The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). 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, H. Con. Res. 165.

The question was taken.

Mr. LANTOS. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN REGARDING ARMED CONFLICT IN NORTH CAUCASUS REGION OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 206) expressing grave concern regarding armed conflict in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation which has resulted in civilian casualties and internally displaced persons, and urging all sides to pursue dialog for peaceful resolution of the conflict, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 206

Whereas during the Russo-Chechen War of 1994–1996, Russian Federation military forces used massive force against civilians in Chechnya, causing immense human casualties, gross human rights violations, large-scale displacement of individuals, and destruction of property;

Whereas Chechnya has been the site of internal lawlessness and numerous kidnapings, including that of United States citizen Fred Cuny, whose exact fate is still unknown;

Whereas in recent months, extremist forces based in Chechnya have mounted armed incursions into the adjacent Russian Federation Republic of Dagestan and attempted to establish a political entity therein against the wishes of the majority of the population of Dagestan;

Whereas almost 300 persons have died as a result of unsolved terrorist bombings in Russia that coincided with the armed incursions into Dagestan and Russian authorities have attributed the terrorist bombings to Chechen insurgents;

Whereas the United States recognizes the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation;

Whereas Russian Federation armed forces have conducted armed attacks against Chechnya and positioned forces with the stated intention of sealing Chechnya's borders and creating a security zone in the region;

Whereas such attacks and indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force have harmed innocent civilians and given rise to over 100,000 internally displaced persons, most of whom have escaped into neighboring regions of Russia;

Whereas such indiscriminate attacks are a violation of paragraph 19 of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, approved at the 1994 Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Budapest, Hungary, which states that in the event of armed conflict, participating States ''will seek to create conditions favorable to the political solution of the conflict. They will cooperate in support of humanitarian assistance to alleviate suffering among the civilian population, including facilitating the movement of personnel and resources to such tasks'', and paragraph 36, which states, ''If recourse to force cannot be avoided in performing internal security missions, each participating State will ensure that its use must be commensurate with the needs for enforcement. The armed forces will take due care to avoid injury to civilians or their property.'';

Whereas the conflict in the North Caucasus may threaten democratic development, the rule of law, and respect for human rights throughout Russia;

Whereas authorities in Moscow and other cities of the Russian Federation have used terrorist bombings as a pretext to intensify a campaign against individuals from the North Caucasus region, including the detention and forcible expulsion of such individuals from these cities; and

Whereas in response to Russian attacks the elected Government of Chechnya has declared its solidarity with renegade Chechen forces in opposing Russian attacks: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) urges the Government of the Russian Federation and all parties to cease the indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population in Chechnya, in accordance with commitments of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe;

(2) urges all parties, including the Government of the Russian Federation, to enter into negotiations on the North Caucasus conflict with legitimate political representatives of the region, including President Maskhadov and his Government, and to avail itself of the conflict prevention and crisis management capabilities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which helped broker an end to the 1994–1996 War;

(3) urges the Chechen authorities to use every appropriate means to deny extremist forces located in its territory a base of operations for the mounting of armed incursions that threaten peace and stability in the North Caucasus region;

(4) urges the Chechen authorities to create a rule of law environment with legal norms based upon internationally accepted standards;

(5) cautions that forcible resettlement of internally displaced persons would evoke outrage from the international community;

(6) urges that the Government of the Russian Federation seek and accept international humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the internally displaced persons from Chechnya, so as to reduce the risk of civilian casualties; and

(7) calls on the Government of the United States to express to all parties the necessity of resolving the conflict peacefully, with full respect to the human rights of all the citizens of the Russian Federation, and to support the provision of appropriate international humanitarian assistance.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

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 H. Con. Res. 206.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH). I believe that it makes important points with regard to the current hostility in the region of Chechnya and Russia.

□ 1515

Most importantly, this measure calls attention to the tens of thousands of innocent civilians who are suffering terribly due to the Russian government's indiscriminate use of force, and that Russia is violating its own commitments as a member state of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This resolution states the obvious.

