

is an important reform because it empowers Veteran Integrated Service Network directors and VA medical center directors to initiate these third-party reviews.

The Manchester VA Medical Center in my home State of New Hampshire currently faces a number of questions regarding the services it provides and the facilities it manages. While Secretary Shulkin has initiated reviews of the facility, it took a number of whistleblowers to put their reputation and jobs on the line to force action.

Legislation like the Enhancing Veteran Care Act could have streamlined this process and made both the facility and the VISN more accountable to the needs of veterans in New Hampshire. VA must be better at assessing its own shortcomings.

Ultimately, veterans in the Granite State and across the country deserve the highest standard of care.

I thank Senators INHOFE and LANKFORD for introducing this important legislation. I thank Senator SHAHEEN, one of the lead Democratic cosponsors of the bill, for helping advance this bill through the U.S. Senate and being attentive to the needs of our Granite State veterans.

I proudly support this legislation and urge all of my colleagues to support this bill and immediately send it to the President's desk.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of S. 1266, the Enhancing Veteran Care Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This has been a team effort on the Veterans' Affairs Committee to work to try to improve the care that our veterans and Nation's heroes get throughout this country. The involvement on both sides of the aisle on our committee is unprecedented, I think, for a committee working toward a single goal and purpose.

Many times, we have differences of opinion, but this bill is just another tool that the VA will be able to use to improve the care that veterans get.

I received a letter today from a gentleman in New Mexico who had a very different experience 6 or 7 years ago with the VA. He was even hesitant to go back. He went back to this VA hospital and had a very pleasant experience. So I think things are changing for the better, I think due to the hard work of the leadership at the VA, the people who work there every day, and this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCLINTOCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1266.

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. ROE of Tennessee. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONDEMNING ETHNIC CLEANSING OF ROHINGYA AND CALLING FOR AN END TO ATTACKS IN AND AN IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO RAKHINE, BURMA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 90) condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 90

Whereas on August 25, 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army carried out attacks on Government positions in the state of Rakhine in Burma ("Rakhine State");

Whereas in recent decades the Rohingya people have lost, through systematic discrimination by Burmese national, state and local authorities, a range of civil and political rights, including citizenship, and face barriers today such that they are mostly stateless peoples;

Whereas since the August 25 attacks, Burma's military and security forces, as well as private mobs, have carried out attacks resulting in over 600,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh;

Whereas Amnesty International described the attacks by stating that "Myanmar security forces are setting northern Rakhine State ablaze in a targeted campaign to push the Rohingya people out of Myanmar";

Whereas the United Nations Security Council has called for an end to the violence and attacks;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights has said that the response by the military is "grossly disproportionate" and a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing";

Whereas Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said, "This violence must stop, this persecution must stop";

Whereas under Burma's military-drafted constitution, the country's military and security services are not subject to civilian rule and only Burma's Commander-in-Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, can command troops to cease attacks impacting civilians in Rakhine State;

Whereas Burma's civilian Government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has not yet taken necessary steps to address the violence and should take further measures, including to address the pervasive problem of hate speech;

Whereas the United States acknowledges the democratic transition underway in Burma, maintains hope for further genuine democratic reforms, and expects Burma's elected officials to take action to prevent violence and secure rights;

Whereas the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State ("Rakhine Commission") examined, beginning in 2016, the underlying tensions in Rakhine State and made a series of recommendations including a wide range of suggestions and policy changes dealing with humanitarian aid, citizenship, reconciliation, and peace;

Whereas the Rakhine Commission stated, "While Myanmar has every right to defend its own territory, a highly militarized response is unlikely to bring peace to the area. What is needed is a calibrated approach—one that combines political, developmental, security and human rights responses to ensure that violence does not escalate and intercommunal tensions are kept under control.";

Whereas the United Nations estimates that \$434,000,000 in humanitarian assistance will be needed to provide life-sustaining support to 1,200,000 people, both refugees and host communities, in the first few months of this crisis; and

