

of the most difficult places on the planet, and I am proud to recognize this organization and all of their efforts. Additionally, every President of the United States since 1943 has proclaimed March to be Red Cross Month and because of this, I am happy to join people across the county in supporting this remarkable organization.

Mr. Speaker, the American National Red Cross is one of our country's greatest treasures, and the work that they do is unmatched across the globe. I encourage my fellow colleagues to join me today in supporting this resolution to recognize this organization and support the goals and ideals of Red Cross Month.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTIERREZ). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 311.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 605) recognizing the continued persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China on the 10th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party campaign to suppress the Falun Gong spiritual movement and calling for an immediate end to the campaign to persecute, intimidate, imprison, and torture Falun Gong practitioners, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 605

Whereas Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline founded by Li Hongzhi in 1992, which consists of spiritual, religious, and moral teachings for daily life, meditation, and exercise, based upon the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance;

Whereas according to the 2008 Annual Report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "tens of millions of Chinese citizens practiced Falun Gong in the 1990s and adherents to the spiritual movement inside of China are estimated to still number in the hundreds of thousands despite the government's ongoing crackdown," and other estimates published in Western press place the number of Falun Gong adherents currently in China at the tens of millions;

Whereas in 1996, Falun Gong books were banned in China and state media began a campaign criticizing Falun Gong;

Whereas in 1999, Chinese police began disrupting Falun Gong morning exercises in public parks and began searching the homes of Falun Gong practitioners;

Whereas on April 25, 1999, over 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners gathered outside the State Council Office of Petitions in Beijing, next to the Communist Party leadership compound, to request that arrested Falun Gong practitioners be released, the ban on publication of Falun Gong books be lifted, and that Falun Gong practitioners be allowed to resume their activities without government interference;

Whereas on the same day, immediately after then-Premier Zhu Rongji met with Falun Gong representatives in his office and agreed to the release of arrested practitioners, Communist Party Chairman Jiang Zemin criticized Zhu's actions and ordered a crackdown on Falun Gong;

Whereas in June 1999, Jiang Zemin ordered the creation of the 6-10 office, an extrajudicial security apparatus, given the mandate to "eradicate" Falun Gong;

Whereas in July 1999, Chinese police began arresting leading Falun Gong practitioners;

Whereas on July 22, 1999, Chinese state media began a major propaganda campaign to ban Falun Gong for "disturbing social order" and warning Chinese citizens that the practice of Falun Gong was forbidden;

Whereas in October 1999, Party Chairman Jiang Zemin, according to western press articles, "ordered that Falun Gong be branded as a 'cult', and then demanded that a law be passed banning cults";

Whereas Chinese authorities have devoted extensive time and resources over the past decade worldwide to distributing false propaganda claiming that Falun Gong is a suicidal and militant "evil cult" rather than a spiritual movement which draws upon traditional Chinese concepts of meditation and exercise;

Whereas on October 10, 2004, the House of Representatives adopted by voice vote House Concurrent Resolution 304, which had 75 bipartisan co-sponsors, titled "Expressing the sense of Congress regarding oppression by the Government of the People's Republic of China of Falun Gong in the United States and in China," and that the text of this resolution noted that "the Chinese Government has also attempted to silence the Falun Gong movement and Chinese prodemocracy groups inside the United States";

Whereas, on October 18, 2005, highly respected human rights attorney Gao Zhisheng wrote a letter to Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao calling for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong and Chinese authorities, in response, closed his law office and took away his law license, with Chinese security forces suspected of being directly involved in Mr. Gao's disappearance on February 4, 2009;

Whereas Gao Zhisheng's family has subsequently been granted political asylum in the United States;

Whereas the United Nations Committee Against Torture in its fourth periodic report of China, issued on December 12, 2008, stated that "The State party should immediately conduct or commission an independent investigation of the claims that some Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to torture and used for organ transplants and take measures, as appropriate, to ensure that those responsible for such abuses are prosecuted and punished";

Whereas the Amnesty International 2008 annual report states that "Falun Gong practitioners were at particularly high risk of torture and other ill-treatment in detention . . . during the year 2007 over 100 Falun Gong practitioners were reported to have died in detention or shortly after release as a result

of torture, denial of food or medical treatment, and other forms of ill-treatment";

Whereas according to the 2008 Department of State's Human Rights Report on China, "Some foreign observers estimated that Falun Gong adherents constituted at least half of the 250,000 officially recorded inmates in re-education through labor (RTL) camps, while Falun Gong sources overseas placed the number even higher";