A peaceful settlement is what is required in Chechnya if the suffering of those innocent civilians is to end soon. This resolution also states, and I think quite appropriately, that there has been a wave of internal lawlessness and kidnappings within Chechnya in recent years and an armed attack on a neighboring region of Russian by extremist forces from Chechnya. Although that does not excuse the current military actions by Russia in Chechnya, it underlines why there is no clear consensus yet as to what the international community should do with regard to this latest conflict in that region.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to state my belief that the latest Russian military offensive will very likely do little to address the underlying causes of instability in the North Caucasus region and indeed throughout Russia. Those underlying problems include vast corruption at all levels of the Russian government and an absence of real economic reforms, allowing the North Caucasus region to slip into grinding poverty that is in turn breeding yet more instability.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, makes several important statements; but I would specifically point out the resolution's statement that Russia's use of indiscriminate force in Chechnya is in direct violation of its commitments as a member state of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, just as its previous military operation in Chechnya was in violation of those OSCE commitments. I would also note that Russia has violated the treaty on conventional forces in Europe in the course of this operation.

The summit of the OSCE heads of state is to be held in Istanbul within the next few days. Mr. Speaker, it is time for our government to call Russia to task for its violation of those OSCE commitments and its disregard for the CFE treaty, a treaty that, in fact, has already been revised to meet the Russian demands. The OSCE summit is a perfect venue in which to do just that. We may not see it on our television

screens, but many innocent people are suffering terribly from the indiscriminate force used by Russia in Chechnya as well as from the extremism of some of those on the Chechen side. It is time to bring the two sides to the table. As this resolution points out, the OSCE can help, if Russia lives up to its commitments. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I would support adoption of this motion suspending the rules and passing this resolution.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 206.

Mr. Speaker, first I want to commend my good friend and distinguished colleague the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations for introducing this resolution. It is a resolution which is overdue, and it is a resolution which I honestly hope this body will pass unanimously.

The issue is not a simple one, Mr. Speaker, and not all the angels are on one side, if indeed there are any angels on any side of this conflict. Extremist, terrorist fundamentalists from Chechnya a few months ago invaded a neighboring republic, with extravagant statements, threats, visions of great conquests. It was easily predictable that having humiliated Russia once before, 4 years ago in the first Russian-Chechen war, they will not get away with it this time.

And for a whole set of complex reasons, including internal political reasons of the current prime minister, Mr. Putin, Russia has decided to finally put an end to Chechnya as a military entity. This resolution properly calls on the Russian Federation to stop this indiscriminate and brutal assault on the civilian population of Chechnya with vast numbers of utterly innocent Chechens, men, women, and children, dying, being maimed, made homeless as the winter approaches.

As a matter of fact, there is reasonable anxiety, Mr. Speaker, that the tens of thousands of refugees from and within Chechnya, displaced persons, will not even have the tentlike protection that we were planning for the displaced people of Kosovo just a few months ago. I think it is appropriate for the United States Congress to call on Russia to terminate this brutal, nondiscriminating military assault on a whole people, to accept the mediation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and to recognize that as a major power, it has a responsibility for the safety of all the citizens living within its borders.

Now, I understand, Mr. Speaker, the annoyance and irritation that the Russian leadership and the people of Russia felt. I was in Moscow a few weeks ago when presumably Chechen terrorists engaged in terrorist activities, costing the lives of several hundred innocent civilian citizens of the capital city of Moscow. But the reaction has been indiscriminate and excessive. It is out of proportion to anything the terrorist tragedy has created in Moscow.

