

still not allowed to be a part of vital international organizations. Congress took the first step today in bringing about a change in this policy.

Without question their economic status and legal system more than qualify them for membership in the World Trade Organization, but the People's Republic of China, which is not nearly as economically stable as the Republic of China, believes it must be admitted first. The 21 million people of Taiwan certainly deserve representation in the United Nations, but again, the People's Republic of China will not allow it. Given America's close relationship with the People's Republic of China, it would appear as though our friendship with Taiwan has been displaced by our concern about the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has begun to take action and today addressed the issue of Taiwan's involvement in the international community with the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 212. This resolution "urges the Council and Member States to support Taiwan's attempts to secure better representation than it currently enjoys in international organizations * * *" and " * * * ask the United Nations to investigate the possibility of setting up a United Nations working group to study the scope for Taiwan to participate in the activities of bodies answerable to the United Nations General Assembly * * *."

At the same token, I understand the need to be aware of the actions and decisions of the People's Republic of China. Obviously the 1.5 billion people living under People's Republic of China rule are important. However, I think it is vital that the United States work to see our friends in the Republic of China are duly recognized for their achievements and to make sure that Republic of China's borders are secure. On October 10, when the Republic of China celebrates their 85th anniversary, we here in Congress should remember to congratulate our friends on Taiwan and assure them that our relationship will remain strong. House Concurrent Resolution 212 is one step in the right direction, but more needs to be done.

The October 10 celebration marks the continuance of a longstanding friendship between our two countries, as well as the founding of a nation. Again, I congratulate Taiwan on the occasion of its national day.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call attention to the 85th national day of the founding of the Republic of China. Not only for its rapid implementation of democratic policies and reforms but also for its responsiveness to trade imbalances between our two countries should the Republic of China on Taiwan be honored and congratulated on this historic occasion.

One proper way to celebrate the Republic of China's national day is for us to recognize Taiwan's campaign to reenter the United Nations and other international organizations. There really is no reason to deny the Republic of China membership in the United Nations. In my mind, Taiwan's membership in the United Nations is in total conformity with the U.N. principle of universality; will definitely contribute to peace and stability in East Asia and will serve the interests of the United States. Today, we have taken a small step in advancing this campaign by the House adopting House Concurrent Resolution 212, which supports Taiwan's entry into international organizations.

In commemoration of Taiwan's 85th national day, I extend greetings and best wishes to President Lee Teng-Hui, foreign representative, Ambassador Jason Hu. May Taiwan continue to prosper and to one day soon be welcomed back into the community of nations.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I do not have any further requests for time on this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUNDERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 212, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended; and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of the measure just considered.

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

There was no objection.

REGARDING PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS WORLDWIDE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 515) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the persecution of Christians worldwide, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 515

Whereas oppression and persecution of religious believers around the world has emerged as one of the most compelling human rights issues of the day, in particular the worldwide persecution and martyrdom of Christians persists at alarming levels, and this is an affront to the international moral community and to all people of conscience;

Whereas in many places throughout the world, Christians are restricted in or forbidden from practicing their faith, victimized by a "religious apartheid" that subjects them to inhumane humiliating treatment, and are imprisoned, tortured, enslaved, and killed;

Whereas in some countries proselytizing is forbidden and extremist elements persist unchecked by governments in their campaigns to eradicate Christians and force conversions through intimidation, rape, and forced marriage;

Whereas in several Islamic countries conversion to Christianity from Islam is a crime punishable by death and on Islamic court in Kuwait has denied religious liberty to a convert from Islam to Christianity;

Whereas the militant Muslim Government of Sudan is waging what its leader has described as a jihad (religious war) against

Christian and other non-Muslim citizens in the southern part of the country, enforcing Shari'a (Islamic law) against non-Muslim African Sudanese, torturing, starving, killing, and displacing over 1,000,000 people, and enslaving tens of thousands of women and children;

Whereas today in Sudan a human being can be bought for as little as \$15;

Whereas Christians in China are now experiencing the worst persecution since the 1970's;

Whereas there are more documented cases of Christians in prison or in some form of detention in China than in any other country;

Whereas both Evangelical Protestant house church groups and Roman Catholics have been targeted and named "a principal threat to political stability" by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China;

Whereas in recent months, in separate incidents, 3 Chinese Christian leaders were beaten to death by Chinese authorities simply because of their religious activities;

Whereas 3 Christian leaders in Iran were kidnapped and murdered during 1994 as part of a crackdown on the Iranian Christian community;

