

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank my colleague, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, for yielding me the time. I want to commend him and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and all the cosponsors of this resolution.

As the gentleman from California mentioned a few minutes ago, sometimes it appears we only bring resolutions which criticize other countries. Here is an example of a country which has moved in a very exemplary fashion in so many areas.

Since its independence in September of 1996, Botswana has been a successful multiparty democracy. It has consistently scored high in human rights reports by the State Department. It has been a long-standing ally of the United States, and it has consistently supported U.S. positions in international fora. Through increased adherence to free-market principles, Botswana has experienced remarkable economic growth, it has made U.S. economic assistance unnecessary, and it has done it in a part of a continent where that is not always the case.

We often encourage African countries to spend money on social concerns such as education and health, and the President Masire government has done exactly that. Unlike so many other leaders in many countries and certainly in Africa, the President is stepping down voluntarily. The ruling Botswana Democratic Party offered him the chance to be exempt from new term limits on the presidency, but he refused. I think he is setting an outstanding example for the future in this multiparty democracy.

It is entirely appropriate that we do commend Botswana for the very impressive progress they have made. I commend my colleague for bringing this to the attention of the House.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton is scheduled to visit Botswana later this month. I am scheduled to accompany him on that trip. We have spoken with the administration about this resolution, and they strongly support this measure as a positive sign to our friends in Botswana.

It would be my honor to present this resolution to President Masire on behalf of this House. I urge my colleagues to make this possible by approving this resolution today.

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this Botswana resolution. President Clinton will be traveling to Botswana in March. He chose Botswana not only for the country's strong democratic values but the increase in economic growth. The economy is market oriented, with strong encouragement for private enterprise. The diamond revenues and solid economic and fiscal

policies has resulted in improved growth. Per capita gross domestic product was approximately \$2800 last year, and it is increasing at a robust annual rate of approximately 7 percent. I understand that elections should take place soon and the Botswana Democratic Party leader, Mr. Masire, will be handing over the reins to his Vice President. Many years ago in Africa when a President took over, he was President for life. We have seen that in Malawi where life President Banda just recently after 30 years handed it over. This is a step really in the right direction.

Let me say that I had the opportunity to participate in a forum to voice my concerns to the NSC and State Department before the President embarks upon his journey to Africa. One thing that came out of the dialogue is that women are a dominant and important part of the economy throughout Africa. Ghanaian women account for almost 90 percent of the market economy. I know the government of Botswana is working to make improvements in this area. Two years ago I applauded the government for taking the initiative to formulate a long-term plan of action to implement the National Policy on Women specifically working on property rights.

In conclusion, let me say that we should congratulate countries like Botswana and that they are eager to be in the first round of the Growth and Opportunity Act. As a matter of fact, for the last 4 or 5 years, Botswana has had a surplus of over a billion dollars each year which has been put aside into the coffers of that country. I would once again like to congratulate that outstanding country and look forward to visiting there with the President in the coming week.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I rise in strong support of the resolution. I want to commend the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, for offering this thoughtful and timely resolution. As a member of the subcommittee, I have had the pleasure of working closely with the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE). I think I speak for all the Members when I say we appreciate his able leadership. I also want to commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the committee; the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the ranking member of the subcommittee; and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for their work on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, Botswana is one of the great success stories of sub-Saharan Africa. As the President prepares to embark on his historic trip to that part of the world, it is fitting that we send along a message of commendation and encouragement to the government and

the people of Botswana. Under the leadership of President Masire, Botswana has maintained a successful, multiparty constitutional democracy with free and fair elections. This resolution commends Mr. Masire on the occasion of his retirement and calls upon his political successors to continue promoting peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic reform in Africa.

Mr. Speaker, this is a well-crafted resolution that deserves the support of every Member of this body. I want to again commend the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the other Members that I referred to. I also want to commend the President on making this trip to Africa. I urge support for the resolution.

