

be brought against former employees or for records of the organization.

It is of utmost importance that the United States Government protects its diplomats who serve in international organizations, often at great personal risk and sacrifice, from financial and personal ruinous litigation. In addition, we must preserve our ability to use informal institutions to conduct foreign policy and attract qualified personnel.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5139.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 5139.

The Office of High Representative in Bosnia and the International Civilian Office in Kosovo were established to help promote stable, multiethnic democratic governance in those countries in the aftermath of the vicious warfare they suffered throughout the 1990s.

The United States has supported these missions and assigned American diplomats to help them with critical expert advice. Regrettably, these American diplomats could now face costly, politically motivated nuisance lawsuits based on their actions in the course of their official duties while helping those organizations and those nations.

For other international organizations in which the United States participates by treaty or by an act of this Congress, the President may freely extend immunity from such lawsuits to officers and employees under the International Organization Immunities Act. However, due to the ad hoc nature of their establishment, these two offices are not automatically covered by this law. This brief bill seeks to rectify the issue by allowing the President to extend those privileges and immunities to those organizations and their employees.

Congress has similarly amended the IOIA to extend immunities to other organizations falling in similar gray areas, such as the European Space Agency, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, among just a few.

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These immunities are not nearly as broad as the personal immunity enjoyed by foreign diplomats in the United States, but will insulate our officers from suit only for their official actions as employees of those organizations, and may be revoked by the President at any time. I'm pleased to support the passage of this measure, which represents a bipartisan text that was worked out with the Department of State and with our Senate colleagues.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5139.

I strongly support this needed legislation which extends the diplomatic protections granted under the International Organizations and Immunities Act (IOIA) to employees of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Civilian Office (ICO) in Kosovo. The OHR and ICO have been critical institutions for fostering peace and stability in Bosnia and Kosovo, but due to their unique ad hoc structure, the employees of these institutions are at risk of litigation related to the carrying out of their official duties.

This is unacceptable. Other similar institutions have been extended IOIA protections, and we must bring the OHR and ICO under the IOIA umbrella. Acting on this issue in a timely manner is especially important as neither the OHR nor ICO is intended to endure beyond a limited time frame necessary for the implementation of their mandate.

The hard working men and women at the OHR and ICO have worked tirelessly, often at great personal sacrifice, to promote peace in the region. This is especially apparent with respect to their efforts to root out corruption and to freeze assets used by war criminals.

Unfortunately, obstructionist political elements in the region have been all too vocal regarding their intent to take legal action against employees of the OHR and ICO. It is unacceptable that OHR and ICO employees could face potential lawsuits for their official actions carried out with the express purpose of furthering core United States foreign policy objectives.

The bill before us takes the necessary step of bringing the OHR and ICO under the IOIA, and grants well deserved protections to those working to bring peace and stability to the countries of Bosnia and Kosovo. Please support this resolution.

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam 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 gentleman from New York (Mr. MCMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5139, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO CHINA FOR TRAGIC EARTHQUAKE IN QINGHAI PROVINCE

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1324) expressing condolences and sympathies for the people of China following the tragic earthquake in the Qinghai province of the Peoples Republic of China on April 14, 2010.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1324

Whereas, on April 14, 2010, an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale struck the Qinghai province of southwest China;

Whereas the China Earthquake Networks Administration confirmed the earthquake struck in Yushu County, a remote and mountainous area sparsely populated by farmers and herdsman;

Whereas the population of Yushu County is overwhelmingly poor, with rural residents earning an average of \$342 a year, largely from agriculture;

Whereas at least 18 aftershocks measuring more than 6.0 on the Richter scale followed the quake throughout the day in the seismically active zone;

Whereas over 2,000 people have been killed and over 10,000 injured, numbers that are feared to climb;

Whereas an unknown number of individuals remain buried in debris as soldiers work around the clock to dig them out by hand;

Whereas at least 40 people remain trapped under a collapsed office building that houses the local Departments of Commerce and Industry of the Peoples Republic of China and many children and young adults still lie beneath the rubble of collapsed primary and vocational schools;

Whereas officials expect the death toll will rise because rescue efforts are stymied by a lack of heavy equipment and the mountainous terrain;