Whereas severe persecution of Christians is also occurring in North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Indonesia (including East Timor), and in certain countries in the Middle East, to name only a few;

Whereas religious liberty is a universal right explicitly recognized in numerous international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas Pope John Paul II recently sounded a call against regimes that "practice discrimination against Jews, Christians, and other religious groups, going even so far as to refuse them the right to meet in private for prayer", declaring that "this is an intolerable and unjustifiable violation, not only of all the norms of current international law, but of the most fundamental human freedom, that of practicing one's faith openly", stating that this is for human beings "their reason for living";

Whereas the National Association of Evangelicals in January 1996 issued a Statement of Conscience and Call to Action, subsequently commended or endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America, in which they pledged to end their "silence in the face of the suffering of all those persecuted for their religious faith" and "to do what is in our power to the end that the Government of the United States will take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution now victimizing fellow believers and those of other faiths";

Whereas the World Evangelical Fellowship has declared September 29, 1996, and the last Sunday in September each year thereafter, as an international day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Christians, and that day will be observed by numerous churches and human rights groups around the world;

Whereas the United States of America since its founding has been a harbor of refuge and freedom to worship for believers from John Winthrop to Roger Williams to William Penn and a haven for the oppressed, and has guaranteed freedom of worship in this country for people of all faiths;

Whereas historically the United States has in many instances failed to intervene successfully to stop anti-Christian and other religious persecution; and

Whereas in the past the United States has forcefully taken up the cause of other persecuted religious believers and the United

States should continue to intervene on behalf of persecuted Christians throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its commitment to the Nation's historic devotion to the principles of religious liberty;

(2) unequivocally condemns the egregious human rights abuses and denials of religious liberty to Christians and other persecuted religions around the world and calls upon the responsible regimes to cease such abuses;

(3) strongly recommends that the President expand and invigorate United States international advocacy on behalf of persecuted Christians and other persecuted religions and initiate a thorough examination of all United States policies that affect persecuted Christians;

(4) encourages the President to take organizational steps to strengthen United States policies to combat religious persecution, including the creation of a special advisory committee for religious liberty abroad which has an appropriate mandate and adequate staff or to consider the appointment of a White House special advisor on religious persecution; and

(5) applauds the actions of the World Evangelical Fellowship in declaring an annual international day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Christians.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HAMILTON] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN].

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

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 515 concerns a worldwide human rights problem of intolerance which affects all of us regardless of our religious persuasion. It is a sad and astonishing commentary on our time that we need to consider such a resolution in this day and age.

Yet it remains an incontrovertible fact that the persecution of Christians around the world for circumstances arising from their faith is on the increase. While the reasons that underlie this increase in bigotry, zealotry, and intolerance are many, the basic fact is that thousands of men, women and children suffer because of the dictates of their conscience.

Intolerance aimed at one religion is an attack upon all religious freedom and all religions. It undermines a basic precept of our civilization that the individual is free to decide for himself how he wishes to worship, and that such a decision should be beyond the hand of governments or other individuals to react against.

As this House has done countless times to protest abuses aimed at other sects and faiths, we need to address the campaign now underway in several countries to deny Christians their fundamental human rights. Religious freedom is not some manifestation of a western cultural bias—it is a universal human right. There is no justification for religious persecution, whether the target is Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, or those of other faiths. Re-

ligious freedom is indivisible and must apply equally to all faiths, or no single faith can ever be safe from the scourge of intolerance.

I commend the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] and the other sponsors of this resolution for bringing this matter before the House. Mr. SMITH, the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, is also a principal sponsor of this measure and one member who always strives to keep the issue of religious freedom alive before us. I urge all members of the House to join in passing this measure today. Please vote for House Resolution 515.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. I want to commend the sponsor, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] for drafting the resolution to bring attention to this very serious international problem. I also want to commend the gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS] for working to make it a bipartisan resolution and for broadening the resolution to condemn persecution of all religious groups. I share my colleague's opposition to religious persecution practices by any individual or any government. I want the United States to use all of its influence and leverage to halt such persecution.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution provides yet another opportunity for Congress to show its support for efforts to end all forms of religious persecution. I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF], the major sponsor of this measure.

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, as lead sponsor of this resolution, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 515, a resolution condemning the persecution of Christians around the world. First, I want to thank Representative BILL GILMAN, chairman of the House International Relations Committee and Representatives CHRIS SMITH and TOM LANTOS, chairman and ranking member respectively of the Subcommittees on International Operations and Human Rights, for their support of the resolution and their help in getting this measure through committee in such a short time. I commend the House leadership for bringing this timely resolution to the floor this week.