Whereas the United States is providing an initial \$32,000,000 in humanitarian assistance to address the urgent needs of Rohingya fleeing violence from Rakhine State into Bangladesh, as well as the needs of internally displaced persons in Rakhine State and host communities in Bangladesh: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns the attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces and calls on Burma's Commander-in-Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, to immediately end all attacks against civilians in the state of Rakhine in Burma;

(2) expresses deepest appreciation to the Government of Bangladesh for providing refuge to those fleeing violence and attacks;

(3) condemns the attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and the violence in Rakhine and Rohingya communities, but warns that these attacks do not justify the unrestrained response by Burmese military and security forces that has resulted in severe human rights violations, murderous ethnic cleansing, and atrocities against civilians;

(4) calls on Burma's Government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, and the Burmese military and security forces to work constructively to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, including those relating to justice, reconciliation, humanitarian aid, and citizenship;

(5) calls on Burma's Government and its military and security services to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to refugees and internally displaced persons;

(6) urges support and access for the United Nations Fact Finding Mission to Burma;

(7) calls on Burma's military and Government to allow refugees to voluntarily return to Burma in a manner consistent with internationally recognized principles of human rights and refugee protection and to change laws and policies that have contributed to insecurity in the state of Rakhine; and

(8) calls on the President of the United States to impose sanctions on members of the Burmese military and security forces who are responsible for human rights abuses.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days

to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, for decades, the Burmese Government and its military has systematically oppressed the people known as the Rohingya, a Muslim minority living in the Rakhine State of Burma.

A 1982 citizenship law denies the Rohingya citizenship, even though most of them have lived in the country for generations. They have been denied freedom of movement, access to healthcare, and education. The Rohingya have been marginalized at every level of the Burmese Government, from the top to the bottom.

Making matters worse, Burma's military is engaged in a new brutal crackdown on the Rohingya that the U.S. has rightly deemed "ethnic cleansing." More than 600,000 Rohingya people have been driven from their homes in recent months, forced to cross the border into Bangladesh.

Hundreds have been killed, though with journalists denied access to large areas of Rakhine State, that number is clearly very much higher than those reported. At least 200 villages have been burned to the ground. Land mines have been placed inside Burma's border with Bangladesh, maiming refugees seeking safe haven. There are reports of rapes and all types of violence committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese security forces.

Importantly, this resolution not only condemns the attack against civilians by Burma's security services led by General Min Aung Hlaing, it also reaffirms the crimes committed against the Rohingya as ethnic cleansing. Recently, Secretary of State Tillerson made this strong but warranted determination, a decision that deserves our praise here.

Bangladesh also deserves credit for opening its borders in order to handle the human refugees that are streaming out of Burma, but its government has to honor its promise to build shelter for new arrivals and provide medical services.

In response to this crisis, Secretary Tillerson recently announced an additional \$47 million in humanitarian assistance for Burma and Bangladesh, bringing the total U.S. assistance to more than \$150 million this year. It is very much needed.

State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and the de facto leader of Burma, must make it a top priority to provide for the safety of those in Burma, including the Rohingya. The safe and voluntary return of the victims displaced in Bangladesh must also be a top priority.

But to get to the point where the Rohingya will feel safe enough to re-

turn to their homes, the Burmese Government and military must honor their responsibility to ensure the protection of all of the people of Burma, regardless of their ethnic background, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The violence against the Rohingya must stop, and those responsible for those atrocities must face justice.

The protection of human rights has long been our Nation's top priority in Burma, including freeing Aung San Suu Kyi. Today, that must include the Rohingya. This is a moral issue and a national security issue. No one is secure when extremism and instability is growing in this part of the world.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure. Let me, first of all, thank my good friend and fellow New Yorker, Mr. CROWLEY; and our former chair of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, Mr. CHABOT, for authoring this important resolution. I also want to thank ED ROYCE, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for his sustained focus on this tragedy and his leadership in quickly bringing this measure to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to see reports of Rohingya refugees fleeing to Bangladesh and widespread hunger and malnutrition for those left behind.