It is clear that the current Russian government is taking full advantage of a patriotic upsurge which has swept Russia in the wave of these terrorist attacks to put an end once and for all to Chechen extremism. Nevertheless, Russia is a civilized country and it is high time it returned to civilized behavior. It must accept European observers who have been excluded from many territories where the warfare currently is unfolding, it must accept western humanitarian aid, and it must cooperate with the civilized world in seeing to it that the innocent people of Chechnya get through this very difficult, very cruel winter which is so typical of that area.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, also, that our government officially must take cognizance of what is happening in Chechnya. There is no way of averting our eyes from what is, in fact, a bloodbath unfolding in the Caucasus. I call on our government to join us in the Congress in expressing its displeasure with the current Russian government which pursues a policy of indiscriminately killing large numbers of innocent civilians.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights who is the sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) the chairman of the full committee and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for their eloquent remarks today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 206. This resolution addresses an issue of utmost urgency, the war in Chechnya and the plight of innocent people caught in the Russian military onslaught. In August and September of this year, Islamic extremists based in Chechnya, independent of the government of Chechnya, twice staged armed incursions into the neighboring Russian Federation Republic of Dagestan with the intent of creating a separate political entity within Dagestan.

In response, the Russian government has sent its army to reoccupy Chechnya, an area that had won de facto independence from Russia as a result of a very bloody war from 1994 to 1996. The Russian government is justified in rebuffing armed aggression against its territorial integrity. Moreover, one can certainly sympathize with Russia's frustration when unsolved bombings kill almost 300 persons in Russia.

But this does not justify reactivating a war against a civilian population in Chechnya. Several news reports have, in detail, described the air raids and the artillery shelling of noncombatant villages, homes, and farms. The November 6 edition of the Guardian, for example, in Great Britain said, and I quote, missiles smash into a crowded marketplace, killing and maiming hundreds. A tank shell explodes among a group of village boys playing football; seven die, others lose legs or eyes. Orphans of an earlier war shake and sob with terror as warplanes on bombing runs boom low over their outdoor camp.

Mr. Speaker, the death toll is in the hundreds, perhaps thousands, and the number of internally displaced persons is now put at around 200,000. This figure, of course, does not include those persons trapped in the besieged Chechen capital of Grozny. Many of these are elderly ethnic Russians with absolutely nowhere to flee. The government of Chechnya has not been entirely blameless as my friend from California pointed out earlier in this situation. Since achieving de facto independence from Russia in 1994, Chechnya has degenerated into a morass of lawlessness and violence with a government powerless to establish law and order and an economy unable to recover from the devastation of war.

Mr. Speaker, specifically H. Con. Res. 206 urges the government of the Russian Federation and all parties to cease the indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population in Chechnya. The government of Russia and all parties are urged to enter into negotiations and to avail themselves to the capabilities of the OSCE which helped broker the end of the war in 1996.

Additionally, this resolution calls upon Chechen authorities to make every effort to deny bases to radical elements committed to violent actions in the North Caucasus and urges Chechen authorities to create a rule of law environment with legal norms based on internationally accepted standards.

Finally, H. Con. Res. 206 calls upon our own government to express to all parties the necessity of resolving the conflict peacefully and to express the willingness of the U.S. to extend appropriate assistance toward such resolution, including humanitarian assistance as needed.

Mr. Speaker, I commend to the reading of my colleague an excellent article in the Wall Street Journal, an op-ed piece by Zbigniew Brzenski who, as we all know, was National Security Advisor and a very prominent and insightfull leader is in international affairs. He points out that unlike the earlier war, this time the Russians have no intention of engaging in costly street fighting against the entrenched and determined Chechens.

Instead, their plan is to use new weapons to launch devastating attacks from a safe distance. Using a combination of explosives and chemical agents,

they will aim to wipe out the thousands of Chechen fighters squeezed by Russian pressure into compressed urban ruins. There have been reports that gas masks have already been distributed to the Russian troops. Among the new weapons will be so-called fuel air explosives which blanket targeted terrain with a flammable vapor cover and following a massive explosion precipitate a lethal vacuum. Even deeply dug-in Chechens will be exterminated.

