

about 35 years. And yet, Barrett says, the biggest battle he faces is not the battle with the disease. The biggest battle that Barrett faces is his battle with the diseased health insurance system.

Barrett has no complications due to his diabetes, yet every year his insurance plan finds new and creative ways to increase his premiums with, of course, no benefits to him. For the last 7 years, Barrett used a product called Lantus insulin to survive, but his insurance company hasn't added it to its formulary. His insurance company states that it is not necessary to his overall health. Well, the reality is, says Barrett, "if I don't take it, I die." It sounds necessary to me.

Plain and simple, Barrett shared with me, insurance companies make more money from nonformulary drugs. Substantially more. The insurance companies and drug companies are turning huge profits. These two conglomerates understand there is a lot of money to be made.

"Let's face it," Barrett says, "the health insurance industry has become nothing more than legalized extortion."

You know, there are millions of Americans like Barrett; Americans who, because of a preexisting condition, through no fault of their own, any of us could be born with or develop diabetes, anybody could develop cancer. I had a friend with a healthy lifestyle, worked out and biked a lot, 41 years old, had a heart attack. You know, it can happen. That is going to be a pre-existing condition for the rest of his life.

Too many Americans bear the scarlet letter of preexisting conditions, like my friend Barrett.

In health care reform, we ban pricing discrimination and exclusions based on preexisting conditions, one.

Two, we empower consumers with choice through an exchange, forcing insurance companies, in some markets for the first time ever, to have real competition with one another, including a public option.

Three, we provide affordability credits to help middle class families afford health care.

Barrett asked, "What is the cost of my health to my wife and daughters?" Barrett says, "I would say it is worth more than the annual bonuses the executives get on top of their six-figure salaries."

Well, I agree with my friend Barrett. The life of Barrett, the health and financial security of his wife and family, the health and financial security of tens of millions of American families is worth more than the bonuses that insurance executives get.

I call upon my colleagues to support the Barretts of the world in your district and join me in supporting health care reform.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as we discuss health care in this body, and we have had a

good and healthy and extensive debate on health care over the last 6 months, and we will continue to over the next month or two, I think it is important to remember the human face; the face of our constituents who put us here to represent them; the face of a family whose 11-year old boy broke his wrist skating and didn't want to tell his mother because he knew it would bring tears to her eyes because of the financial ruin it could cause the family; the story of somebody who is a breast cancer survivor who can't get coverage because of a preexisting condition.

This is the face of health care in America today. And we can do better, and we will do better, and I call upon my colleagues in the House of Representatives to say, enough is enough. Let's make a health care system that we can be proud of, that makes American families stronger, and promotes our economic growth and our financial health.

SUPPORT FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY IN HONDURAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is no secret that there are many challenges to democracy in our hemisphere. There are a number of anti-democratic regimes within our hemisphere that are doing everything they can to expand their influence, to expand their anti-American, anti-democratic, anti-freedom agenda across the hemisphere. But tonight I want to speak about a little country in Central America that is fighting a heroic battle to stop that trend, to keep their democracy alive, to keep their freedoms, their rule of law, their electoral process intact, and that is Honduras.

The people of Honduras, Madam Speaker, have for decades had a democratic process. It has been a process that, frankly, has been a model for many around the world. They have great established democratic institutions. They have had presidential and other elections on regular cycles. And that took place again in November of 2005 when a new President was elected. Mr. Manuel Zelaya was elected.

What happened though, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, is that president then started going in the same direction as other authoritarian regimes had gone, like Mr. Chavez in Venezuela.

□ 2310

And he started violating the Constitution. He started violating the rule of law, not to mention obviously, other things like massive corruption and theft and allegations of ties with the narco—with drug trafficking. But again, he also was violating the Constitution.

On March 23, 2009, right almost at the end of this man's term, he then started an illegal effort to try to change the Constitution so that he could stay in power, remain as President after his term had expired. Now, it's very interesting, we need to understand something, that because Honduras had had dictatorships in the past, their Constitution, which is revered by the people there, was very clear that you could not do that. You could only serve one term as President and that's it for life. You could not do it again. Article IV of that Constitution states very clearly that a President's term may never—is one term, and that that part of the Constitution can never be amended. In other words, a President cannot try to stay on after his term.

March 25, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, as again I mentioned, because President Zelaya tried to start the process so that he could remain in power, the Office of the Public Prosecutor begins investigating what President Zelaya is doing, focusing on the legality or the possible illegality of that proposed referendum to change the Constitution.