Whereas medical supplies and tents are also in short supply;

Whereas China Central Television and the Red Cross Society of China estimate that 90 percent of homes and 70 percent of schools in the region have been destroyed;

Whereas the region that includes Yushu County is located on the Tibetan plateau, and many villages sit well above 16,000 feet, with freezing temperatures not uncommon in mid-April;

Whereas by the evening of April 14, 2010, temperatures in the county seat had already reached 27 degrees Fahrenheit;

Whereas thousands of Tibetan monks, many of whom traveled long distances from other Tibetan areas, have played a vital role in relief efforts, providing food and assistance, and tending to the basic and spiritual needs of the victims;

Whereas in order to prevent a flood, workers are racing to release water from a reservoir in the disaster area after discovering that a crack had formed in the dam due to the earthquake;

Whereas many survivors have already fled to the surrounding mountains, amid fears that a nearby dam could be ruptured by the aftershocks hitting the area;

Whereas news media reported that 700 paramilitary officers are already working in the quake zone and that more than 4,000 others will be sent to assist in search and rescue efforts;

Whereas the Civil Affairs Ministry said it would also send 5,000 tents and 100,000 coats and blankets; and

Whereas the international community is sending much needed supplies and supporting local Chinese relief efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its deepest condolences and sympathies for the loss of life and the physical and psychological damage caused by the earthquake of April 14, 2010;

(2) expresses solidarity with the people of the Qinghai province, Tibetan-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and all those who have lost loved ones or have otherwise been affected by the tragedy, including rescue and humanitarian workers;

(3) reaffirms the United States pledge, issued by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, to stand ready to assist the people of China during this difficult period; and

(4) expresses support for the recovery and long-term reconstruction needs of the residents of the areas affected by the earthquake, including the restoration of monasteries and other Tibetan Buddhist sites that are integral to the preservation of Tibetan culture and religious traditions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCMAHON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCMAHON. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I thank my colleague, Congressman MANZULLO of Illinois, for his support, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, on April 14, 2010, an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale struck the Qinghai province of southwest China. With over 18 aftershocks measuring more than 6.0 on the Richter scale, the devastation and suffering that followed was immeasurable. The earthquake killed over 2,000 residents of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, which is 97 percent Tibetan and has been a cradle for Tibetan culture and religion for centuries. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the quake, countless schools, government buildings, and local monasteries stood in ruins.

First on the scene were local Tibetan Buddhist monks who worked in very treacherous conditions to stabilize schools, clinics, and homes to rescue survivors. These monks, many working in their robes with the most basic of tools, worked for hours without breaking until heavy machinery could be moved in. They were joined in their efforts by local and national Chinese authorities who worked in conjunction with the community groups on search and rescue and now join in the rebuilding.

The worst-hit town of Kyegu still contains over 100,000 homeless residents, on top of the 20,000 migrants, described as “mostly herders and farmers,” already living there. Yet, 5 weeks after the earthquake, we are seeing the silver lining, as plans to reconstruct all of Kyegu, including the destroyed Buddhist holy sites, and build new homes for those who tragically lost their own, take place.

On May 1, 2010, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced a plan to rebuild Kyegu in an “eco-friendly” manner during a meeting on postdisaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. I commend the Chinese government’s efforts

to rehabilitate and modernize the region, but encourage them also to include the local Tibetan population in their reconstruction plans, given the distinctiveness of the region as a center of Tibetan culture.

On behalf of the over 50,000 Chinese Americans who reside in my congressional district, I express my condolences for all the people of the Qinghai province, Tibetan Americans, Chinese Americans, and all those who have lost loved ones or are otherwise affected by this tragedy, including rescue and humanitarian workers. I also want to commend Ambassador Huntsmann, who presented a check for \$100,000 to the Chinese Red Cross Society for their efforts to rebuild after the Qinghai earthquake. Ambassador Huntsmann’s remarks demonstrated that we stand with the Chinese people to rebuild Qinghai and further develop stronger ties between our two nations.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this resolution addressing the tragic earthquake which took over 2,000 lives and left over 10,000 injured when it struck on April 14, 2010. I would, however, like to mention an omission in the official American response to this tragedy—one that is only partially rectified in the wording of this resolution. The epicenter of the earthquake struck on the Tibetan plateau and the vast majority of victims were from Tibet. Yet the message of condolence issued in the name of the Secretary of State on April 15, while “offering thoughts and prayers for the people of China on this difficult day,” made no mention of the thousands of Tibetans who lost their lives, their homes, and their places of worship. Madam Speaker, political correctness has no place when addressing human tragedy, no matter where it occurs in the world.