The Burmese military and security forces are waging a brutal campaign of violence against unarmed civilians, including women and children, killing, raping, and destroying lives and livelihoods.

The Rohingya people have been marginalized for decades, but the unthinkable violence and human suffering since August is ethnic cleansing, pure and simple—a description the Trump administration now agrees with, although they were far too slow to say so—and possibly even genocide.

□ 1415

Over the past 4 months, more than 600,000 men, women, and children have fled to neighboring Bangladesh to find refuge in a country with tremendous needs of its own. This is more than 10 times the number of refugees the administration will allow into the United States this year, the same administration that ended America's participation in the U.N. effort to develop a global compact on migration, all this right in the middle of the world's most serious refugee crisis in history. I say shame on us. We should be doing more.

Bangladesh deserves our deep gratitude for opening its doors to the Rohingya at a time when our government slams the door shut. The Governments of Burma and Bangladesh have struck a deal to begin repatriating Rohingya next month, but it is not clear that anyone is interested in returning right now. In fact, there are reports of more arrivals in Bangladesh each day on fishing boats for those who

can afford passage and on makeshift rafts for those who cannot.

People are leaving Burma out of fear; they are leaving because they are hungry; and they are leaving because they know, if they stay, they will die. The Burmese Government has not yet set appropriate conditions for the voluntary, dignified, and safe return, including allowing an independent United Nations fact-finding mission and addressing citizenship issues.

The United States Congress has long defended the rights and freedoms of the Burmese people, championing Burma's new leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, during her many years under house arrest, supporting Burma's historic 2015 decision, and remaining a committed partner in Burma's ongoing democratic transition. With the measure before us today, this body will continue to speak out on this issue. We support freedom and respect for human rights in Burma.

This measure condemns the horrific actions of the military and security forces, calls for an immediate cessation of its violence, and urges the restoration of humanitarian access. It also calls for Aung San Suu Kyi to exercise moral leadership, something that is needed now more than ever.

We reject the army's claims that what is taking place in Burma is a so-called counterterrorism measure. That is nonsense. It is textbook ethnic cleansing; that is what it is.

We should also encourage other governments to stay engaged and continue to address the pressing needs of these refugees, needs that will only grow as long as this situation remains unresolved.

Lastly, we must also urge our own administration to hold members of the Burmese military and security forces accountable for these atrocities, and I have introduced sanctions legislation to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, and I compliment both our chairman and our ranking member for how they have ensured that our committee remains a bulwark of support for human rights throughout the world.

It has been 16 years since 3,000 Americans were slaughtered before our eyes by a global terrorist movement, using Islam as an excuse for the cowardly murder of innocent people, people of every faith who were butchered in order to terrorize the rest of us in the world into submission to their fanaticism.

Crucial to our ability to defeat this evil force has been our commitment to

ensure that the battle did not evolve into a war between Islam itself and the rest of us, which would then, of course, pit Muslims against all Christians as well as people of other faiths.

George W. Bush, President of the United States, reached out at that moment after 9/11 to ensure that the plot by these radical terrorists did not succeed in polarizing the world as such. Our greatest success has been preventing that polarization that would have put all the people of the world against Islam and all Muslims against all the rest of the people of the world.

That battle to make sure that does not happen must continue. It is essential to keep open the ties with those people in the Muslim world who are appalled by the terror and brutality of these fanatics who commit such monstrous crimes.

It is vital for our own security that we aggressively condemn terrorism and human rights abuses when it is against Muslim people. The Muslim people are the victims, and they need to know that we are on their side, just as we expect good Muslim people to be on our side when we confront this terrorism in the world. We did that, of course, when the Serbian Christians were killing, ethnically cleansing, Muslim people in Kosovo.

Today we reaffirm to the Muslim people of the world and to ourselves that we loudly proclaim that we are condemning the slaughter of the Rohingya people who reside in the southern states of Burma. If these attacks by the Burmese military continue, we must follow this strong condemnation today with sanctions.