Mr. ROYCE. 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 resolution, House Resolution 373.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING FOR FREE AND IMPARTIAL ELECTIONS IN CAMBODIA

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H.Res. 361) calling for free and impartial elections in Cambodia, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 361

Whereas Cambodia continues to recover from years of political conflict, civil war, the era of Khmer Rouge genocide, and subsequent foreign invasion;

Whereas the 1991 Paris Peace Accords contributed significantly to a process of political accommodation, national conciliation, and the establishment of a state based on democratic ideals;

Whereas the people of Cambodia overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for the democratic process through the participation of over 93 percent of eligible voters in the United Nations-sponsored 1993 elections;

Whereas the commitment of the Cambodian people to democracy and stability is reflected in the national constitution guaranteeing fundamental human rights;

Whereas the international donor community has supported the democratic process in Cambodia by contributing over \$3,000,000,000 to peacekeeping and national reconstruction efforts;

Whereas notwithstanding the notable societal and economic reforms made subsequent to the 1993 elections, tensions within the Cambodian Government continued to mount, culminating in the July 5, 1997, military coup by which Second Prime Minister Hun Sen deposed the duly elected First Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh;

Whereas the Hun Sen government has yet to adequately investigate the killings and human rights abuses which occurred at the time of the July 5, 1997, coup and which were detailed in the August 21, 1997, Hammarberg report;

Whereas Second Prime Minister Hun Sen made a commitment to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR) to extend the mandate of UNCHR;

Whereas an ongoing atmosphere of intimidation has prevented many of the political exiles who have returned to Cambodia from carrying out their activities in preparation for the election scheduled for July 26 without fear;

Whereas questions remain concerning the independence and impartiality of the newly created National Election Commission;

Whereas the failure of the Hun Sen Government to agree to arrangements for the expeditious return of Prince Ranariddh calls into serious question the possibility of a credible election; and

Whereas the European Union has unwisely decided to provide 9,500,000 ECU's (approximately \$11,500,000) in aid to the Hun Sen regime to prepare for the July election in the absence of conditions that would allow a credible election: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls upon the Cambodian Government—

(A) to fully implement the Paris Peace Accords;

(B) to enforce the rule of law and fully protect human rights, including a thorough investigation of the extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses which occurred following the July 5, 1997, coup and punishment of those involved;

(C) to restore a nonviolent and neutral political atmosphere, including strict adherence to the cease-fire announced on February 27, 1998;

(D) to allow all exiled opposition leaders, including First Premier Ranariddh, to return to Cambodia and to engage in political activity without fear of political or physical reprisal; and

(E) to take further measures to create mechanisms to help ensure a credible election, including a truly independent and impartial election commission and provisions to allow domestic and international observers to monitor the entire election process;

(2) commends the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for its efforts to restore democratic governance in Cambodia and urges a continuation of these efforts;

(3) calls upon the European Union to reconsider its decision to provide assistance to the election process until such time as genuinely free and fair elections can be conducted;

(4) urges the Secretary of State to continue to provide support through appropriate nongovernmental organizations to the courageous Cambodian human rights workers who persevere in their difficult task, despite the considerable risk at which they put themselves;

(5) calls upon the Secretary of State to work with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and with members of the Donors group in urging the Cambodian Government to create the conditions which would guarantee a free and fair election;

(6) calls upon the Cambodian Government to work cooperatively with the Phnom Penh office of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and urges the United States Government and the international community to support the efforts of the Centre to promote human rights in Cambodia by providing the additional financial assistance needed to increase the number of United Nations human rights monitors in Cambodia; and

(7) states its unwillingness to accept as legitimate or as worthy of United States assistance any Cambodian government that arises from a fraudulent electoral process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 361.

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

There was no objection.

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

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as the author of H.Res. 361, this Member rises to urge the government of Cambodia to create conditions which would ensure a free, fair, and credible election in that troubled country.

Mr. Speaker, this Member would tell his colleagues that 7 months after a violent coup ousted the democratically elected First Premier Prince Ranariddh from power, Cambodia's prospects for democracy remain a shattered dream.

Those democratic hopes were considerably brighter in 1993 when an international effort led by the United Nations oversaw Cambodia's first democratic elections. Nearly 90 percent of the eligible electorate took part in that contest which chose FUNCINPEC's Prince Ranariddh as Prime Minister. Hun Sen, however, refused to accept the people's verdict and threatened a coup if not allowed a major role in the new government. Hun Sen's stand resulted in an unnatural, and ultimately unworkable, coalition government.

The fragile coalition finally disintegrated last July when Hun Sen violently expelled Prince Ranariddh from the government. Many prominent opposition leaders fled into exile. Many of these politicians have now returned to Cambodia to prepare for the elections scheduled for July 26. However, because of continued intimidation by forces close to the Hun Sen regime, these politicians have not been able to conduct normal political activities. The media, as well, has been cowed by the same forces of intimidation.