I also want to thank Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute and Nina Shea of the Puebla Program of Freedom House for their leadership on this issue. Michael and Nina have worked tirelessly in the past year sensitizing the American Christian community about Christian persecution and encouraging action. I appreciate their hard work and their commitment to this compelling issue, which has been an important one for me for some time.

Mr. Speaker, religious persecution did not disappear with the cold war. It is very much alive today. In many countries around the world, people of faith are forced to endure severe persecution because they choose to worship Jesus Christ or adhere to the teachings of the Buddha dharma or practice the teachings of the Baha'u'lla (as in the case of the Bahai's) or otherwise practice their faith. In Bosnia, thousands of innocent men, women and children were slaughtered simply because they were Muslim. In Russia and some of the former Soviet republics, anti-Semitism persists.

This resolution focuses on persecution of Christians. First, it condemns persecution of Christians and the calls upon responsible regimes to cease such abuses. Second, it recommends that the President expand and invigorate international advocacy efforts on behalf of persecuted Christians. Third, it encourages the President to appoint a special advisor or advisory commission to recommend ways to modify U.S. policy to better address this problem. And fourth, it applauds the World Evangelical Fellowship for declaring an international day of prayer for persecuted Christians. The Senate unanimously passed a similar resolution on Tuesday, September 17.

House Resolution 515 is the first resolution in recent memory to focus specifically on Christian persecution. It focuses on Christians not because persecution of Christians is any more abominable than persecution of Jews or Bahai's or Buddhists. Persecuting a person because of his or her religious affiliation or beliefs is abominable anytime it occurs and should always be condemned by the international community. This resolution focuses on persecution of Christians to bring attention to a problem that is increasing in its regularity, its ferocity and its scope. One scholar has said that in the 20th century, more Christians have been killed for being Christian than in any of the previous 19 centuries combined.

We do not know the names of all today's Christian martyrs, but we do know what happens to them: Imprisonment and torture for attending Christian worship services or Bible studies; criminal prosecution, harassment and torture of believers for failing to register with government-sanctioned "religious associations" run by atheists who are hostile to religious practice; systematic beatings of children who attend Christian schools; unpunished looting and burning of Christian churches, businesses and homes; prosecution and sometimes extrajudicial murder for charges brought under broadly construed "blasphemy laws"—laws designed to punish people for saying something negative against the prophet Mohammed; imprisonment for possession of Bibles; and prosecution, torture, and murder of Christian converts.

In Sudan, a country I have visited three times, women and children from

Southern Sudan (who are mostly Christian or practice a traditional African religion) are literally sold into slavery. Some for as little as \$15. The authoritarian Government of Sudan, while fighting for land and power, has declared a jihad against the people of the South. Reports of forced Islamization are prevalent.

Human rights groups and humanitarian organizations have been reporting for several years that humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine, is often withheld from families that refuse to convert to Islam. Freedom House reports that Christian boys are sent to the front lines as cannon fodder. Entire villages have been relocated into so-called peace camps—squalid desert communities where food and water are scarce or nonexistent.

U.N. Special Rapporteur Gaspar Biro reported that in May 1995, soldiers in uniform executed 12 men, women, and children for refusing to convert to Islam. Christian leaders, including clergy, have been assassinated, imprisoned, tortured, and flogged for their faith.

Christians in many other countries also practice their faith in danger. Earlier this year, the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Human Rights, chaired by Representative CHRIS SMITH, held a hearing on anti-Christian persecution where witnesses testified about persecution in North Korea, Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Mexico, and other places. We have heard reports of persecution of Assyrian Christians in Turkey and evangelical Christians in the Oromo region of Ethiopia. Human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Puebla Program of Freedom House, Christian Solidarity International, Open Doors, International Christian Concern, and others continue to document case after case of Christian persecution around the world.

But the best human rights reporting in the West only scratches the surface. Thousands of voiceless, nameless victims suffer alone. Families scared for their lives cannot share their pain with the world.

Mr. Speaker, these kinds of abuses must not escape notice by the American people, the Congress, or the administration if we are a Nation devoted to the principles of freedom and dedicated to preservation of human rights here and abroad. We cannot ignore suffering if we are a Nation of compassion.