In the meantime, not one bullet or weapon should ever be made available to the Burmese military. And, in the meantime, the Burmese military officers and the government officials who are engaged in this particular policy of genocide against the Rohingya people must know they will be held accountable for their crimes against the Rohingyas, because it is not a crime just against Rohingyas, it is a crime against humanity.

So, again, I commend the leadership of our committee, both the ranking member and the chairman, for making this an important issue for this Congress.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the author of this resolution, a longtime advocate for the people of Bangladesh and Burma, the Democratic Caucus chair, and my fellow New Yorker.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from New York for yielding me this time. I thank the chair, as well, for his work on this effort. I thank my friend and colleague from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for his work on putting this resolution together. I know Mr. LEVIN, Ms. McCOLLUM, and others, have also expressed a tremendous interest in this issue, and I am very pleased and happy about that.

In late August, after attacks on outposts, Burma's military and security forces launched a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya in Burma. The response has been grossly disproportionate. The attacks by the military against the Rohingya civilians have been systematic, organized, and ruthless.

Amnesty International says:

The Myanmar military has killed hundreds of Rohingya women, men, and children, including babies; raped women and girls; and carried out targeted burning of entire villages.

And that is just what we know of.

The authorities have terrorized the Rohingya people so cruelly that more than 600,000 Rohingya people have fled Burma to neighboring Bangladesh. Even before the attacks, the Rohingya were often effectively denied access to proper healthcare and education, as the chairman has indicated, many just barely getting by.

But the most disturbing thing of all, at least so far, there is no light at the end of this tunnel. Still today, Burma's authorities are blocking adequate humanitarian aid to many who need it, denying critical food aid to many men, women, and children.

As a result, those Rohingya who do remain in Burma are getting hungrier, they are getting weaker, and they are becoming even more vulnerable. But instead of trying to resolve the issue, many authorities are denying that this has happened at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have had enough. I think we have all had enough. The United States certainly cannot solve every problem in the world, but there are some things that we can and that we must do. Imposing sanctions against the perpetrators of atrocities in Burma is one of the things that we must do.

Doing so will send an important signal that we are watching and we are not standing by idly. It will signal that we want to see the recommendations of former Secretary General Kofi Annan carried out. It will signal that there is a cost to pay for carrying out atrocities. It will signal that the world won't simply turn away.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum recently released an important report on the Rohingya, called, "They Tried to Kill Us All." The title should say it all, "They Tried to Kill Us All." What clearer message do we need before we act? The time for action is now.

I also want to thank the Government of Bangladesh for the humanitarian relief to the Rohingya people that they have offered.

I want to call on our friend, Aung San Suu Kyi, to do everything that she can to protect the Rohingya from further ethnic cleansing and genocide.

I want to thank Pope Francis for his courage in speaking out and using the term "Rohingya."

I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure.

I thank my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee for giving this issue the attention that it needs and deserves.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of what our colleague JOE CROWLEY brought up today, there is new urgency in this argument and new urgency to us getting the point across to the Government of Burma. Let me speak for a minute as to that issue.

Many people at this moment are in grave danger. Many people who are in certain areas in Rakhine State are in danger at this moment. They are at risk of mass killings.

State security forces as well as armed civilian perpetrators stand poised. So the situation right now, it is possible that we have not seen the worst of this in terms of mass killings.

As we speak, the Government of Myanmar confines 120,000 Rohingya men, women, and children to more than 45 internment camps in these eight townships in Rakhine State, which we are most concerned about at this moment. They have been confined for the last 5 years, as we know. They have been denied aid, and they have been, obviously, deprived of their dignity.

Since August 25, the Government of Myanmar has obstructed, as shared with this body today by JOE CROWLEY, has blocked food aid, humanitarian aid to some of these internment camps, systematically weakening that population. They are at grave risk.

This is notice to the Government of Burma. The authorities there continue to block the delivery of this humanitarian aid, this food aid to these women and children. If this does not end now, it will constitute acts of genocide. It must end now.

And also, of course, the authorities there continue to enforce severe restrictions on freedom of movement and severe restrictions on the livelihoods of these people.