Whereas according to the 2008 Annual Report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "The (Chinese) central government intensified its nine-year campaign of persecution against Falun Gong practitioners in the months leading up to the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games";

Whereas Falun Gong-related websites remain among the most systematically and hermetically blocked by China's Internet firewall; and

Whereas, according to an April 2009 New York Times report, "In the past year, as many as 8,000 (Falun Gong) practitioners have been detained, according to experts on human rights, and at least 100 have died in custody": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses sympathy to Falun Gong practitioners and their family members who have suffered persecution, intimidation, imprisonment, torture, and even death for the past decade solely because of adherence to their personal beliefs;

(2) calls upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to immediately cease and desist from its campaign to persecute, intimidate, imprison, and torture Falun Gong practitioners, to immediately abolish the 6-10 office, an extrajudicial security apparatus given the mandate to "eradicate" Falun Gong, and to immediately release Falun Gong practitioners, detained solely for their beliefs, from prisons and re-education through labor (RTL) camps, including those practitioners who are the relatives of United States citizens and permanent residents; and

(3) calls upon the President and Members of Congress to mark the 11th anniversary of Chinese official repression of the Falun Gong spiritual movement appropriately and effectively by publicly expressing solidarity with those practitioners in China persecuted solely because of their personal beliefs, and by meeting with Falun Gong practitioners whenever and wherever possible to indicate that support for freedom of conscience remains a fundamental principle of the United States Government.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. 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 gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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

This resolution recognizes the continued persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China on the 11th anniversary of the government crackdown on the spiritual movement. I would like to thank my friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the ranking member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, for introducing this legislation and for her dedication to this issue.

Since 1999, the Chinese government has undertaken a harsh campaign of suppression against the Falun Gong movement, banning its presence in China and banning it as an “illegal cult.” According to the 2009 annual report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Chinese authorities “conducted propaganda campaigns that deride Falun Gong, carried out strict surveillance of practitioners, detained and imprisoned large numbers of practitioners, and subjected some who refused to disavow Falun Gong to torture and other abuses in reeducation through labor facilities.” According to the State Department’s latest human rights report on China, the Falun Gong’s core leadership was “singled out for particularly harsh treatment,” and simply believing in the discipline—without publicly practicing any of its tenets—was enough for practitioners to be punished or imprisoned.

Falun Gong is a spiritual movement combining meditation and breathing exercises, with a doctrine loosely rooted in Buddhist and Daoist teachings. The Chinese government banned the group’s existence and its practices in 1999, after thousands of practitioners gathered in Beijing to protest the government’s restrictions on the group’s activities. Chinese authorities are obsessed with eradicating the group because they believe it could pose a challenge to one-party rule and has the potential to generate social unrest and instability.

This resolution calls upon the Chinese government to immediately end its decade-long campaign to prosecute, intimidate, and imprison Falun Gong practitioners solely because of their personal beliefs. It also calls on China to release those practitioners being held in prisons and labor camps throughout the country. Finally, this resolution expresses sympathy to Falun Gong followers and their family members for the suffering that has been inflicted on them at the hands of the Chinese government.

I strongly support this resolution, and urge my colleagues to do the same. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

It is a delight to work with my wonderful colleague from California, Ambassador WATSON. We greatly regret that she will be retiring from the halls of Congress, but we look forward to working with her in another capacity.

I am proud to rise, Mr. Speaker, as the author of this resolution, which ad-

resses one of the most flagrant examples of systematic persecution against a particular group currently taking place. The Chinese Communist regime’s obsessive and relentless hunting down of Falun Gong practitioners, which is a spiritual discipline based on truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, says a great deal about the insecurity and the paranoia of the current rulers in Beijing.

While this resolution gives a detailed accounting from authoritative international sources of the last 11 years of Beijing’s bloody crackdown on Falun Gong, there are two particular areas, Mr. Speaker, which I would like to address in greater detail. First is the issue of the penetration of agents of an alien Communist regime right here inside the United States to wage a campaign of repression against U.S. citizens. And, second, is the issue of coercive organ transplants involving a “bloody harvest” from Falun Gong practitioners inside China.

How could one believe that diplomats of a foreign regime would collude with secret agents and thugs to suppress the constitutional right of our fellow citizens right here in America? Well, Mr. Speaker, clear evidence indicates that that is exactly what is happening with Chinese agents persecuting American Falun Gong practitioners in our own country.