Until recently, the American Christian community has been relatively silent on this growing problem. There are many Americans who do not know or understand the suffering which their fellow believers are forced to endure in countries that do not share our belief in liberty and the self-evident truth that all men are created equal.

But the American Christian community has begun to educate itself and call for action. This Sunday, worshippers in over one hundred thousand

churches around the world will be observing the International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians, a day for Christians to pray for the persecuted and pledge themselves to action.

In January, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) issued a Statement of Conscience and Call to Action pledging to end their "silence in the face of the suffering of all those persecuted for their religious faith" and "to do what is in our power to the end that the Government of the United States will take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution." The statement of conscience was subsequently endorsed by the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church, United States of America.

Pope John Paul II recently sounded a call against regimes that "practice discrimination against Jews, Christians and other religious groups" declaring that "this is an intolerable and unjustifiable violation not only of international law, but of the most fundamental human freedom, that of practicing one's faith openly." The U.S. Catholic Conference has decried the low priority religious freedom generally receives in U.S. human rights policy and commended efforts to "give greater visibility to our government's defense of religious liberty wherever it is denied."

Christian leaders such as Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Chuck Colson, resident of Prison Fellowship; Ravi Zacharias, president of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries; and a wide range of interdenominational leaders and scholars have urged greater attention to this problem.

So, I urge you to support House Resolution 515. It's not about party; it's not about politics. It's about religious liberty and justice. It's about Mehdi Dibaj, martyred in Iran in 1994. It's about Bishop Su, a 64-year-old Catholic bishop imprisoned in China earlier this year, beaten with a wooden board until it broke in splinters, suspended upside down while being beaten, who has permanently lost his hearing due to repeated blows. It's about 15-year-old Salamat Masih, a young boy forced to give up his life in Pakistan after being accused of blaspheming Mohammed. And it's about To Ding Trung, a Vietnamese Christian evangelist serving time in Quang Ngai prison for "abusing his freedom as a citizen by propagating religion illegally."

We are a great Nation and we are compassionate people. Vote "yes" on House Resolution 515.

□ 1645

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the resolution. It is not about a party, it is not about politics, it is about religious liberty and justice. It is regarding and about those who have been persecuted for their faith.

This Congress, during the 1980's and 1970's, stood with those persecuted

from different religious beliefs. I believe that this is one of the finest hours, that we stand for those who are being persecuted for their Christian faith, and want to again thank the chairman, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], for his efforts, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SMITH] for his efforts, the gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS] for his efforts, and the House leadership on both sides of the aisle for moving this important bill.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. CLEMENT].

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON] and thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS], and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF].

Mr. Speaker, today I enjoy a privilege that can only be dreamed of by millions around the world. That privilege is freedom: My freedom to express myself as I choose. My freedom to openly believe in God and to serve Him according to the dictates of my faith.

Yet it is a tragic reality that millions around the world are denied this fundamental right. The United States has rightly affirmed the U.N. Declaration of 1981 stating that "Discrimination between human beings on grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity * * * and shall be condemned as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." We have justly condemned human rights abuses against Tibetan Buddhists, Bosnian Muslims, Soviet Jews, and others.

Yet there are many, many more whose cries we must also hear. For too long, we have shut them out, perhaps because of ignorance. We can do so no longer. These are the cries of millions of Christians in countries across the world who are harassed, tortured, raped, imprisoned, or even executed for exercising the freedoms we in America so easily enjoy.

In Vietnam, China, Egypt, Iran, and other countries, government forces have jailed and often brutally tortured pastors, priests, or converts to Christianity. Some have been beaten or tortured to death.

In the Sudan, government forces kidnap children from Christian communities and sell them as slaves and concubines. In China, Laos, and Cuba churches have been shut down or destroyed.

In Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, and other countries, conversion from Islam to Christianity is punishable by death. In Pakistan, a terrible blasphemy law carries the death penalty for any statement against the prophet Muhammed.

Mr. Speaker, it is unjust for us to ignore the suffering of these millions when it lies within our power to respond in some measure. It is my honor today to join my colleagues from both parties in cosponsoring House Resolution 515, introduced by Representative

WOLF. This resolution reaffirms our historic commitment to religious freedom, recommends appropriate measures on the part of our government and applauds the designation of an annual international day for prayer for these brothers and sisters. This Sunday, September 29, I plan to exercise my own precious freedom to join in prayer for them with churches and citizens across America and in 117 other countries.