It is more than worrisome, the extent to which the Burmese Government and security forces have continued to thwart international observers from moving into these camps and have thwarted international organizations. The world should demand access now for impartial fact finders. Any continued resistance can only reinforce our suspicions that Burma has something to hide and that the evidence will show will constitute acts of genocide if this continues. It must end now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking

Member ENGEL for their leadership in bringing this important resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 90, condemning the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in Burma and the immediate restoration of access to humanitarian aid. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution.

I thank our previous speaker, my colleague, JOE CROWLEY, as well as our Republican colleague, STEVE CHABOT, sitting in front of us, for authoring this measure.

We are seeing condemnations of the atrocities occurring in Burma from across the world, Mr. Speaker, as well as calls for the nation's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, to make greater efforts to stop the violence there.

□ 1430

Last month, our U.S. administration issued an official determination that the Burmese military's actions constitute ethnic cleansing, and rightly so. The atrocities being committed against this ethnic minority have been well documented and they deserve the utmost condemnation.

The reality on the ground is shocking, Mr. Speaker. Over 600,000 were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh; the systematic massacre, the rape, the pillaging, all in an effort to eliminate any trace of these Muslim minorities in Burma.

No one is safe, no Rohingya is safe, yet the world continues to sit back and watch as these individuals are targeted for extinction and eradication from the history books.

We as a United States Congress can do more, we must do more, and we expect responsible nations and responsible actors to do more to end this persecution.

Last week, Pope Francis met with Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's top military commander, delivering the message that these atrocities must be stopped. The Dalai Lama has spoken out against this systematic campaign.

Now it is time for us in the U.S. Congress to add our voice and send a strong message of our own, and this resolution does just that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), my good friend, the senior member of the Ways and Means Committee and a senior member of Congress.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ENGEL for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution. At the same time, I want to express concerns about the full thrust of the resolution.

It makes it clear that the military in Burma is the main perpetrator of the crimes committed against the Rohingya people. In November, Secretary Tillerson called the violence against the Rohingya "ethnic cleansing," holding the military responsible.

Some have urged that Aung San Suu Kyi does not control the military and there is a danger that the military would use the present crisis as a way to dismantle the civilian government. It has also been said that the civilian government is working within a deep traditional bias against the Rohingyas, and some see them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Others point out the pressure on the civilian government could lead to Burma moving closer to the Chinese. Still others point out that talks about Rohingyas returning to Burma must be afforded time to work out, and the process has only begun.

None of these factors must undermine the realities of the persecution of the Rohingyas. As a U.N. official has stated, it is "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

The Pope was under great pressure to not mention the Rohingyas by name. He expressed his deep concern while visiting the country. Later in Bangladesh, the Pope, being specific, said: "None of us can fail to be aware of the gravity of the situation." He called for "... decisive measures to address this grave crisis."

A few years ago, I was part of the codel organized by Leader PELOSI to Myanmar. One of the highlights of the trip was meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been freed after almost 2 decades of house arrest. We discussed her unique role in moving Myanmar toward a nation of freedom, human rights, and peace.

The resolution earlier introduced by Senators MCCAIN and DURBIN expressed the overriding need for the world to step up to the plight of the Rohingyas. I introduced the same resolution in the House. These resolutions reflect what many esteemed historical figures have said.

Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, executed by the Nazis, said: "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil."

Desmond Tutu has said: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

Elie Wiesel said: "We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

I quote the statement of Martin Luther King, who said: "... an individual who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the chairman of the Committee on Small Business and a senior member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 90. This is a bipartisan bill condemning the Burmese military's systemic attacks on the Rohingya in Rakhine State.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank especially Congressman CROWLEY from New

York for working together in a bipartisan manner on this legislation and also with Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL and so many others.

As someone who has chaired the Foreign Affairs Committee on Asia and the Pacific and who has been to Burma and met with Aung San Suu Kyi and followed Burma very closely, what has happened there is truly shocking and disheartening, and really a blot on the world in how this has been handled up to this point in many ways.