May 2009, because President Zelaya's actions were a clear violation of the Constitution, the Attorney General also petitioned the Administrative Law Tribunal to annul, to stop this illegal process that President Zelaya was trying to do, a referendum again so that he could keep himself in power.

May 11, 2009, the Office of the Public Prosecutor publicly states that the referendum violates the Constitution. On May 12, 2009, the Administrative Law Tribunal issues a temporary injunction, prohibiting this referendum that President Zelaya is trying to do to keep himself in power from taking place.

May 27, 2009, the Administrative Law Tribunal rules that the referendum violates the Constitution and orders suspension of all acts in its support. May 28, 2009, despite the referendum already having been declared illegal by the Administrative Law Tribunal, then President Zelaya continues to advocate for that referendum so that he can stay in power.

On May 29, 2009, the Administrative Law Tribunal clarifies its previous May 27 ruling, explaining that any and all acts that would lead to any vote or poll similar to the referendum that President Zelaya was trying to put forward is a violation of the Constitution.

On June 9, 2009, the appellate court, now, of the Administrative Law Tribunal unanimously, unanimously rules that Zelaya's actions violate the Constitution. I think you're starting to see a pattern here; that there is a broad consensus in the courts and everywhere that what Mr. Zelaya's trying to do to keep himself in power is in violation of their country's Constitution.

June 19, 2009, the Honduran appeals court orders the Honduran Armed Forces to not provide any support for this proposed referendum that the

President was trying to do to keep himself in power.

June 24, 2009, Zelaya orders the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense to violate the constitution and to carry out the referendum, which again has already been ruled unconstitutional. You know, why would he ask the Armed Forces to do that? Because under article 272 of that country's Constitution, it states that the Armed Forces is the one that carries out the elections and helps in the election. But the Armed Forces says, No, Mr. President, we're not going to violate the Constitution and the court rulings.

So when the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense refuses to carry out the illegal orders of the President to violate the Constitution, what does President Zelaya do? He fires them both. On June 25, 2009, the Office of the Public Prosecutor files a motion with the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice to reinstate the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Mr. Velazquez.

June 25, same day, the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice now unanimously rules that Zelaya's dismissal of General Velazquez is another violation of the Constitution. Again, this constitutes one of multiple violations of the Constitution by President Zelaya, and he's trying to do all this so that he can stay in power, despite the Constitution.

Now, since this referendum that President Zelaya continues to try to do had been ruled illegal and they can't print the ballots, what does President Zelaya do? He has ballots printed in Venezuela by Hugo Chavez. Everybody in our country knows who Hugo Chavez is. Those ballots are then flown into the country to try to go ahead with this illegal referendum to change the Constitution, I repeat, so that Mr. Zelaya can stay in power.

Well, June 25, 2009, the Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal declares that the referendum violates the Constitution, once again, and orders that the Armed Forces take custody of those illegal ballots printed in Hugo Chavez's Venezuela. The same day, June 25, the Office of the Public Prosecutor files a criminal complaint against President Zelaya for treason, abuse of authority, and usurpation of power.

June 26, 2009, Zelaya makes public a secret executive order rescinding his original intent referendum, replacing it with another one, and basically, again, continuing to go forward to try to change the Constitution so that he can stay in power and stay in power as President. I don't know for how long he had the intention of staying in power.

June 27, Zelaya then leads a mob of supporters because, remember, the Armed Forces had held these illegal ballots. Well, he then leads a mob in violation of court orders of the Supreme Court, et cetera, and he breaks into where those ballots had been held by the military, a military base, and he

takes them out with the intention of starting to distribute them, despite the fact that there had been multiple court rulings saying that they're illegal.

Well, then, June 28, 2009, the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice issues an arrest warrant for President Zelaya and orders the Armed Forces, orders the Armed Forces to arrest him. Remember, this is a court order by the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice ordering the military, and I mentioned before that the military are the ones in their Constitution who are responsible to enforce that. They order the military to go ahead and arrest him. So, yes, the Armed Forces carry out those orders. Now, June 28, the legislature, the Congress of that country votes 124-4 also to remove President Zelaya because of his violation, multiple violations of the Constitution.