Mr. Speaker, religious freedom is not the privilege of one group. It is a universal right, and when the right of one is trampled, the rights of others follow. May we, today, not be condemned by these famous, haunting words of a Lutheran pastor in Nazi Germany, which now hang on the walls of the U.S. Holocaust Museum:

*** they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew *** Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his eloquent words.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. CAMPBELL], a member of our committee.

(Mr. CAMPBELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, today, we enact the resolution; we do not enact the "whereas" clauses. That is an important distinction that I wish to put on the record. I do not ask any of my brothers and sisters in this House of Representatives to vote no, because the resolution itself in my view is perfectly appropriate, but several of the "whereas" clauses, it seems to me, unnecessarily bring us to the edge of possibly saying things with regard to the religion of Islam that would not be constructive, and also with regard to the conditions in China.

I draw particular attention to the "whereas" clause on page 2 of the committee print: "Whereas, in several Islamic countries conversion to Christianity from Islam is a crime punishable by death."

This, I do not think is a helpful statement. I do not think it is helpful to criticize a part of a religion in a book regarding a punishment for giving up the faith, and I note that in the Judeo-Christian religions, as well, to the followers of Christian and Jewish of the Old Testament, the prohibition for blasphemy is stoning, in the book of Deuteronomy.

I am concerned as well in the "whereas" clauses regarding the militant Government of the Sudan as waging a "Jihad." Surely our cause today and the cause of good feeling and human rights, including religious rights, would be advanced by not using the

phrase "Jihad" so readily. It has, I think, a very powerful and potentially misleading application in this context.

As I understand the Quran, "Jihad" means struggle, but certainly in the popular sense in the United States today it would mean a war commanded by, as a matter of faith, and/or as part of Islamic religion. I think that is a great danger to use such a phrase regarding the situation in the Sudan.

Surely we could have accomplished just as much by saying that we condemn the large-scale human rights abuses, killings, and slavery in the Sudan, some of which are done for religious purposes, without using the extremely dangerous and I think inflammatory phrase "Jihad (religions war)."

We have also a "whereas" clause that "Whereas an Islamic court in Kuwait has denied religious liberty to a convert to Islam from Christianity ***." If it is a religious court, surely that is a matter for the religion in question. If the death penalty was applied, then that is a matter of human rights, but there is no allegation that it was applied; once more, a possible confusion of what is written in a book of ancient antiquity and what is actual practice.

Lastly, in reference to China, I think it would have been more profitable not to condemn China wholesale, but rather the specific instances at issue of discrimination and human rights abuses.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for giving me the opportunity to speak in what I hope is a moderating tone, to insist that we are fair and do not add to the flames of difficulty in passing this resolution, but not in endorsing all of the "whereas" clauses.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SMITH], the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations, who has been a long time and continuing advocate of this measure.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 515, offered by my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF], who has been a tireless ally in defending the helpless, the imprisoned, the enslaved, and the persecuted, particularly persecuted Christians. I want to commend my colleague for authoring this legislation and recognizing the modern-day travesty of religious intolerance, imprisonment, and increasingly, the growing numbers of people who are martyrs.

In recent years, Pakistani Christian Javid Mashi was martyred; Iranian Christians, including Bishop Haik, have been killed and martyred by those regimes; Catholic and Protestant Church leaders in China, as well as ordinary believers, are regularly being

arrested, regularly being beaten and fined by the dictatorship.

I have led three human rights trips to the People's Republic of China, Mr. Speaker. I have seen people in this country, the community that has made it to this country and gotten asylum, and also people who have risked much to tell stories in China itself, about the incredible repression that the house church movement and the Catholic Church that is aligned with Rome endures on behalf of their belief in Christ. It is unbelievable, the beatings, the middle of the night visits by the security police, who drag them off to be interrogated, and then the long incarcerations for their faith.

As a matter of fact, we met with one bishop who is aligned with Rome who actually celebrated mass in his apartment, only to be arrested and then get thrown back into prison for that expression of his religious belief, having already spent more than a dozen years in incarceration because of his faith.

We see that the same thing is happening in Vietnam. There are a number of believers who are not aligned with officially recognized churches, which are controlled by the dictatorship, who are languishing in prison and often being tortured and imprisoned for their faith.

Mr. Speaker, the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, which I chair, held a series of hearings in the springtime on religious persecution, and we spent an entire day looking at the rising tide of persecution against Christians.