The Rohingyas have long been at the fringes of Burmese society and it is no secret that the Burmese military regards them as outsiders who don't even belong in Burma at all. That is why the military used some attacks back in August by a rogue group of Rohingyas as a pretext to terrorize the entire Rohingya population.

This campaign of terror and violence has demonically worked. Over 600,000 Rohingyas have fled Burma for Bangladesh, and at least 250,000 of those people are children.

Further, credible human rights organizations and the media have documented numerous horrors and abuses, including rape, murder, and torture. The most unspeakable things have happened there.

Together, these atrocities amount to what has been called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

Unfortunately, Burma's constitution ensures that the Burmese military controls much of the government in Burma, while Burma's civilian government has proved incapable of taking appropriate action to address this violence. Since the Burmese military began its ethnic cleansing campaign, it has gone on and on.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to do everything we can to stop these horrors.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), my good friend and the chief deputy whip of our House Democratic leadership.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 90.

I am very grateful for this debate today because we need to raise this issue so the world knows that right before our eyes right now ethnic cleansing is happening halfway around the world in Myanmar.

I was privileged to go 2 weeks ago to both Bangladesh and Myanmar to be an on-the-ground witness to what is going on. In my district, I have probably most of the 1,000 or so Rohingyas in the Chicago area and even have in my district the Rohingya Cultural Center, which I visited this weekend with Senator DICK DURBIN, who was also on this congressional delegation.

We listened to people in Bangladesh and we heard about unspeakable atrocities that, in fact, were spoken, and I recorded some of them.

We talked to a 20-year-old woman who was holding her hijab on her face

as she cried and told about, in front of her eyes, how her husband's throat was slit and he was killed, his brother was killed, and then they grabbed the baby out of her arms and, in front of her, killed that child. It was just one of the stories.

We talked to a grandmother and her granddaughter next to her covered with burns that are now scars from a few months ago. She is so scarred that she cannot speak, and her grandmother wishes only that she would be able to talk.

We met with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Hasina, a woman, who we thanked for allowing 620,000 Rohingya to cross into Bangladesh, but they want them to go home. The Bangladeshis want them to go home. Right now that is impossible because villages have been burned and because the almost complete prejudice against the Rohingya people. They won't even use the name Rohingya in Myanmar, in Burma, to refer to these individuals.

Thousands upon thousands of stories like that are coming out of Rakhine State, where the Rohingya made their home.

We thought we were going to be, but we were not permitted to go to the displaced persons camps, which are really prisons, concentration camps in northern Rakhine, where people have been thrown out of their homes, and their homes and jobs destroyed.

We went to Sittwe, the capital of the Rakhine State. We went to what is essentially a ghetto surrounded by barbed wires, blocked by police, where people cannot get healthcare, they can't go to the stores that they used to have in the village, they can't get education. They are running out of rice right now.

This is happening now in the world. We need to do something about it. I am proud of this Congress for standing up today and saying no more ethnic cleansing.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 90. The discrimination and violence imposed on the Rohingya ethnic minority in Burma is brutal, horrific, and preventable.

I do welcome, like the rest of my colleagues, the administration's determination that the attacks against Rohingya are ethnic cleansing, because it certainly is, but I would respectfully submit it certainly rises to the level of genocide.

The Genocide Convention couldn't be clearer: If you look to destroy an ethnic group—there are other categories

as well, but it is all about the group—in whole or in part, and even the thought, the contemplation of doing so can rise to genocide.

Here it is actually happening, and it is happening because of who they are as a group.

I think there needs to be a further refinement of that determination to the point of being genocide.

The responsibility for this humanitarian crisis falls squarely on the Burmese military and, to some extent, on the endemic and widespread intolerance expressed in Burmese society for the Rohingya.

After the State Department's determination of ethnic cleansing, it should not hesitate to impose sanctions against the Burmese military leaders and all others who are responsible for this bloodbath.

Like many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I am deeply concerned that this crisis may destabilize the National League for Democracy's ruling coalition and set back Burma's democratic transition.