While we mourn the death of both Tibetans and the Chinese migrant workers who were in the area, we should not ignore the fact that this was one more blow to the Tibetan heartland. The damage to Tibetan monasteries caused by this earthquake is only the latest event in the sad chapter of the devastation of this culture over the past half century.

The war waged against Tibetan culture began with the Chinese People’s Liberation Army invasion of the Tibetan plateau in 1959. It continued in the frenzy of fanatic young Red Guards smashing statues of Buddha and assaulting monks and nuns during the infamous “Cultural Revolution.” It continued right up until 2 years ago, when Beijing cracked down once again on dissent by rounding up Tibetan political prisoners and in closing the monasteries. It has been the United States’ stated policy since the passage almost a decade ago of our late colleague, Tom Lantos’ Tibetan Policy Act, to work to

protect the Tibetan culture, language, and their religion. Yet the administration was noticeably silent regarding this latest blow to Tibetan culture and regarding the massive loss of their lives. The Dalai Lama, recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal, addressed this tragic earthquake with these words of appeals. He said, “To fulfill the wishes of many of the people there, I am eager to go there myself to offer them comfort.”

I submit for the RECORD the brief remarks the Dalai Lama made on April 14 and April 17, 2010.

[From dalailama.com, Apr. 14, 2010]

HIS HOLINESS OFFERS HIS CONDOLENCES TO THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN KYIGUDO

I am deeply saddened by the loss of life and property as a result of the earthquake that struck Kyigudo (Chinese—Yushu) this morning.

We pray for those who have lost their lives in this tragedy and their families and others who have been affected. A special prayer service is being held at the main temple (Tsuglagkhang) here at Dharamsala on their behalf.

It is my hope that all possible assistance and relief work will reach these people. I am also exploring how I, too, can contribute to these efforts.

[From dalailama.com, Apr. 17, 2010]

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA EAGER TO VISIT EARTHQUAKE AFFECTED AREA

As I mentioned briefly soon after I heard the news, I was deeply saddened by the effects of the devastating earthquake in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Tibetan: Kyigudo) of Qinghai Province which resulted in the tragic loss of many lives, a great number of injured and severe loss of property. Because of the physical distance between us, at present I am unable to comfort those directly affected, but I would like them to know I am praying for them.

I commend the monastic community, young people and many other individuals from nearby areas for their good neighbourly support and assistance to the families of those who have lost everything. May your exemplary compassion continue to grow. This kind of voluntary work in the service of others really puts the bodhisattva aspiration into practice.

I also applaud the Chinese authorities for visiting the affected areas, especially Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who has not only personally offered comfort to the affected communities, but has also overseen the relief work. I am very appreciative too that the media have been free to report on the tragedy and its aftermath.

In 2008, when a similar earthquake struck Sichuan, Chinese central and local government leaders and auxiliary authorities took great pains to provide relief, allow free access to the media, as well as clearing the way for international relief agencies to provide assistance as required. I applauded these positive moves then and appeal for such ease of access on this occasion too.

The Tibetan community in exile would like to offer whatever support and assistance it can towards the relief work. We hope to be able to do this through the proper and appropriate channels as soon as possible.

When Sichuan was rocked by an earthquake two years ago, I wished to visit the affected areas to pray and comfort the people there, but I was unable to do so. However, when Taiwan was struck by a typhoon last year, I was able to visit the affected families

and pray with them for those who had perished in that disaster. In providing some solace to the people concerned, I was happy to be able to do something useful.

This time the location of the earthquake, Kyigudo (Chinese: Yushu), lies in Qinghai Province, which happens to be where both the late Panchen Lama and I were born. To fulfill the wishes of many of the people there, I am eager to go there myself to offer them comfort.