Just ask Bill Fang, who was assaulted on the streets of Chicago back in 2001, as he was peacefully demonstrating in front of the Chinese consulate. That assault led to a criminal conviction in the Circuit Court of Cook County. Or, just ask Judy Chen, the proud mother of two United States Marines then serving in Iraq, who was manhandled in May of 2008 by thugs with reported Chinese regime ties while she was handing out Falun Gong literature in front of a public library in Flushing, New York.

□ 1615

It is high time for our State Department to get tough and to let the Chinese regime know that any of its staff members who engage in activities in the U.S. incompatible with their diplomatic status, including encouraging such illegal acts, are persona non grata in the United States.

On the issue of organ transplants, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that this resolution cites the recommendation of the U.N. Committee on Torture, calling for an independent investigation “into the claims that some Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to torture and used for organ transplants.”

I would like to further point out that expert testimony given before a subcommittee on the Foreign Affairs Committee appears to corroborate the charges of coercive organ transplants in China. A hearing was held before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on September 29, 2006, entitled “Falun Gong: Organ Harvesting

and China’s Ongoing War on Human Rights.” Committee witness Kirk Allison, Ph.D. of the University of Minnesota testified: “In my meeting with practitioners in June 2006, evidence included transcripts of queries to identified hospitals and physicians on organ availability. Falun Gong sources were characterized as being of high quality and often available in as short a time as a week, and in some cases with a guarantee of a backup organ should the first fail.”

The systematic killing of Falun Gong practitioners for their organs is almost too ghoulish to imagine. It seems incomprehensible that in the 21st century such barbaric acts could occur, a cruelty comparable to imperial Romans throwing Christian martyrs to be eaten by lions. The stark reality which this resolution addresses gives new meaning to the phrase “butchers of Beijing.” The Beijing regime of today engages in the barbaric repression of some of its own people simply because they seek to practice a peaceful spiritual discipline. Several hundred have reportedly died, and hundreds of thousands remain in detention in reeducation through labor camps. How can anyone seriously call these the actions of a responsible stakeholder? I strongly and enthusiastically urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California, Representative LYNN WOOLSEY, chairwoman of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. WOOLSEY. First of all, I would like to thank the two women who are here bringing this resolution to the House floor. It’s so very important. I rise today in support of H. Res. 605, a resolution recognizing the continuing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

In 2002, Mr. Speaker, I authored a resolution expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the Chinese Government’s oppression of Falun Gong in the United States and in the People’s Republic of China. Sadly, 8 years later, the persecution continues. People are being sent to jail, to work camps and are assaulted for their practice of Falun Gong. China has claimed that the Falun Gong practitioners are “disturbing social order” and have labeled the practice an evil cult.

International media reports have found that over 100 Falun Gong followers have died in the custody of the Chinese Government. All people, even those in China, have the internationally recognized freedoms of association and religion. The Chinese Government must put a stop to this inhumane persecution. I urge my colleagues, stand up for human rights and vote “yes” on this resolution, H. Res. 605.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 605, defending the human rights of Falun Gong practitioners, savagely persecuted by the Chinese government, and thank my good friend Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN for introducing this resolution.

On the tenth anniversary of the Falun Gong's inspiring silent protest at Zhongnanhai many people still do not understand the savagery of the Mao-style campaign which the Communist Party unleashed in 1999.

The story of a typical Falun Gong arrest is horrific: first the government beats them, later it tortures them, molesting and sometimes raping women, sends them to forced labor camps and then brainwashing classes, all the while a high-profile publicity campaign defames and humiliates them. And it has been documented that it has killed at least 3,000 of the Falun Gong.

Members of Falun Gong will not pretend to accept Marxism-Leninism, and so the government brands them an "evil cult." They practice non-violence, and the government assaults them with cattle prods. Their hearts are remarkably serene, and so the government engages in psychiatric torture.

The Falun Gong are one of a wide array of religious faiths and spiritual groups in China, yet members of Falun Gong are the majority of all reported cases of torture and half of China's labor camp population—well over one hundred thousand of them.

Many of the Falun Gong have fled to America, and the government has followed them here, cyber-attacking their American Web sites, installing agents in their midst, and raising crowds to harass and beat them, as happened last year in New York.

