their role in maintaining and building democratic institutions.

They are keenly aware of the challenges that they face as one of the poorest nations in the world, where basic services from electricity to schools are just being initiated. It is in our Nation's interest to work with nations like East Timor, nations struggling on the road to democracy and stability to establish effective legislative bodies.

The commission enables Members of this body, Democrats and Republicans alike, to do just that, to share our knowledge, expertise and passion for the legislative branch with our counterparts in these emerging democracies.

We have worked with parliamentarians from these countries in their home countries, in State capitals across this country and here in Washington, focusing on the establishment of legislative information and research services, on

providing advice on legislative procedures and committee operations, and on constituent services.

The commission has also provided these parliaments with some needed material support, such as office equipment and computers and library resources. So as we confront the global security challenges of the 21st century, initiatives that strengthen democratic institutions abroad and help provide a positive image of the United States are of utmost importance. That is why this commission is so worthy of our continued support. That is why I urge a "yes" vote on House Resolution 24.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to Mr. BOOZMAN of Arkansas, our last speaker, who has made incredible contributions to the House Democracy Assistance Commission as a founding member of that body.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 24 to reauthorize the House Democracy Assistance Commission. This type of parliamentary development program was initially seen as a tool to help 12 emerging democracies rise from the grasp of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-1990s.

The Solomon-Frost Task Force assumed that successful democratic transitions in former Communist countries depended on direct involvement and at a modest cost were able to help these parliaments become effective legislatures and play a crucial part in a democratic system.

One of the most evident impacts of the program was the goodwill it generated towards the U.S. Congress and the American people among these East European countries under the Iron Curtain.

As the need has continued to grow and our world continues to evolve, former Speaker HASTERT recognized the necessity of having this program once again. The House Democracy Assistance Commission has given the U.S. Congress the ability to guide fledgling democracies into strong, stable institutions of government by creating relationships between members of both bodies.

Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to travel to Lebanon, Kenya and Liberia on a trip not too long ago. And we were greeted in Kenya by a big guy. I am a pretty big guy myself; I am not used to looking up to people. But this individual was probably 6-5, 6-6. He was the staffer that was in charge of taking us around the capital making sure that we got where we were supposed to be.

And then we had the opportunity to journey outside of the capital out into the countryside. We flew out, and this same individual greeted us in his Masai warrior outfit. And we had the opportunity to visit with the Masai, see how they ran things. But, Madam Speaker, that is how you change the world, with the relationships, helping others build the institutions that underpin democracies.

That is how you change the world.

Again, I want to thank Congressmen PRICE and DREIER for their leadership, for the tremendous job that they have done, to Speaker PELOSI for going forward and agreeing to getting things along as far as they have on this, former Speaker HASTERT for his vision, and then most importantly, to the staff that does such a tremendous job of helping out and making all of those things possible.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, we have no further requests for time, and yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield such time as he might consume to the distinguished member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, my good friend from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I would like to say a word or two about the Democracy Assistance Act. Let me commend the chairman and the ranking member for bringing this very important legislation up for reenactment.

I had the opportunity to travel with the Democracy Assistance Commission, and was very impressed with the work that they were doing. I traveled to Lebanon with them, and I think we were the last group there before the war broke out. And we saw glimmers of hope with the parliament at that time. And so there was great interest in moving democracy forward.

Our leaders at that time, Chairman DREIER and Cochairman PRICE did an outstanding job meeting with all party leaders. We then had the opportunity to visit South Africa and Liberia.

In all of the countries we attended there was a tremendous amount of interest in our leadership of the Congress being there. I understand that there are possibilities for Haiti and perhaps Colombia and other countries throughout the world to be assisted by this very important commission.

And so I would just like to add my voice to the importance of the Congress, the parliament, legislator-to-legislator, in attempting to bring democracy throughout the world.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time.

Madam Speaker, before concluding, let me just say this is the ideal way this body works. We have set ourselves an important task: Teaching new democracies how a parliamentary body should work. And with some of our finest colleagues from the Republican and the Democratic side, we have succeeded during the last session of Congress; and under the leadership of DAVID PRICE, we shall move ahead, teaching the practice of democracy across the globe from a practical point of view.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 24, to reestablish the House Democracy Assistance Commission in the 110th Congress. In the 109th Congress, the House of Representatives created this Commission to enable the

Members and staff of the House of Representatives to personally assist their counterparts in the parliaments of new democracies around the world to build strong, independent legislatures. I thank my colleagues, Mr. DAVID PRICE, the gentleman from North Carolina, and Mr. DREIER, the gentleman from California, for leading the Commission and supporting the promotion of democracy.

Under their leadership, the Commission has accomplished a great deal. It undertook congressional delegations to six new or re-emerging democracies and hosted six visiting parliamentary delegations here in Congress. It also offered material assistance to several legislatures through USAID. One highly successful project furnished, equipped, and trained staff of the parliamentary library of East Timor, with the invaluable assistance of our own Library of Congress.

In the aftermath of September 11, it has been too easy to view some nations more aggressively, as we undertook the obvious course of attempting to dismantle terrorist networks, end the support they received from states, and strengthen domestic and international defense capabilities. But in addition to responding to the immediate security threat, it is also necessary to help democracy take root in those countries of the Middle East, Africa, South and Central Asia, and other regions that now breed or support terrorists. It is in these Muslim countries or regions, more than anywhere else, that terrorism feeds off tyranny, finding recruits among the politically repressed and sanctuary from states that use terror against their own people. Building effective political institutions is the surest way to sever the link between terror and tyranny and to advance the values of democracy, individual rights, and cultural pluralism in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world.