Within Cambodia, human rights workers persevere in their difficult task, often at considerable personal risk. Today, 7 months after the fact, Hun Sen's regime has yet to investigate the many instances of extrajudicial killing that took place at the time of the coup and since, despite repeated calls for accountability from domestic and international groups.

H.Res. 361 cites the coup d'etat of July 1997 and subsequent extrajudicial killings, the ongoing atmosphere of political intimidation, the questionable

impartiality of the election law and the newly created National Election Commission, and the failure of the Hun Sen regime to facilitate the expeditious return of Prince Ranariddh and his full participation in the election process as indications that conditions do not yet exist to conduct free, fair, and credible elections.

In response to these problems, H.Res. 361 urges the Cambodian government to fully enforce the Paris Peace Accords; to restore a nonviolent and neutral political atmosphere; to allow all exiled opposition leaders, including First Premier Ranariddh, to return to Cambodia and engage in political activity without fear of political or physical reprisal; and to take further measures to ensure a credible election.

H.Res. 361 then also calls on all sides in the domestic dispute to abide by the cease-fire of February 27, 1998. It commends the work of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, and the U.N. Centre for Human Rights for their ongoing efforts to restore democratic governance to Cambodia. It calls upon the United States Government to continue its support for human rights NGOs in Cambodia.

Finally, H.Res. 361 states our unwillingness to accept as legitimate or worthy of U.S. assistance a Cambodian government resulting from a fraudulent election.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on International Relations unanimously adopted H.Res. 361. This Member believes that H.Res. 361 represents a balanced assessment of the situation in Cambodia and our prescription for advancing democracy and human rights in that beleaguered nation.

This Member also thanks the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the distinguished majority leader, for moving this initiative in such an expeditious manner.

This Member also expresses appreciation to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations for his constructive additions to this resolution.

This Member also thanks the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, for his assistance in speeding this resolution before this body.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H.Res. 361.

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

□ 1600

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I strongly support this resolution and commend the gentleman from Nebraska for bringing it before the House today. The next few months may well determine the future of Cambodia for years to come. With good fortune

and concerted effort on the part of the Cambodian people as well as the international community, democracy may begin to take root in Cambodia. But there is also a real chance that the forces of tyranny and hatred may triumph in Cambodia, once again bringing chaos and misery to that tragic land.

The resolution before us today represents a vote for democracy. It demonstrates our commitment to political pluralism and a Cambodia whose people can live in peace and without fear. It deserves our support. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting yes on this important resolution.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, for introducing this resolution that calls for free and fair elections in Cambodia and for keeping this issue in the forefront of the work of this House and before the public.

The people of Cambodia who expressed their overwhelming commitment to the democratic process in the U.N.-sponsored elections in 1993 deserve the unflinching support of the American people, of this body and our government and the entire international community. But as we well know, democracy is in dire danger in Cambodia. The illegitimate government of Hun Sen continues to oppress and impose its political will on the people of Cambodia and threatens the legitimacy of a democratic process that many, both inside and outside Cambodia, worked so hard to create. The people of Cambodia deserve much better.

With only 4 short months until the proposed July national elections, H. Res. 361 is an extremely timely resolution. It is critical that our body continue to bring to the attention of the American people and to the world the plight of Cambodia and those struggling for democracy there. We must also call upon others such as ASEAN and the European Union to do the right thing and to support a genuine democratic process in Cambodia by way of a free, fair and fully representative election. These elections must be fully representative of the Cambodian people and we should accept nothing less.

Although I believe my views on the subject are well known, I want to reiterate my strong support for the democratic forces in Cambodia and for the good people of Cambodia who have suffered so much and deserve so much better. While all of us are disappointed in the current state of affairs, we are