June 28, 2009, a special congressional commission issued a report on Zelaya's action, a special congressional commission, and based on this report the Congress votes 124-4 to remove Zelaya and replace him with the person who, in their Constitution, was next in line. And that was, who was available was the Speaker of the House, Mr. Micheletti. He becomes the President.

June 28, the Armed Forces, as a defender of the Constitution, decides that instead of imprisoning Mr. Zelaya as they had been told to do, following those court orders, instead of imprisoning him, what they do is they put him on an airplane and they send him to neighboring Costa Rica.

Now, that is what has happened. The democratic process continues in Honduras. The elections that were convened before this whole issue and this whole crisis started, those have continued to go forward. So here's the good news, that despite that challenge, the Honduran people, the democratic institutions, that democratic country is going forward with their elections. Those elections are going to be taking place the 29th of November. And obviously, we here in the United States and the world should be applauding, applauding that heroic people, the way that they're following their Constitution, they're preserving their institutions, they're preserving the rule of law, their freedom and their democracy. But, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, that's not the case.

Because of the pressure of individuals like the Castro dictatorship and Hugo Chavez, unfortunately, even the United States is now saying that the Honduran people should not have elections, that they don't deserve those elections, that they should not go forward with those elections.

□ 2320

Now, Madam Speaker, think of the sacrifice of the American people, particularly our men and women in uniform who have done so much and sacrificed so much so that people around the world can have elections.

And here we have a neighboring country, an ally of the United States,

who is about to have elections, who is about to fulfill their people's dreams. They're going to have presidential elections, municipal elections, and congressional elections. Are we celebrating it? Are we encouraging them? Are we helping them? No. We're trying to stop them. We're trying to impose a dictatorship, and we're trying to stop them. How unfortunate and how short-sighted, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am joined today by a number of individuals that I have the highest admiration and respect for.

I would like to first recognize Mr. ROSKAM from the State of Illinois. Mr. ROSKAM has been looking at this issue, has been analyzing this issue, speaking up on this issue. And it is a privilege to recognize him for 3 minutes.

Ms. ROSKAM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I was out with a group of Members in Congress and my BlackBerry went off. And I read my BlackBerry, and there it was: it was a message, and it said that Senator DEMINT was going to be going to Honduras and the Senator from South Carolina was making that journey available to other Members of Congress who had a desire to go. And I made the decision, I said, Hey, I want to go down to see what's going on there, to see with my own eyes what's happening in Honduras.

I was joined by the gentleman from Illinois, Representative SCHOCK; the gentleman from Colorado, Representative LAMBORN. And the four of us went down on what's called a congressional delegation.

In we flew. It was a 1-day trip, a short trip. In we flew, and we landed in Honduras. And what a great privilege to meet with those people.

Let me tell you a little bit about that trip, Madam Speaker.

We met with President Micheletti and his leadership team. We met with the Honduran Supreme Court. We met with the leading presidential candidates who are running for office in the races that the gentleman from Florida mentioned that is going to convene on November 29 of this year. We met with the independent election commission, and we met with members of civil society, in other words, those people who are participants in the culture and economy and religious life of Honduras, including Americans who have lived down there, Madam Speaker, for as long as 25 years.

And as the four of us gathered and listened and asked questions of these folks who represented the leadership and a wide range of perspectives across Honduras, there is one word that comes to mind that was universal in how they were perceiving the United States of America. And that single word was "bewilderment."

They were bewildered because, from their perspective, they had been coloring within the lines. From their perspective, they look to the north at this Nation that they admire, this Nation

that they have a relationship with, this Nation that they look to, and yet this Nation was looking at them askance.

Now, think about that. This is a Nation, the United States of America, that is willing to enter into conversations directly or indirectly with Ahmadinejad of Iran; we're willing to enter into conversations directly or indirectly with the Castro brothers of Cuba; but we are not willing to be in a conversation with this group, this long-time ally, the country of Honduras.

Let me tell you where it breaks down from my perspective. We met with President Micheletti, and all of us who are Members of Congress and members of the general public, we've all been in meetings that have been highly manipulated and we know when there's a hustle going on, and you can kind of feel it. You know when it's scripted, when somebody is saying, Oh, you say this and you say this and you say this.

But I am telling you, in this meeting, there was a great deal of spontaneity. And that was true of all of these meetings, Madam Speaker, all five of these meetings that I just described, they were spontaneous.

And in the course of the meetings, President Micheletti admitted two mistakes. He was very transparent. He said, Look, we didn't have the authority to remove President Zelaya from the country. We didn't have the authority to do it. It was a mistake.