I am concerned about China's interests in Burma, because a robust democracy on China's border does not fit the goals of the Chinese leadership, including Xi Jinping.

I am concerned that outside jihadi groups will exploit this situation to open yet another front.

I am concerned, like my colleagues, about the stability of Bangladesh, whose fragile economy must now host well over 500,000 new refugees.

Of course, we are all most concerned about the Rohingya women, children, and men who suffer horribly during this crisis.

The roots of this humanitarian crisis are long. A durable solution for the Rohingya in Burma will be a difficult task, but we must make the effort. As we all know, there are other ethnic minority groups in Burma, including the Karen, the Karenni, and others, who have also faced atrocities over the years at the hands of the Burmese military.

A democratic and multiethnic future should be Burma's best hope for prosperity and stability. The Burmese military remains the obstacle to that future.

□ 1445

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my great pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), a champion for human rights, especially for the rights of women and girls.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, and I thank the chairman, as well as the authors of this piece of legislation, Mr. CHABOT and Mr. CROWLEY, for their work on this important issue.

Last month, I visited Burma and Bangladesh on a congressional fact-finding mission. Our visits to refugee camps, our conversations with survivors, made it clear that the persecu-

tion of the Rohingya people in Burma's Rakhine State is a severe humanitarian crisis and demands robust American leadership. This resolution is an important first step in demonstrating that Congress will not tolerate human rights abuses against the Rohingyas.

Our delegation saw, however, there is a path forward. The Burmese Government and the military must fully implement the recommendations of the former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's advisory commission. Burma must work with Bangladesh, and the U.N. must fully work to return voluntarily the Rohingya refugees with guarantee of a safe return and a fair process to allow the Rohingyas to apply for and secure citizenship. That must be established.

Finally, there must be an independent investigation to ensure accountability for the atrocities and the abuses that have taken place.

Mr. Speaker, I saw people suffering in both Burma and in Bangladesh, and the suffering must come to an end. They are crying out for action, and the United States and the international community must help them secure justice. This resolution, this vote today, is just the beginning. I encourage people to support this.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the plight of the Rohingya is not and will not be forgotten. I think we heard it from both sides of the aisle with the impassioned speeches today. Nor will we dismiss the suffering of Burma's many other ethnic groups who have been abused by the Burmese Armed Forces throughout decades of conflict.

Since August, we have seen over 600,000 Rohingya in Burma flee to Bangladesh seeking refuge from Burma's murderous security forces. This ethnic cleansing, and perhaps even genocide, is a direct result of the failure of Burma's Government to protect the rights of all people within their borders.

This resolution calls for the reimposition of targeted sanctions against those responsible for this violence. It is the least we can do. History is watching, so I again urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for, once again, working with him in a bipartisan fashion.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just wanted to, again, thank JOE CROWLEY, our colleague, and Mr. STEVE CHABOT for their work on this measure, and Mr. ELIOT ENGEL as well, our ranking member of the committee. They have all along been leaders on this issue, and I thank them for authoring the measure.

I think all of us know that even before this latest resurgence, this massive displacement, this ethnic cleansing, many considered the Rohingya to

be one of the most persecuted minorities, one of the most persecuted populations on the planet. I think this particular resolution rightly shines a light on the abuses committed against them, calling for an end to all violence.

I urge all Members here, but also I urge the Government of Burma, to consider that we are at a point of crisis. If the government there does not reverse course immediately, it will do irreparable damage to its standing in the world and earn it a place among the most egregious human rights abusers in modern history. So what we ask is a reversal of these policies.

I urge all colleagues to vote in favor, send a clear signal that the U.S. will not turn a blind eye toward these atrocities.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 90.

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. ROYCE of California. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2017.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have made the decision to retire from my position as the Member of the United States House of Representatives from Michigan's Thirteenth Congressional District effective today.

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2017.

Hon. RICK SNYDER,
Governor of Michigan,
Lansing, MI.