committed to bringing democracy, justice, peace and freedom once again to the kingdom of Cambodia and to the Khmer people. There is much work to do between now and the elections. I think this resolution expressing the sense of Congress is certainly a good and worthy start. I am proud to be a cosponsor. I look forward with the help of our colleagues to passing it today on the floor of the House.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank my colleague from New York for his comments. He is absolutely right. The people of Cambodia have been very long suffering. They deserve better. We are headed for a noncredible, disastrous election unless the world community lets the Hun Sen regime know that we will not accept election results, that we expect better, that we expect that candidates for office, including Prince Ranariddh will be able to come back and to campaign unimpeded by physical intimidation. This House will be asked to vote in a recorded vote in a few minutes. I would hope that my colleagues will give a unanimous positive vote for this resolution. This is a resolution where we may indeed have an impact on Cambodia and on the international community.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Nebraska for his keen sense of timing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this should be a very busy time for this House. Many of us should come to the floor in support of these resolutions. I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER). I know that we spent some time together at the European Union on these issues. I think certainly H. Res. 361, if I might, simply adds to the importance of allowing for free and impartial elections, the rule of law and human rights.

I really rise, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Human Rights Caucus, and therefore these issues are very, very near and dear to our effort and the message that I believe is very important as a part of this Nation's foreign policy. For too many we have been chastised for trying to be the police of the world. I would rather think of us as the conscience of the world. Certainly it is important with so many Cambodians here in the United States that we recognize the importance of free elections and human rights.

I believe that human rights allows a nation to stand on its feet. Human rights engenders economic opportunity and advancement. Human rights provides for opportunities to educate all of your people. Human rights gives the free marketplace an opportunity to work. And so H. Res. 361 is more than policing the world, it is opening the doors of opportunity.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my appreciation and support of H. Res. 373, which is commending democracy in Botswana. Here we have a very small nation of 2 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. I had the pleasure of visiting it as part of the presidential mission in December. Probably to the surprise of many of my colleagues, this nation has been democracy filled for 31 years. In fact it has created a multiparty democracy. It is the oldest freestanding democracy in Africa with their first President elected, Mr. Koma, in 1966, who remained in office until his passing. With the present President Mr. Masire, who came in 1994, they have had an unblemished record of democracy. What has it engendered for them? A high economy, free housing for many of its citizens, peace in the streets. And so the question becomes to my colleagues, I hope that they will support both of these resolutions, because what does peace and human rights and justice beget us? It begets us the opportunities that we have here in this country. Yes, America's foreign policy and domestic policy are not perfect, but it certainly does not mean that we cannot stand up and demand and require our allies and friends to recognize the importance and value of human rights.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask certainly for continued support and passage of H. Res. 373 and support for H. Res. 361.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment this afternoon to join in support of H. Res. 373 and recognize the remarkable efforts of the government of Botswana in stabilizing the practice of democracy not only in their own country, but throughout all of the Southern part of the African continent. Since its independence from British rule in 1966, Botswana has been nothing less than a powerful reminder to all of us about the untapped potential of having a politically liberated Africa. So in this very brief amount of time that I have been allotted, I want to share with you Botswana's secret; I want to cite the reasons why they have deservedly captured the attention of the world.

First of all, Botswana has captured the world's attention by creating a multi-party democracy that without exception is an outstanding parallel to our own. From the election of their first President, Seretse Khama in 1966, who brilliantly served the people of Botswana until his passing in 1980, to the re-election of their current President, Ketumile Masire, in 1994, Botswana has established an unblemished record of conducting extremely fair political contests. No ethnic, racial or religious minorities are excluded from participation in the electoral process. No one political party or affiliation stronghandedly dominates the political landscape of the country. In essence, the rule is simply that all of the citizens of Botswana after the age of 21 are given the opportunity to exercise the franchise, freely.

But most importantly, Botswana has captured our attention, because the will of its people is sovereign. The Constitution of Botswana establishes a system of government similar to that of our British allies across the Atlantic. Botswana has a parliamentary legislature with

a traditional separation of powers that is equally divided by checks and balances amongst three independent branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. This is a system of government that is not much different than the one envisioned by Baron de Montesquieu, in his *magnus opus*, *The Spirit of the Laws*, over two centuries ago. It is a perfect and fair model of the ideal civil libertarian state. But despite all of these shining political achievements, we all know that a nation's political structure is only one part, albeit extremely necessary part, of a nation's success.