Now, he was charging the military base and so forth, but President Micheletti acknowledged that they didn't have the authority to do it.

He also said they didn't have the authority to shut down two television stations. They were small stations. They were broadcasting insurrection. We didn't have the authority to shut them down. It was a mistake. We regret it. We are moving to open them up, and so forth.

But I cannot even begin to convey to you the sense of bewilderment, Madam Speaker, that the Hondurans expressed.

Here we are, Members of the United States Congress, and we're seated with the Honduran Supreme Court. And I am thinking to myself, frankly, who am I or who are we to pass judgment on the Honduran Supreme Court on how they're interpreting their own Constitution, right?

But they say to us, Look—and they made it very, very clear—we issued the order that the military followed. The military didn't tell us what to do. We, a civilian supreme court, issued the order and told them what to do. And I think that that's pivotal.

When I was down there with Representative SCHOCK, who's joining us tonight, and others, it was clear to me there's more police officers, Madam Speaker, around the United States Capitol tonight than there are around the presidential palace around Honduras. So the characterization of this as a military coup is casting it, frankly, in a false light.

So all kinds of drama going back in the past, all kinds of situations as you look back in the past. Some mistakes, some not mistakes, some things characterized a certain way, some things not characterized a certain way.

Where do we go from here? We go to November 29.

Now we, as a country, historically, have looked to elections of a free people as the remedy moving forward. We have historically said, notwithstanding the background of a nation, if there is a free, fair, and open election, we are going to recognize and acknowledge the government that is subsequent to that.

And I wholeheartedly believe and I wholeheartedly hope that the Obama administration, Secretary Clinton will lay out a parameter by which the Honduran Government can satisfy the administration that they're going to move forward. In other words, if the Honduran people make a decision on November 29—and let's remember, President Zelaya, former President, is not going to be on the ballot; President Micheletti, who is currently in office for this collapsing duration of time, is not going to be on the ballot. It's several other individuals who campaigned, got their nominations. They're on the ballot for their parties. Those are the individuals who are campaigning for office. And when we met with those individuals, not a one of them had a suspicion that there was anything that was untoward in this upcoming election. They all felt it was going to be pure as the wind-driven snow.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSKAM. Yes, I will.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. You just mentioned the election that's going on. It is accurate to say, is it not, that that's a process that's been going on for about a year? And those candidates that you met with are the same candidates that have been in this process that were elected in open primary elections to represent their respective parties. So that has not changed. There is no change there. That process is the same, clean, clear democratic process that has been going on way before any of this controversy has been going on, and they're the same candidates, are they not?

Mr. ROSKAM. Reclaiming my time, they are exactly the same candidates, absolutely.

And when Representative SCHOCK and I met with the individuals who are those that are in charge of administering the elections, frankly, they made it very clear to us they were not happy to meet with us at the place where we had to meet. They felt like we shouldn't—they shouldn't be there in the presidential palace.

But they were humoring—they were accommodating us and being very gracious to us, but they made it very clear that they weren't happy to meet with us there. Why? Because their job is to ensure the integrity of the ballot.

So here's where we go. So we're looking at November 29, the Honduran people are going to make a decision. They're going to choose one of these nominees who has been nominated by their party, and the United States Government then is going to have a decision to make.

□ 2230

I think it is wise. I think it drives toward stability. I think it drives toward prosperity and toward a really good, solid foundation for us, for the American people, to recognize the legitimately elected officials of that government that the Honduran people, themselves, choose on November 29.

I think it would be a devastating mistake if we were to look the Hondurans in the eye and say, You know, we really don't care who you choose. We're going to manipulate, and we're going to decide who your next president is going to be. Heaven help us if we go that route when we're a nation that historically has stood up and has said that we're going to stand for free, open and fair elections.

I'm the first to say—and I think you are, too, Mr. DIAZ-BALART—that if there were any nonsense to go on in an election, you would be the first one to jump in; but there has been no indication whatsoever, none, even from the presidential candidates who are currently running nor from the conversations that Representative SCHOCK and I had and that I know you had with others when you went with Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN and others down to Honduras. So I think it is incumbent upon us to stand up, to stand with the Honduran people, to stand alongside them in this time of real turmoil.