□ 1700

The most compelling stories at that hearing and those that were submitted to us came from the actual victims who told us of the sufferings and of what they had endured. Persecution occurs in countries including Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, and Turkey, where Government policies repress religious practice and where Islamic extremists stir public uprisings against Christians, particularly those who seek to share their faith and perhaps to witness for Christ or those who convert from Islam to Christianity. People can be killed simply for changing their faith. Where is the religious freedom in those countries where that is practiced?

Persecution also occurs, as I said, in the People's Republic of China, in Cuba, in Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam, where Communist regimes feel threatened by Christians whose faith ultimately transcends the reach and control of political authorities.

In many parts of the world, those in political power rightly see that the inner freedom and human dignity inherent in the Christian faith undermines the pervasive thought control imposed by those dictatorial regimes. Tragically, the testimony heard by our subcommittee confirmed that in countries governed by antidemocratic and

anti-Western regimes, Christians even become the scapegoats and as a means to vent and popularize hatred of the West and of the United States.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the worldwide persecution of Christians continues to this day, and regrettably it is on the rise, one of the most compelling human rights issues in modern times. The martyrdom of Christians has reached absolutely staggering and shocking levels in this century. People of conscience have committed themselves to prayer and to action on behalf of those who are suffering.

I commend the National Association of Evangelicals for their clarion call to action. Pope John Paul II earlier this year denounced the persecution of Christians by Islamic extremists and by Communist regimes. The World Evangelical Fellowship has spearheaded an international day of prayer for the persecuted church. The first annual day of prayer is set for Sunday, September 29.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] has raised all of our attention for years to this. I have traveled with him to such disparate places as the PRC and Romania, and we have seen persecuted Christians. This is another manifestation of his concern for our suffering brethren. I hope everybody votes for this and supports it and joins in this effort to provide freedom and some help for our suffering brethren.

Mr. GILMAN. MR. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his strong supporting arguments and for pushing this measure through at this time.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] for bringing House Resolution 515 forward. He is a leader on the issue of protecting human rights of people around the world. And I am thankful that he has brought notice to this House the tragic increase of anti-Christian bigotry and persecution around the world.

America is the land of religious freedom, and should be a defender of religious liberty. We stand for a person's right to practice a faith. We have long since been familiar with anti-Semitism around the world, which continues to rear its ugly head. Many lawmakers have stood tall to fight that scourge. But we are here today because a new kind of persecution, anti-Christian persecution, is on the rise.

In Sudan, China, Iran, Vietnam, and India, and, I regret, in other countries as well, Christians are being punished for believing in Jesus Christ or for possessing a Bible. For merely acknowledging the Scripture, Christians in these countries risk being kidnapped, killed, raped, and subjected to many other forms of torture. This is an affront to the international community and to all people of conscience.

As a nation, the United States was founded on the basis that the Freedom of Religion was a basic human right. As elected representatives serving in a hall that declares "In God We Trust," we in Congress have an obligation to speak out when religious freedom is denied.

This resolution today affirms the commitment of Congress to condemn the threats to religious liberty around the world, on behalf of

Christians and other persecuted people of faith. I call on all my colleagues to join us today in support of House Resolution 515.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] for his leadership on this issue and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 515, offered by my good friend and colleague, Mr. WOLF of Virginia, who has been a tireless ally in defending the helpless, the imprisoned, the enslaved, and the persecuted—particularly persecuted Christians. I commend my colleague for authoring this resolution which recognizes the modern day travesty of religious intolerance, imprisonment and even martyrdom.

In recent years, Pakistani Christian Javid Mashhi was martyred; Iranian Christian Mehdi Dibaj, Minister Tateos Michaelian and Bishop Haik Hovespian-Mehr were martyred; Catholic and Protestant church leaders in China, as well as ordinary believers, are regularly being arrested, beaten and fined; Christians in Sudan have been executed, enslaved, tortured, and sent into forced labor for their refusal to convert to Islam; for the last 18 years, about one dozen Catholic priests and monks in Vietnam have been imprisoned; in nearby Cuba, Pastor Orson Vila remains under house arrest following his 10 months imprisonment. Mr. Speaker, the entire century has been plagued with the martyrdom and persecution of religious leaders and their faithful flocks—the number of Catholic, Evangelical, and Orthodox Christians who have died for their faith will never be fully accounted.

The Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, which I chair, held hearings this past spring on religious persecution, particularly Christian persecution. The most compelling stories were from the victims themselves. Persecution occurs in countries, such as Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Turkey, where government policies repress religious practice and where Islamic extremists stir public uprisings against Christians, particularly those who seek to share their faith or those who convert from Islam to Christianity.