Mr. Speaker, one of the invaluable things about this resolution is that it officially documents this Chinese-government sponsored violence on American soil, exercised against American citizens.

We need to learn more about whether our government is doing everything it can to protect the Falun Gong here in America.

I was in China last July, trying to visit human rights activists in the run-up to the Olympics. I remember going into an Internet cafe and trying to look up Falun Gong. You know the story: nothing. Search engines had been doctored. I wonder, if I were not a U.S. Congressman, would that search have gotten me identified, tracked, and tortured? After all, even foreign journalists who ask about Falun Gong have been arrested, and some have been beaten.

And would U.S. companies have been involved in identifying me? Sadly, we know it for a well-documented fact, from a six-hour hearing I held in 2006, that some leading U.S. IT companies are involved in censoring the Chinese Internet and turn over personally identifying information to the Chinese Internet police, making it possible to track and imprison dissidents.

I mention this because many members of Falun Gong are great heroes of Internet freedom. Several members have come to my office and demonstrated how they help millions of Chinese men and women break the so-called "Great Firewall of China" with which the Chinese government tries to cut its citizens off from the global Internet.

Mr. Speaker, Falun Gong practitioners have been great witnesses of courage and peace. Again I thank Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN for introducing this resolution.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 605, which condemns the Chinese government's targeted, persistent and egregious persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. This resolution was introduced last year to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party's campaign to suppress the Falun Gong spiritual movement. Sadly, the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and anyone associated with them, including lawyers who try to defend their human rights, continues today.

Since 1999, 6,000 Falun Gong practitioners have been sentenced to prison, over 100,000 were sentenced to re-education through labor camps, and at least 3,000 died while in police custody. They have been sent to special high security psychiatric hospitals for the "criminally insane" against their will where torture has been widely reported. Lawyers trying to defend their rights have been harassed, beaten and attacked by police officers in order to intimidate them. One of China's most prominent human rights advocates, Gao Zhiseng, who has defended the rights of many individuals attacked for their religious beliefs, was detained by police in February 2009 and his whereabouts are still unknown. The government continues to deny any involvement in his case.

The Government of China censors all media in China and actively opposes any information exposing its brutality and injustice. But the truth is clear to us today. This resolution is a testament to the millions of victims of the Chinese Communist Party that the Chinese government cannot hide the truth, and its victims will not be forgotten.

This resolution also stands as a statement of the U.S. Congress's continued support for the inalienable right to freedom of religion and expression recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that applies to all people everywhere. To be taken seriously as a participant in the twenty-first century global economy, China must take the rights of their citizens seriously. Egregious injustices, such as those suffered by the Falun Gong practitioners and others targeted by the Chinese Communist Party, are unacceptable in a civilized world and must end today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 605, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

THANKING VANCOUVER FOR 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1128) thanking Vancouver for hosting the world during the 2010 Winter Olympics and honoring the athletes from Team USA, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1128

Whereas the people of Canada opened their hearts and their home to the athletes of the world;

Whereas the Olympics foster healthy competition and interaction among nations;

Whereas these games were not without moments of tribulation and tragedy, but the courage and resolve of the athletes to continue was inspirational;

Whereas the United States won a record 37 medals, 9 gold, 15 silver, and 13 bronze;

Whereas the United States won the overall medal count for the first time since 1932, the highest medal total by any one nation in the history of the Winter Olympics;

Whereas the United States men's and women's silver medal hockey teams excited and inspired the games with their world class play;

Whereas Apolo Anton Ohno won his seventh and eighth medals to become the most decorated United States Winter Olympian of all time;

Whereas the United States earned medals in Nordic Combined events for the first time in history, took the gold in men's figure skating, and won a gold medal in bobsledding for the first time since 1948;

Whereas United States teams and individual athletes should be honored for their contributions to these monumental achievements;

Whereas some athletes must overcome great personal adversity to realize their Olympic dreams;

Whereas the strong performances by United States Olympic athletes inspire children across the Nation to engage in physical fitness, work hard, and set high personal goals;

Whereas the dedication and sacrifice of the families, coaches, and communities associated with Olympic athletes should also be recognized; and

Whereas the Olympic torch has been extinguished in Vancouver, but the flame of camaraderie burns on in the hearts and minds of the world community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the City of Vancouver, Team USA, and the athletes of the world for an outstanding and inspiring 2010 Winter Olympics; and

(2) wishes participants in the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games success in their athletic endeavors.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include