DEAR GOVERNOR SNYDER: I have made the decision to retire from my position as the Member of the United States House of Representatives from Michigan's Thirteenth Congressional District effective today.

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from

Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the whole number of the House is 433.

TAYLOR FORCE ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1164) to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1164

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Taylor Force Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Palestinian Authority's practice of paying salaries to terrorists serving in Israeli prisons, as well as to the families of deceased terrorists, is an incentive to commit acts of terror.

(2) The United States does not provide direct budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority. The United States does pay certain debts held by the Palestinian Authority and funds programs for which the Palestinian Authority would otherwise be responsible.

(3) The United States Government supports community-based programs in the West Bank and Gaza that provide for basic human needs, such as food, water, health, shelter, protection, education, and livelihoods, and that promote peace and development.

(4) Since fiscal year 2015, annual appropriations legislation has mandated the reduction of Economic Support Fund aid for the Palestinian Authority as a result of their payments for acts of terrorism including, in fiscal year 2017, a reduction "by an amount the Secretary determines is equivalent to the amount expended by the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations with such entities as payments for acts of terrorism by individuals who are imprisoned after being fairly tried and convicted for acts of terrorism and by individuals who died committing acts of terrorism during the previous calendar year".

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Congress—

(1) calls on the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations to stop payments for acts of terrorism by individuals who are imprisoned after being fairly tried and convicted for acts of terrorism and by individuals who died committing acts of terrorism and to repeal the laws authorizing such payments;

(2) calls on all donor countries providing budgetary assistance to the Palestinian Authority to cease direct budgetary support until the Palestinian Authority stops all payments incentivizing terror;

(3) urges the Palestinian Authority to develop programs to provide essential public services and support to any individual in need within its jurisdictional control, rather than to provide payments contingent on perpetrating acts of violence;

(4) urges the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the United Nations to highlight the issue of Palestinian Authority payments

for acts of terrorism and to urge other Member States to apply pressure upon the Palestinian Authority to immediately cease such payments; and

(5) urges the Department of State to use its bilateral and multilateral engagements with all governments and organizations committed to the cause of peace between Israel and the Palestinians to highlight the issue of Palestinian Authority payments for acts of terrorism and to urge such governments and organizations to join the United States in calling on the Palestinian Authority to immediately cease such payments.

SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

(a) LIMITATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For fiscal year 2018 and each of the five subsequent fiscal years, funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for assistance under chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.; relating to Economic Support Fund) and available for assistance for the West Bank and Gaza that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority may only be made available for such purpose if, except as provided in subsection (d), not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of State certifies in writing to the appropriate congressional committees that the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations—

(A) are taking credible steps to end acts of violence against Israeli citizens and United States citizens that are perpetrated or materially assisted by individuals under their jurisdictional control, such as the March 2016 attack that killed former United States Army officer Taylor Force, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan;

(B) have terminated payments for acts of terrorism against Israeli citizens and United States citizens to any individual, after being fairly tried, who has been imprisoned for such acts of terrorism and to any individual who died committing such acts of terrorism, including to a family member of such individuals;

(C) have revoked any law, decree, regulation, or document authorizing or implementing a system of compensation for imprisoned individuals that uses the sentence or period of incarceration of an individual imprisoned for an act of terrorism to determine the level of compensation paid, or have taken comparable action that has the effect of invalidating any such law, decree, regulation, or document; and

(D) are publicly condemning such acts of violence and are taking steps to investigate or are cooperating in investigations of such acts to bring the perpetrators to justice.

(2) ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of State shall include in the certification required under paragraph (1) the definition of "acts of terrorism" that the Secretary used for purposes of making the determination in subparagraph (B) of such paragraph.

(b) EXCEPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the limitation on assistance under subsection (a) shall not apply to—

(A) payments made to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network;

(B) assistance for wastewater projects; and

(C) assistance for any other program, project, or activity that provides vaccinations to children.

(2) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of State shall notify in writing the appropriate congressional committees not later than 15 days prior to making funds available for assistance under subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (1).