Promoting democratic institutions and values in the Muslim world is thus one of our most urgent challenges. But it is not the only one. Meeting the challenge of democratization in the Muslim world should not warrant a retreat from a global approach; on the contrary, it constitutes a powerful new argument for maintaining and strengthening this approach. As September 11 made clear, any seam of dysfunction in the international system, however marginal to the main centers of political and economic interest, can become a source of exposure and threat. In a globalized world, the cancer of breakdown in any country can metastasize to other parts of the global body politic and thus constitutes a danger to international peace and security. In promoting the antidote of democratic institution-building, therefore, it is unwise to write off any country as insignificant or beyond hope.

The global defense of democracy is the appropriate and most effective response to the threat posed by Islamic extremists. As has already been suggested, these extremists do not represent a religion or a civilization but espouse an ideology of hatred and violence as their means to power. Though it is a particularist and corrupted Islamic ideology, to its zealous adherents it is a universal system of truth and thus a fitting rival to democratic civilization, which they falsely describe as decadent and narrowly Western. Since democracy is a genuinely universal value based on the belief that people everywhere, regardless of their religion or culture, can achieve self-government under the rule of law, it is the natural

organizing principle in the struggle to defeat terrorism and to create a stable and peaceful world.

Pending the passage of this resolution by the full House, in 2007 the House Democracy Assistance Commission plans to assist the legislatures of Afghanistan, Colombia, East Timor, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia and Ukraine. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to participate in this important project.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 24, which will reestablish the House Democracy Assistance Commission for the 110th Congress.

I was honored to be appointed by Speaker PELOSI to serve as a member of the House Democracy Assistance Commission during the last Congress, and I am proud of the accomplishments that were made by the Commission. I want to commend Representative DAVID DREIER and Representative DAVID PRICE who worked tirelessly during the 109th Congress to fulfill the mission of the Commission, and John Lis who worked tirelessly as the Commissions Staff Director.

The HDAC built upon Congress's long history of helping emerging democracies around the globe. Many of my colleagues will remember the informal Frost-Solomon Task Force which worked during the early 1990's to provide invaluable technical assistance and equipment to Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Russia. When the HDAC was created, former Congressman Frost commented that the work of the Commission, "means a great deal to members of foreign parliaments because it demonstrates that elected leaders in the United States care about what happens in their country." The work of this Commission may not be noticed by many of our colleagues or even our constituents, but it is vitally important to support and strengthen parliaments of new democracies around the world.

In 2006, the commission was active in Afghanistan, East Timor, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, and Macedonia. I was glad to join the House Democracy Assistance Commission delegation to Lebanon and Kenya. During the trip, the delegation met with our counterparts in the Lebanese National Assembly and the National Assembly of Kenya. In Kenya, the delegation visited the Kimana Health Center and the Sinet water project, both of which were then dedicated in honor of Representative DAVID DREIER and DAVID PRICE, respectively.

The final leg of this trip was to a meeting with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Liberia is home to the first female head of state in all of Africa and is a country founded by freed American slaves, it is essential that the United States remain actively engaged in helping to build Liberia's fledgling democracy.

Madam Speaker, the House Democracy Assistance Commission has only begun its important work. With the approval of this resolution, the Commission will be able to continue to spread its good work with an ever expanding list of partner countries.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from

California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 24, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those voting have responded in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam 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.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO ESTABLISH A PUBLIC JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO THE MURDER OF NORTHERN IRELAND DEFENSE ATTORNEY PATRICK FINUCANE

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 20) calling on the Government of the United Kingdom to immediately establish a full, independent, and public judicial inquiry into the murder of Northern Ireland defense attorney Patrick Finucane, as recommended by Judge Peter Cory as part of the Weston Park Agreement, in order to move forward on the Northern Ireland peace process, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 20

Whereas human rights defense attorney and solicitor Patrick Finucane was brutally murdered in front of his wife and children at his home in Belfast on February 12, 1989;

Whereas many international bodies and nongovernmental human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, British Irish Rights Watch, the Committee for the Administration of Justice, and Human Rights First, have called attention to serious allegations of collusion between loyalist paramilitaries and British security forces in the murder of Mr. Finucane;

Whereas in July 2001 the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom under terms of the Weston Park Agreement appointed retired Canadian Judge Peter Cory to investigate the allegations of collusion between loyalist paramilitaries and British security forces in the murder of Mr. Finucane and other individuals;

Whereas Judge Cory reported to the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom in April 2004 that sufficient evidence of collusion existed to warrant a full, independent, and public judicial inquiry into the murder of Mr. Finucane and recommended that a public inquiry take place without delay;

Whereas the Government of the United Kingdom in April 2005 adopted the Inquiries Act 2005 which empowers the Government to block scrutiny of state actions and limits independent action by the judiciary in inquiries held under its terms, and, after the enactment of this legislation establishing new limited inquiry procedures, the Government announced that an inquiry into the murder of Mr. Finucane would be established which would operate under terms of the new legislation;

Whereas Judge Cory, in a written statement presented to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives in 2005, stated that his 2004 recommendation for a public inquiry into the