The fact of the matter is that a nation's future is as much premised upon its economic stability as it is on its political stability. And Botswana, in this arena as well, has done nothing but distinguish itself. All of the relevant statistics about recent financial growth in Africa indicate that Botswana's economy has been on an upward climb for over two decades now. This kind of responsible fiscal management is the reason why ground-breaking bills like the African Growth and Opportunity Act are being considered and passed in this House. Because today is truly a new age, my friends. This is an age where the human rights grievances and political instabilities of Africa's past are quickly slipping away. This is a time that will be remembered by future generations as the period when Africa began to move rapidly into the economy of the post-industrialized information age, as both our mutually beneficial partner and our friendly competitor. So I stand here proudly today to salute the nation of Botswana, to salute our many friends on the continent of Africa, and finally, to salute the prosperous future that I am sure we will have together.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for their comments regarding Cambodia. The gentlewoman from Texas also made very commendable comments on Botswana.

Mr. Speaker, I urge unanimous support and a recorded vote for the Cambodia resolution to do what we can to ensure free and fair and credible elections in Cambodia.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 361, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules

and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 152) expressing the sense of the Congress that all parties to the multiparty peace talks regarding Northern Ireland should condemn violence and fully integrate internationally recognized human rights standards and adequately address outstanding human rights violations as part of the peace process, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 152

Whereas multiparty talks regarding Northern Ireland attended by representatives of the British and Irish Governments and representatives elected from political parties in Northern Ireland are underway for the first time since the partition of Ireland in 1922 creating a momentous opportunity for progress on human rights concerns;

Whereas human rights violations and the lack of accountability by those responsible for such violations have been persistent features of the conflict in Northern Ireland; and

Whereas more than 3,000 people have died and thousands more have been injured as a result of the political violence in Northern Ireland since 1969: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress condemns the violence committed on all sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland as illegal, unjust, and inhumane;

(2) the Congress commends the leadership in both the British and Irish Governments and former United States Senator George Mitchell, Independent Chairman of the multiparty talks, for fostering a new environment in which human rights concerns may be addressed and an agreement may be reached expeditiously through inclusive talks with respect to Northern Ireland; and

(3) it is the sense of the Congress that—

(A) all parties should reject violence and work diligently through democratic, peaceful means to reach a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

(B) human rights should be protected for all citizens and any peace agreement in Northern Ireland must recognize the state's obligation to protect human rights in all circumstances; and

(C) there are a number of measures which can be taken immediately that would remedy abusive human rights policies and build confidence in the peace process, such as acting upon the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) report and recommendations put forth by other human rights organizations.

□ 1615

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, this resolution is a bipartisan resolution. I am very pleased and honored to have the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, as one of the principal cosponsors of this bill; also, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING); the gentleman from New York (Mr. MANTON);

the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH); the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY); the gentleman from New York (Mr. McHUGH); the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE); the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS); the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY); the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS); and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. KENNELLY) to name just some of the cosponsors of this H. Con. Res. 1252.

Mr. Speaker, we are expressing a sense of the Congress that all parties to the multiparty peace talks regarding Northern Ireland should condemn violence and fully integrate internationally recognized human rights standards and address the outstanding human rights violations as part of the peace process.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the British Irish Watch, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and many, many others have urged that this House pass this resolution.

As a matter of fact, just to read some of their statements, Human Rights Watch said, "Human Rights Watch fully supports the resolution now being considered for passage by the Congress regarding human rights in the Northern Ireland peace process. The resolution rightly recognizes the gravity of past violations and the role that such abuses have played in perpetuating the conflict. The resolution is a signal that Congress is eager to prevent the same kind of lack of attention to human rights issues which has doomed other peace processes and may threaten the success of the Northern Ireland peace process if action is not taken now."

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on the Administration of Justice and I recently traveled to the north of Ireland, met with all of the parties, like other Members of this House have and other Members of the Senate, but I found that the Committee on the Administration of Justice tries to evenhandedly promote human rights. Whether they be Protestant or Catholic, a person's value and dignity must be respected.

Well, of the committee, Martin O'Brien stated, and I quote, "Any effort by Congress to raise these issues is particularly welcomed and deserves widespread support. In that regard, the initiative is to be supported, and it would be helpful if the concerns of the Congress on human rights be raised with the British and the Irish Governments," and it goes on, and I would put the full statement into the RECORD at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great opportunity, a window of opportunity right now, especially on St. Patrick's Day, but in the coming weeks as part of these multiparty talks to come to a conclusion. We need to express in a bipartisan way, Democrats, Republicans, moderates, liberals and conservatives, that we are foursquare, fully behind