Persecution also occurs in China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam, where Communist regimes feel threatened by Christians whose faith ultimately transcends the reach and control of political authorities. In many parts of the world, those in political power rightly see that the inner freedom and human dignity inherent in the Christian faith undermines the pervasive control sought by dictatorial regimes. Tragically, the testimony heard by the Subcommittee confirmed that, in countries governed by anti-democratic, anti-Western regimes, Christians become scapegoats as a means to vent and popularize hatred of the West and of the United States.

Clearly, if the United States is to retain its moral leadership, we must initiate policies that distance the United States from governments which engage in these persecutions, or allow rampages against the Christian communities and believers to go unchecked. The United States must seek to insure that the inalienable right to freedom of religion, along with the concomitant rights of freedom of speech, assembly, and the freedom to change one's religion, are supported through the United States foreign policy. Governments and tyrannical religious groups must be put on notice that per-

secution of Christians violates numerous international treaties and covenants and will not be tolerated by the United States. The United States must exercise decisive leadership and consistently raise these issues in bilateral negotiations and relations, and in multilateral fora.

My colleagues, Mr. WOLF and Mr. PORTER, and I had encouraged the White House to appoint a Special Advisor on matters of religious persecution. Recent press reports indicate that a special advisory committee is being appointed, headed by Department of State Assistant Secretary John Shattuck. While the stated mandate of the committee has not been made public, I would suggest that the mandate be unequivocal with a focus on the tragedy of religious persecution, particularly of Christians. The committee should have precise reporting deadlines. Proposing specific recommendations of policy, diplomatic action and other initiatives appropriate for government to undertake should be part of the committee's mandate.

The worldwide persecution of Christians is one of the most compelling human rights issues in modern times. The martyrdom of Christians has reached alarming levels in this century and people of conscience have committed themselves to prayer and to action on behalf of those suffering. I commend the National association of Evangelical for their clarion call to action. Pope John Paul II, earlier this year, denounced the persecution of Christians by Islamist and communist regimes. The World Evangelical Fellowship has spearheaded an international day of prayer for the persecuted church. The first annual day of prayer is set for Sunday, September 29. I urge my friends and colleagues of all faiths to join in this call to action.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the resolution before the House, House Resolution 515.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague from Virginia for introducing this important piece of legislation and for his leadership on this issue. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this outstanding resolution.

The persecution of Christians throughout the world is a serious and growing problem, but it has received surprisingly little attention in the mainstream media. According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, 160,000 Christians are killed each year for practicing their faith. The Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a briefing for Members on March 7 of this year. We heard from various experts about the widespread persecution of Christians in China, Iran, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, Pakistan, Sudan, and Egypt.

In Sudan, Christian women and children as young as six are captured and sold into slavery as part of the Sudanese Government's jihad against Christianity. In China, churches and religious texts are destroyed and Christians are regularly jailed. Recently, three Christian leaders in China were beaten to death by Chinese authorities. In Kuwait, Robert Hussein was sentenced to death for converting to Christianity. These are just a few of the horrible examples of how Christians throughout the world are harassed and oppressed. Is it any surprise that among the worst offenders are the last remaining totalitarian regimes where religious freedom does not exist?

Mr. WOLF, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and I sent a letter to President Clinton earlier this year, calling on him to present a statement on this crucial issue, and to fulfill his pledge to appoint a special adviser on religious persecution. As evidenced by the need for this legislation, the White House has failed to act. I am hopeful that this resolution will prompt strong action by the administration, placing the full force of our Nation's moral authority behind efforts to end persecution of religious minorities.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. GUNDERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 515, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of the measure just considered.

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

There was no objection.

NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES ACT OF 1996

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3217) to provide for ballast water management to prevent the introduction and spread of nonindigenous species into the waters of the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3217

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act may be cited as the "National Invasive Species Act of 1996".

(b) REFERENCES.—Whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to or repeal of a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.).

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE NONINDIGENOUS AQUATIC NUISANCE PREVENTION AND CONTROL ACT OF 1990.