In closing, I just want to make one observation. In the meeting that we had, the United States has, I think, unfortunately, cut off very pivotal aid right now to the country of Honduras. Yet, as one of the Honduran individuals said to me, You know, we can endure the lack of aid, but what good is aid to us if we give up our country?

I think, Madam Speaker, that is a good watchword, one upon which we need to rest our foreign policy, and I would encourage the Obama administration to take that to heart.

With that, I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I want to thank the gentleman.

The gentleman mentioned bewilderment and that the Honduran people are, frankly, in awe, wondering what is going on. All they want to do is to continue to have their democratic process—to have their elections that were prescheduled.

A person who asked that question and who tried to get some real answers is an individual you already met and who went with you to Honduras. He is a person who is, obviously, dedicated, who is young, but who has led a very productive life in public service. So I would like to recognize the other gentleman from your State, who was also down there with you—Mr. SCHOCK.

It's interesting. I know you had some of the same questions. I guess you asked the Library of Congress to look into it, right?

Mr. SCHOCK. Correct. Thank you, Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

Look, shortly after I was born, which was in the 1980s, much of Latin America and Central America was struggling with the issue of democracy. Through much of that decade, it was the goal of the administration and the goal of this country to promote and to transition to democracies in that region. So, through much of my life, I have watched these countries continue to grow, to continue to strengthen their relationships with the United States, to continue to be friends and allies to the United States. That was my understanding of that region of the country.

Now, I'm not an attorney. I'm not a constitutional law expert. I certainly do not know the Honduran Constitution chapter and verse. So when the events took place on June 28 and when our State Department and this administration quickly said, Well, this was a coup d'etat and that what occurred there was wrong and that what occurred there was a violation of their Constitution, and when they began demanding that the Honduran people and the government there turn back on the decisions they had made, I didn't know what to think. Before jumping to conclusions, before getting on board with our State Department's position or opposing our State Department's position, I enlisted the support of the many resources that we have as elected Members of Congress, namely, the Congressional Research Service.

In July, I wrote to the Congressional Research Service, and I asked them to look into the events that had occurred in Honduras. I asked them to look at the Honduran Constitution and to tell me chapter and verse whether or not what occurred there in Honduras was, in fact, in keeping with Honduran law or whether or not it was a violation of their Constitution.

The Congressional Research Service then reached out to the law library—to the Library of Congress—and I patiently waited for over 2 months for them to generate this report. In September, they provided this report on Honduras and on the constitutional law issues that we had raised about this situation. They did a very thorough analysis, and they went through, basically, chapter and verse of the Honduran Constitution and on what had occurred in Honduras.

Basically, they came to the conclusion that what had occurred there was in keeping with the Honduran Constitution, that the Congress and the Supreme Court have the authority to hold their elected representatives accountable, that they have the authority to vote and to take action when they believe that the leaders of their country are dilatory in their duties and to ask that they be removed.

However, the report also found that the expulsion of Mr. Zelaya from the

country was a violation of their Constitution, and they cited the portion of the Constitution that clearly says, even if you violate Honduran law, you are to be prosecuted, and you can be imprisoned, but you cannot be expelled from the country.

Now, it's pretty clear to me what was legal and what wasn't legal. In stepping back and in looking at the current State Department's position, I kind of scratched my head, and wondered, Well, where is their justification? Where is their chapter and verse? Where is their black-and-white outline of justifying their position which says that what occurred there was not legal? Other than to say, well, we don't like what happened, that we don't like the tone, that we don't like the precedent, and that we don't like the way it looks, I haven't seen a counterpoint. I haven't seen a counter report from the State Department that has gone through chapter and verse and has given a legal opinion on why this was a violation of the Honduran Constitution.

Furthermore, we can all have a debate here tonight about what should happen with those issues which we all agree should not have occurred, namely, the expulsion of Mr. Zelaya from the country, but what I want to say is this:

First of all, we as a country must uphold the rule of law, and we as a country must respect other countries' constitutions. Whether they're the way we would write the constitutions or whether we like the way the constitutions are written really is irrelevant. The fact of the matter is, for us to suggest otherwise—for us to suggest, well, your constitution has to look like our Constitution, and your process has to look like our process—really is giving us the symbol of the ugly American, if you will, in the world, that somehow we believe everyone should look like the United States of America in all of our forms, including in our Constitution. What is important, however, is that the constitution is written by the local citizens, that it is respected and that the rule of law is upheld.