In conclusion, I appeal to governments, international aid organisations and other agencies to extend whatever assistance they can to enable the families of those devastated by this tragedy to rebuild their lives. At the same time, I also call on the survivors of this catastrophe to recognise what has happened as the workings of karma and to transform this adversity into something positive, keeping their hopes up and meeting setbacks with courage as they struggle to restore what they have lost. Once again, I pray for those who have lost their lives as well as for the well being of those who have survived.

I call upon the administration to hear the cries of the Tibetan victims of this tragic national disaster and to advocate for a visit by their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. I urge Beijing leadership to show some mercy and allow a visit to the earthquake area by the Dalai Lama as well—a location very near the site where he was actually born. Only when their spiritual leader is allowed to come and offer solace to their grief and suffering can the Tibetan victims of this national tragic disaster truly begin to heal.

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

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

Just to continue on a point that I failed to mention, the issue of the Tibetan people is, of course, very near and dear to me as well. I have in my district the only Tibetan cultural museum in North America. And it's a site that we have worked with and honored for years—the importance of the Tibetan people, their culture, and what it means to the whole world, and that they are allowed to continue to survive and flourish in this world. And so on many points I agree with the gentleman from Texas.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. McMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1324.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

URGING ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S. CONSULATE IN KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 873) establishing a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 873

Whereas 15 countries, including leading European nations, have diplomatic and consular representation in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq;

Whereas the United States Department of State modified its Travel Warning for Iraq this year to reflect the relative safety and security of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as in other regions of Iraq, is consistent with current United States policy to normalize United States-Iraqi relations at the diplomatic, commercial, cultural, and educational levels as United States Armed Forces responsibly redeploy from Iraq in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement between the United States and Iraq;

Whereas greater United States Government civilian representation throughout Iraq, including in the Kurdistan Region, will serve United States interests during this period of transition;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will increase travel between the United States and Iraq and thus strengthen people-to-people exchanges between both sides;

Whereas currently, United States citizens either living in or visiting the Kurdistan Region of Iraq must travel to the United States Embassy in Baghdad, 200 miles away, to receive consular services;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will be helpful both in attracting greater United States business and investment to the region and in ensuring that the region continues to serve as a "gateway" to United States business success in other parts of Iraq, as a number of United States Government agencies have advocated;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will reaffirm United States support for the stability, prosperity, and democracy that the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has achieved;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in Iraq, including in the Kurdistan Region will facilitate more governmental and nongovernmental missions between the United States and the Iraq;

Whereas the Kurds of Iraq have been willing partners with the United States in the democratic transition in Iraq since 2003;

Whereas the United States and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have been full partners in the battle against terrorists who seek to undermine progress toward an Iraq that is prosperous, free, and federal;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region and in other regions will play a helpful role in continuing to safeguard Iraq's territorial integrity from external aggression and support United States and Iraqi diplomatic initiatives that seek to prevent outside interference in Iraq's affairs;

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will also foster continued dialogue between the United States and the KRG; and

Whereas the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will positively contribute to continued diplomatic initiatives between the KRG and Turkey: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls on the Department of State to establish a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as in other appropriate regions of Iraq; and

(2) affirms that the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region as well as in other regions of Iraq will be an important United States diplomatic step in supporting stability, prosperity, human rights, and democracy throughout Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. McMAHON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. McMAHON. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

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

This resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the United States should establish a consulate in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. As the United States military presence in Iraq winds down and our diplomatic presence increases, a consulate in northern Iraq will prove indispensable to America. Fifteen countries, including Iran, Turkey, and a leading number of European countries, have already opened consulates in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan regional government. It would benefit U.S. national security to follow suit. American economic interests would also be served by opening a consulate in northern Iraq. Indeed, Iraqi Kurdistan offers numerous business opportunities across a number of important sectors, including energy development and infrastructure. The lack of a consulate in northern Iraq is preventing U.S. firms from taking full advantage of these new economic opportunities in a rapidly developing region. Instead, contracts are going to Iranian, European, Turkish, and Asian corporations.

Finally, the absence of a U.S. consulate in northern Iraq makes it extremely difficult for the residents of that region—Kurds, Arabs, and others—to gain access to U.S. consular services. Iraqis from the north must drive more than 200 miles to reach the American Embassy in Baghdad. And