(a) FINDINGS; DEFINITIONS.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Section 1002(a) (16 U.S.C. 4701(a)) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

"(2) when environmental conditions are favorable, nonindigenous species become established, may compete with or prey upon native species of plants, fish, and wildlife, may carry diseases or parasites that affect native species, and may disrupt the aquatic environment and economy of affected near-shore areas;

"(3) the zebra mussel was unintentionally introduced into the Great Lakes and has infested—

"(A) waters south of the Great Lakes, into a good portion of the Mississippi River drainage;

"(B) waters west of the Great Lakes, into the Arkansas River in Oklahoma; and

"(C) waters east of the Great Lakes, into the Hudson River and Lake Champlain;"

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by inserting "by the zebra mussel and ruffe, round goby, and other nonindigenous species" after "other species"; and

(ii) by striking "and" at the end;

(C) in paragraph (5), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(6) in 1992, the zebra mussel was discovered at the northernmost reaches of the Chesapeake Bay watershed;

"(7) the zebra mussel poses an imminent risk of invasion in the main waters of the Chesapeake Bay;

"(8) since the Chesapeake Bay is the largest recipient of foreign ballast water on the East Coast, there is a risk of further invasions of other nonindigenous species;

"(9) the zebra mussel is only one example of thousands of nonindigenous species that have become established in waters of the United States and may be causing economic and ecological degradation with respect to the natural resources of waters of the United States;

"(10) since their introduction in the early 1980's in ballast water discharges, ruffe—

"(A) have caused severe declines in populations of other species of fish in Duluth Harbor (in Minnesota and Wisconsin);

"(B) have spread to Lake Huron; and

"(C) are likely to spread quickly to most other waters in North America if action is not taken promptly to control their spread;

"(11) examples of nonindigenous species that, as of the date of enactment of the National Invasive Species Act of 1996, infest coastal waters of the United States and that have the potential for causing adverse economic and ecological effects include—

"(A) the mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) that has become established on the Pacific Coast;

"(B) the green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) that has become established in the coastal waters of the Atlantic Ocean;

"(C) the brown mussel (*Perna perna*) that has become established along the Gulf of Mexico; and

"(D) certain shellfish pathogens;

"(12) many aquatic nuisance vegetation species, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, hydrilla, water hyacinth, and water chestnut, have been introduced to waters of the United States from other parts of the world causing or having a potential to cause adverse environmental, ecological, and economic effects;

"(13) if preventive management measures are not taken nationwide to prevent and control unintentionally introduced nonindigenous aquatic species in a timely manner, further introductions and infestations of species that are as destructive as, or more destructive than, the zebra mussel or the ruffe infestations may occur;

"(14) once introduced into waters of the United States, aquatic nuisance species are unintentionally transported and introduced

into inland lakes and rivers by recreational boaters, commercial barge traffic, and a variety of other pathways; and

"(15) resolving the problems associated with aquatic nuisance species will require the participation and cooperation of the Federal Government and State governments, and investment in the development of prevention technologies."

(2) DEFINITIONS.—Section 1003 (16 U.S.C. 4702) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (1) and redesignating paragraphs (2) through (8) as paragraphs (1) through (7), respectively;

(B) in paragraph (2), as redesignated by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, by striking "assistant Secretary" and inserting "Assistant Secretary";

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (15) as paragraphs (11) through (17), respectively; and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (7), as redesignated by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the following:

"(8) 'Great Lakes region' means the 8 States that border on the Great Lakes;

"(9) 'Indian tribe' means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional corporation (as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.)) that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians;

"(10) 'interstate organization' means an entity—

"(A) established by—

"(i) an interstate compact that is approved by Congress;

"(ii) a Federal statute; or

"(iii) a treaty or other international agreement with respect to which the United States is a party; and

"(B)(i) that represents 2 or more—

"(I) States or political subdivisions thereof; or

"(II) Indian tribes; or

"(ii) that represents—

"(I) 1 or more States or political subdivisions thereof; and

"(II) 1 or more Indian tribes; or

"(iii) that represents the Federal Government and 1 or more foreign governments; and

"(C) has jurisdiction over, serves as forum for coordinating, or otherwise has a role or responsibility for the management of, any land or other natural resource;"

(b) AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES CONTROL PROGRAM.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO HEADING.—The heading to subtitle B (16 U.S.C. 4711 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

"Subtitle B—Prevention of Unintentional Introductions of Nonindigenous Aquatic Species".

(2) AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES.—Section 1101 (16 U.S.C. 4711) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 1101. AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES IN WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

"(a) GREAT LAKES GUIDELINES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue voluntary guidelines to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes through the exchange of ballast water of vessels prior to entering those waters.

"(2) CONTENT OF GUIDELINES.—The guidelines issued under this subsection shall—

"(A) ensure to the maximum extent practicable that ballast water containing aquatic nuisance species is not discharged into the Great Lakes;