I have to think back to just a year ago at about this time. Prior to my being in Congress, I was in the statehouse in Illinois. In December of last year, our legislature, of which I was a member, started a process according to our constitution in the State of Illinois to remove our duly elected leader—our Governor. Now, our Governor had not been convicted of any crime. He had not been indicted for any crime. He had not been brought to trial for any crime, but our constitution clearly said, in the State of Illinois, when a majority of the legislature deems that the Governor is dilatory in his duties, it can have him removed, and our legislature followed that constitution, and had him removed.

I'm going to tell you right now that not everybody in the State of Illinois agreed. Certainly, not everyone in this

country agreed with removing a sitting officeholder from office, namely, a Governor, prior to a conviction. However, it was allowed for in the constitution. You saw no one in the Federal Government, certainly not our President of this United States, who happens to come from Illinois, call out and say that this would somehow fly in the face of democracy or that some great injustice had occurred.

A few years earlier, in the same decade, the citizens of California decided that their Governor was dilatory in his duties and that their Governor, who was duly elected, who had not been convicted of any crime, and who had not gone to trial for any malfeasance, should be removed from office. However, their constitution required that his removal be done by a different process—through voter referendum and through a recall provision.

Now, the reason I point this out is that we have 50 States in the Union, and every State has a different constitution. Every State has a different process. Each process is different, and each process is unique. What is important is not that each process is the same but that the rule of law is upheld.

I would argue, Madam Speaker, that the same is true in Honduras. The Honduran people have a different Constitution. However, based on the findings of this law review and based on the findings of many legal experts, what occurred there up until the point of Mr. Zelaya's expulsion was in keeping with the Honduran Constitution.

What is important in moving forward is not necessarily whether or not Mr. Zelaya is held in the Brazilian Embassy or whether he is brought to trial or whether he gets amnesty or whatever. What is important is that we continue to promote democracy and that we continue to promote free and fair elections around the world, specifically in Honduras.

I can't help but think that, as we start to celebrate the elections that are upcoming in Afghanistan, which will take place in less than 2 weeks and where men and women from our Armed Forces have fought and died, much the similar in Iraq, we would look to a friend of the United States for over 30 years, a democracy in Central America, and say to them, You know what? Because of this issue with the removal of your president, we're not going to uphold democracy in your country. We're not going to seek free and fair elections in your country.

□ 2340

It seems preposterous, and so I really, tonight, am asking the State Department, show us your plan. What is the end game for Honduras? What is the end game for democracy in that region?

My friends who join me here tonight, we only see one solution to continuing to promote democracy in that region, and it's free and fair and open elections

in Honduras. Six candidates were nominated by their parties in May. Six candidates have campaigned for this position for nearly a year, and six candidates will be the options for the Honduran people to vote on on November 29.

Whomever the Honduran people vote for, the candidates for office we met with made it very clear they will support the outcome of the election. The interim President Micheletti made it very clear upon those elections he looks forward to surrendering the power to the incoming President and going back to his duties in the Congress.

The end of the game that I see is we need to be pushing for free and fair elections. We need to be pushing for the rule of law and democracy in Honduras and making sure that the will of the Honduran people is respected on November 29. We, as the United States of America, promoters of freedom around the world, send election observers, send the resources and the support necessary to ensure that free and fair elections occur on November 29 in Honduras.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I think you were very clear in illustrating exactly what did take place. You mentioned what is the end game, what is the solution? What is it that we should all strive for? It's elections. That solves the issue. Those elections are going to take place on November 29. That is a solution we should be applauding. We should be supporting those elections. Unfortunately, this administration is trying to do everything in its power to try to stop those elections from taking place.

Now, frankly, one of the people I most admire in this process who has done so much to help push for elections, particularly where they have not been able to do so for generations, who was an advocate of freedom around the world, I am anxious to hear, Mr. BURTON, what you have to say, because nobody knows and has fought for elections around the globe like you have. It's a privilege to have you here.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Hopefully, in the not so distant future, we will see fair elections in your former native land of Cuba.

With that, let me just say I have heard in my years here in the Congress a lot of very thorough and eloquent expressions of concern about what's going on in foreign policy and foreign lands, but the young gentleman from Illinois just covered about everything about as thoroughly as you possibly can.

The one thing that I think I might add is that there are those who say the elections should be postponed and that there are reasons for that. But, according to what I have been able to learn from our research is that the Supreme Court of Honduras rendered a decision after careful study, and they said that what was done was constitutional, it

was within the law, and they upheld that decision, and they have said that the elections should go forth, and they are now in control of the election process, and I believe that it should go forth.

