

The 3.5 million American citizens of Puerto Rico deserve no less.

CHRISTIANS ATTACKED IN PAKISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARDY). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it seems now, more than any time in recent history, Christians around the world are being singled out and persecuted.

Most recently and unfortunately were occurrences in Pakistan, where two churches were targeted by suicide bombers. The two attacks that occurred resulted in the deaths of 14 people and injured at least 70.

The bombings were obviously coordinated as they occurred fairly close in proximity and time. One suicide bomber detonated inside one church, and the other was stopped at a security checkpoint and detonated when being tackled by a guard.

Pakistan, whose track record of protecting religious minority groups is spotty at best, has a history of attacks on Christians.

In an op-ed piece I wrote in The Washington Times in February, I discussed the suffering of Christians and other religious minorities around the world.

Last November, a mob of 1,200 in Pakistan lynched two Christians accused of burning a Koran, and a judge sentenced a Christian to death for blasphemy.

The State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2013 highlights Pakistan's inability to protect the religious minorities under its jurisdiction. The report speaks of Pakistan's enforcement of blasphemy laws that restrict religious freedom and are the symbols of religious intolerance.

While the government is vocal of its condemnation of attacks on Christians and other religious communities, it has not taken proper steps to ensure the attackers of such atrocities are brought to justice. Again, it seems to be that words matter more than actions to them. Pakistan is by far not the only country to possess such a dismal record of protecting Christians.

In my op-ed, I speak of China and North Korea as countries that target Christians. Across the Middle East and North Africa, Muslim terrorist organizations search out Christians and kill them in violent and graphic ways, only because the person chose to pray to a different God.

Fellow Americans, when you think about what I have just said, when you think about the freedom that we have here, the very essence of our religious freedom in America is the freedom for all to express their religious beliefs or express none at all; yet all over the world, countries such as Pakistan, Islamic extremist groups such as ISIS

and others—who have no part in a civilized society and need to be banished and done away with in a civilized society—choose to horrendously kill someone for whom they pray and the faith that they have.

Explain to me how you are supposed to worship a God that says it is okay to behead 16 Christians or to blow up their church or desecrate their facilities. It is something that must be addressed.

You see, these atrocities should not just startle those of religious faith and of nonreligious faith as well; they should startle and shock the world to realize that this is something that must cease.

For me, it is personal. As a Christian, as one of faith, my faith is described to me as being one in Christ with other believers. For me, when one is beheaded, we are all persecuted, including those here in our comfort in America.

You see, religious freedom is not just something that we talk about in the comfort of America, but must be rung loud and true throughout the world.

You see, having a member of a common faith that is being decapitated, burned alive, impaled, or crucified, these are family members to me, but in the reality to the world, as the poet has once said: "Any man's death diminishes me."

What a tragedy it takes on when it takes the form of religious intolerance by people who want their own views believed.

You see, I desire now that the President seriously take into consideration the recommendation of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. It provides recommendations to Congress and the President about the lack of religious freedoms in other countries and advises the White House on nonlethal actions that can be taken against those countries.

Since 2002, they have recommended that Pakistan be named as a "country of particular concern." The designation of "country of particular concern" allows the government to use non-military policies to encourage a country to increase protection for religious minorities.

I strongly encourage the White House to consider looking into designating Pakistan as a "country of particular concern."

I ask the question to this administration and to the world: How many more Christians have to be blown up, how many more have to be beaten in prison, how many more have to have their heads taken off before we act?

When I deployed to Iraq, I saw the multitude of faiths and lack of faith. I have seen it come together and understand what we are fighting for. When we talk about those who act in the name of a God and are Islamic extremists who want nothing but to eradicate the rest of the people's beliefs, this is something that cannot be tolerated. I cringe when I think of this.

While I disagreed many times with the decisions made at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, I ask that this administration take this very seriously and consider religious freedom for all around the world.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank my good friend for raising an important issue about religious freedom. It certainly is critical.

As we look at some of the atrocities that are happening around the world, Mr. Speaker, I want to rise today to talk about the Armenian genocide that happened nearly 100 years ago. This year actually marks the 100th anniversary.

As the eyes of the world focus on ISIS and the brutal killings of innocent Christians in the Middle East, we must recognize the horrors of the past if we hope to avoid repeating them in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, during which the Ottoman Turks systematically exterminated over 1.5 million Armenians and Christian minorities. This genocide is a fact and cannot be ignored. It is settled history.

Turkey, however, has never accepted the responsibility and has continued to hide behind its brutal tactics that shroud violations of human rights. Even as 11 of our NATO allies and 42 U.S. States have recognized Turkey's leading role in this atrocity, this body has yet to do so.

The continued campaign of denial sets a dangerous precedent that makes future atrocities, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, more likely. While ordering his military leaders to attack Poland, Adolf Hitler rationalized: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Mr. Speaker, if we deny that these atrocities exist, we actually perpetuate the potential that it may happen again. We must join the international community to speak with a unified voice against this genocide.

Our bipartisan Armenian Genocide Truth and Justice Resolution, H. Res. 154—just dropped—would send an unequivocal message that we will never forget those that were lost, nor will we tolerate human rights abuses of any kind.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember the 100th anniversary—on April 24, to be specific—of the Armenian genocide. I call on our colleagues in the United States Congress to speak out by passing the Armenian Genocide Truth and Justice Resolution so that we can end the denial once and for all.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAAYER

Reverend Dr. Mark Gooden, Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church, Johnson City, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, I give You praise this morning for Your goodness and mercy, Your steadfast love, and Your wonderful grace. Holy is Your name.

I pray for these Congresswomen and -men who represent the people across this land. These faithful servants sought public office to make a difference. Help them to stay the course and to compromise when conscience allows, but stand strong in their convictions when they can do no less. For their work ahead, I pray that You grant them clarity of thought, wisdom, and understanding. Some here are hurting and grieving; please comfort them and give them peace.

I pray that You forgive us as a people when we react with hatred and not kindness, when we are quick to speak and slow to listen, when we seek not to be understood but to judge. Help us to remember what You require of us: that we act justly, that we love mercy, and that we walk humbly with You.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BEATTY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. MARK GOODEN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Mark

Gooden of Johnson City, Tennessee, for his service today as a guest chaplain of the House of Representatives.

For more than 30 years, Dr. Gooden has served as a spiritual light to over half a dozen churches across Tennessee as a pastor and an elder. I have personally had the privilege of knowing him as the senior pastor of my home church, Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church, in my hometown of Johnson City, Tennessee.

Mark and his wife, Judy, have been a blessing in my life. Mark ministered my wife during her recent illness and prayed with my family minutes before she passed, and for this I will be eternally grateful.

I am proud to recognize Dr. Gooden today as a guest chaplain of the House of Representatives.

ELECTING A MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a resolution (H. Res. 155) electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives, and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 155

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Buchanan.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MILITARY OATHS

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our Constitution's very first amendment protects every individual's freedom of religion, but our servicemen and -women who protect our country with their lives are seeing that freedom under fire.

In 2013, the United States Air Force Academy made the phrase "so help me God" optional in the oath each cadet takes. And why did they do that? Because of one radical atheist group's demands.

Let me be clear: Americans have the freedom of religion—but not the free-

dom from religion. That is why I am introducing legislation that requires congressional approval before any change could be made to our military oaths.

Mr. Speaker, the moral foundation of our country is in serious danger if we allow radical groups to dictate whether or not we can freely express our religious beliefs. I think it is time to take a stand.

THE GOP BUDGET

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a GOP budget proposal that can be summed up in one phrase: work harder for less. The GOP leadership put forth a budget that does nothing to boost paychecks of hard-working Americans.

Students will see education cuts, and college will be less affordable. Mr. Speaker, this budget takes away the tools that allow people to climb the ladder of opportunity.

It attacks retirement for seniors; and seniors on Medicare will immediately pay more for preventive health services, and those with high prescription drug costs will see prices skyrocket. It will mean the end of the current Medicare guarantee, and millions of seniors can be hurt.

While Republican leadership pushes this misguided budget proposal that doesn't work for my district and doesn't work for the Nation, Democrats will continue pursuing policies that provide the tools hardworking families need to achieve economic security.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

(Mr. BUCSHON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, 90 years ago today, the deadliest tornado in U.S. history passed through the southwestern Indiana towns of Griffin, Owensville, and Princeton. Named the Great Tri-State Tornado, the deadly cyclone traveled three States and 219 miles over 3.5 hours, causing 695 deaths, destroying family farms, and devastating cities.

This catastrophic event is an important reminder to Hoosier families: don't wait to get prepared. Make an emergency plan ahead of time. As we enter tornado season, take the time to stay informed.

Hoosiers can access information on what to expect and how to prepare through the Department of Homeland Security at the Federal level, the Indiana DHS, the Red Cross, my office, and other organizations.

Don't wait. Take the time to get prepared today.