For the United States of America and our State Department and our very young and new President, whom I feel probably does not have the expertise that he requires to make these kinds of decisions, although I am sure that he would like to see his position supported, I think that we should support the Honduran people, support a free and fair election, and let our State Department know that the Members of the Congress here in Congress feel very strongly that they have made a miscalculation and a misdiagnosis of what the situation is or should be down in Honduras.

They should change their mind and come back and support the constitutional elective process in Honduras and let the elections go forth with our support. The United States of America should support the free election process in Honduras and our State Department should share that view, and that's why tonight you have a number of Congressmen here on the floor of the House who are saying to the administration and to the State Department, You have made a mistake.

As the young gentleman from Illinois said, this has been researched very thoroughly by our legal authorities and experts here in the Congress of the United States, and they have concluded that the only thing that was done that was not correct was forcing the former President out of the country. But it did not say anything that we would contradict the decision that was made by the administration that showed that there was some unconstitutional things done and supported by the previous President. The Supreme Court has rendered that decision and they said the election should go forth, and we should support that decision.

If I were talking to our Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, or the President, I would say that the administration and the State Department should support that position.

I really appreciate you and your brother and the rest of the people that are here on the floor tonight, I really appreciate you staying so late. It's a quarter till 12. The people of this country, who I hope might be paying attention, will realize we feel this is extremely important for stability in our hemisphere, in our front yard, and we feel very strongly that the administration and the State Department should review this and come out in very strong support of the elective process which should be taking place very shortly.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I want to thank you for those words.

And, again, what we keep talking about is that there is a solution. There is a very simple solution. There's a

very simple answer to this crisis, and that's the answer and the solution that men and women for generations, American men and women for generations have given their lives for, and that's for the ability of people to elect their leaders, for free and clear multiparty elections.

There are people that are in that process already, a process that has been going on for over a year, a process that has not been interrupted. How we cannot support that process is, frankly, beyond me.

I don't know. Maybe the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. McCOTTER), who is one of the keen intellects in this body, can have some explanation as to how elections are not, all of a sudden, the answer, why the Honduran people should not have the right to elect their next President.

It is a privilege to have you, sir. I recognize Mr. McCOTTER.

Mr. McCOTTER. I thank the gentleman. I know we are heading toward the witching hour, so I will try to put some remarks in a very succinct fashion.

First, I would like to point out some of the principles which undergird our position in support of the Honduran people. One is that we, as Americans, understand our self-evident right to liberty is from God, not the government, and no tyrant nor terrorist can interfere with it. We also understand, as Americans, that our security is from strength, not surrender, and that our greatest strength is the expansion of liberty to others to ensure freedom for ourselves.

We also understand, as is painfully evident with Honduras, that the United States and all free people are targets of tyrants and terrorists, not because of our actions, but because of our existence. The existence of free people, the rule of law, the pursuit of one's happiness in accordance with one's inalienable rights is a threat to all tyrants and despots throughout the world, for their thrones are unstable in the presence of free people and oppressed people who are inspired by such examples.

With the Honduras situation, we see crystal clear that the United States, in many ways in our foreign affairs, has gotten away from these foreign principles and the concepts. The danger, not only to our allies like Honduras, is great.

I pose one example. Can this administration, for the edification of individuals like myself who may not grasp the intricacies and the genius of their foreign policy, explain one thing. What is the difference between women being shot in the streets of Iran for trying to be free and the difference between a constitutional democracy in Honduras following the rule of law to protect itself from a would-be tyrant?

This administration said these situations are distinguishable, because in the instance of the Iranians' murderous regime, that is an internal affair for the Iranian people; yet, when the free

people of Honduras through the rule of law in defense of their constitutional democracy exercised their means of self-defense, we are told that that is of the utmost interest to the United States and we must demand an outcome in accordance with our will and the will of the OAS, which now includes Mr. Fidel Castro, no fan of elections.

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Can you tell me why the freedom of the Iranian people is to be left in the hands of their murderers and why the freedom of the Honduran people is to be taken from theirs and put in the hands of butchers like Fidel Castro and others such as Chavez? I eagerly await a response, although I do not know that I will find it edifying, let alone satisfactory. I yield back.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I thank the gentleman. And also coming with us tonight is a person who also has a distinguished and effective record of fighting for human rights and freedom around the globe, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Well, I want to thank you for calling this Special Order, convoking it and focusing in on this very important, really critical subject. Winston Churchill talked about the fact that facts are better than dreams. There are facts with regard to the crisis in Honduras. The people of Honduras acted constitutionally. Their institutions acted constitutionally in removing a President who was acting unconstitutionally, and they removed him. The institutions, the democratic institutions of Honduras removed a President who had been acting unconstitutionally on June 28. Those are facts.

The Obama administration is wrong when, in this case, it sides with Chavez and Castro, Ortega, Correa, the other anti-democratic elements in this hemisphere who are pressuring for the imposition of the President who had violated the Constitution in Honduras for his return, his forceful return, unconstitutionally to power. The Obama administration is wrong. That's a fact.

Now, there's another fact that is of importance, and that is we saw a number of Members of Congress here almost at midnight, because of the importance of this issue, tell the American people that after thorough study, they have come to the conclusion that the Obama administration is wrong and that the Honduran people acted appropriately. It's a fact that there is a growing number of Members of Congress who are becoming involved, educated and are expressing themselves with regard to this issue. That's a fact that the Obama administration needs to take into consideration, because as was mentioned before, even if the situation were different, and even if the Hondurans had acted unconstitutionally in removing President Zelaya from power, the solution to the crisis should

be evident to all: free and fair elections, especially when the candidates were chosen before the crisis began by all of the political parties.

So what is most not only incorrect, but almost inconceivable, Madam Speaker, is that the Obama administration is not only wrong with regard to what happened in Honduras, is not only wrong with regard to whom it is siding with and whom it is siding against, but that even if the administration were not wrong with regard to what has happened, the evident solution being the elections of November 29, are not being supported by the Obama administration, but the Obama administration is saying that they will not recognize the will of the Honduran people as expressed on November 29.

That is inconceivable—beyond wrong. That is inconceivable, Madam Speaker.

So, facts: Congress is aware of how wrong the administration is. Congress is aware that the Honduran people are proceeding with an election on November 29. The reason that the majority leadership is not bringing to the floor of this House a resolution to express support for the elections, the resolution was filed by Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and others, expressing support for the elections that are going to be held November 29, the reason the majority leadership does not bring that resolution to the floor is because it would win a majority vote, because the fact is a growing number of Members of Congress, I maintain by now a majority of this House, are aware of the gross unfairness with which that small nation is being treated by this administration.

So I think it's important for the administration, Madam Speaker, to take note, tonight, almost at midnight, that Honduras, despite the pressure, despite the fact that it's a small country, is moving forward with elections. Those elections deserve not only support and respect, but commendation. And further efforts to deny the Honduran people their right of self-determination, their right to express themselves freely by secret ballot on November 29 is wrong.

That's a fact.

More and more people in this Congress are learning the facts. And I hope, Madam Speaker, that the administration takes note and reverses itself, backs off from not supporting elections, from not supporting free determination and, rather, supports the Honduran people.

I thank you, Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART, for focusing attention, for your leadership role on this critical issue. Not only do the people of Honduras deserve it, but the hemisphere requires the further attention of the American people to this critical issue. Thank you very much.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I want to thank the gentleman from Florida for really summing it up so well that, yes, regardless of what may have happened, the solution is there, it's evident. It's the elections that are coming up.

The American people need to understand, need to know that this administration, unfortunately, is siding, siding, is on the side, is siding with Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro in trying to stop the democracy, the democratic process, the elections that are about to take place in Honduras. They need to know that.

This administration needs to understand that history will judge this administration if it does not reverse itself and sides with the people of Honduras, with their election, with their freedom. And also the Honduran people need to understand that we have great admiration for them, that we respect their process, their Constitution, and we commend them for going forward with their elections, their free, democratic, multi-party elections.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and with that, I will yield back the remaining part of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and tomorrow.

Mrs. BIGGERT (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 4:30 p.m. and for the balance of the week on account of personal business.

Mr. BUYER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 12:30 p.m. and for the balance of the week on account of illness.

Mr. DREIER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 3:15 p.m. through Monday, October 26, on account of events in the district.

Mr. GOHMERT (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. HINOJOSA (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week.

Mr. WALDEN (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POLIS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. KAGEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WEINER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DEAL of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE of Texas, for 5 minutes, October 29.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes, October 29.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, October 23.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, October 29.