The cumulative result of this tragedy will be the killing of most fighting-age Chechen males. Mr. Brzenski goes on to state and I quote, so far the Clinton administration has been callously passive while international reaction has been muted even though a Russian success in the war would have wide and negative consequences. Then he goes on to further develop that case.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that this resolution is not anti-Russian or pro-Chechen. Many observers who wish to see a prosperous and democratic Russia have been deeply disturbed by the present campaign in Chechnya. Recently, the chairperson of the Moscow Helsinki Group, Ludmilla Alexeeva, and Dr. Elena Bonner and several other prominent human rights activists in Russia issued an appeal in which they condemned the Russian government for having chosen full scale war in Chechnya as the means to fight terrorism.

□ 1530

The appeal states, and I quote, ''We believe that authorities' actions will not solve the problem in Chechnya. The most that they will accomplish will be a long-term occupation of Chechnya which will deform Russian democratic institutions and will once and for all transform Russia into a police state,'' close quote.

Mr. Speaker, last week the State Department accused Moscow of failing to meet human rights standards set out in both the Geneva Conventions and the codes of conduct of the OSCE, a very welcome statement on behalf of our government. Unfortunately, when Attorney General Janet Reno visited Moscow last month, her evasive comments about the war in Chechnya prompted the October 23, 1999, edition of the Moscow Times to conclude that, and I quote, ''Reno's Quiet Gave War a Green Light.'' Hopefully, the administration will continue, as it has begun now, to speak with one voice in the future and to avoid any such mixed messages.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, criticism of Russia's actions in Chechnya is mounting throughout the world. From the European Union and the Council of Europe to the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada; the government of Bahrain is reportedly taking steps to have the humanitarian situation in Chechnya considered by the U.N. Security Council. The proposal to win IMF funding for Russia while it continues its bloody outrage in Chechnya is an excellent idea, and I would hope that the Congress would consider it when the next session opens in January.

Finally, in an editorial entitled ''No Funds for Russia's War,'' this past Sunday, the Washington Post called for an end to IMF funding for Russia and wrote, and I quote: ''Few would oppose a Russian campaign to eliminate terrorism, the stated purpose of the military campaign. But Russia's violence against Chechen civilians has become so indiscriminate and massive that no one can take seriously any longer the official justifications. Just on Friday, a Russian prime minister flatly stated that ''Chechnya's capital will be destroyed.''

I urge support for the resolution.

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

As we approach the millennium, there will be a great deal of glib oratory about this new and civilized and highly developed society that we have evolved. But we are getting too many reminders almost on a monthly basis from Kosovo to East Timor and now to Chechnya that man's inhumanity to man has taken no pause.

As we enter the 21st century, it will be increasingly clear that the dominant theme of the next century will be the struggle for human rights wherever they are violated, in Kosovo, in East Timor, in Chechnya, in Cuba, in Tibet, in China, wherever the ruling authorities, using their power, attempt to squash and destroy and eliminate and pulverize those who choose to disagree with them.

This episode we are dealing with today is far from Washington, but it is not far from our central concerns, because clearly, we cannot have normal relations with Russia, as much as we would like to, as long as the Russian government perpetrates a policy of indiscriminate slaughter. Innocent Chechen children are dying as we speak, and it is the responsibility of the Congress to speak out on this issue. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), a member of our Committee on International Relations.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, because I think it makes common sense and because I think that it points out two glaring inconsistencies that need to be addressed. I think that what this resolution really gets at is, first of all, proclaiming that what is going on over there is not okay.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to me that the Chechen foreign minister came out in today's press conference, actually in Prague with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, and his words were these: ''Moscow is creating a Chechnya, basically around a zone of total destruction in which everything that moves is doomed to death.''

My colleague from New Jersey made comments that pointed out Mr. Brzezinski's comments, that so far, the Clinton administration has been callously passive to this zone of death that is being talked about over in Prague just a few hours ago.

What I think is interesting is that this same administration said that what is going on in Kosovo is absolutely unacceptable based on world standards today; and, therefore, we have to do something about it. They led the effort toward $15 billion of taxpayer money being spent over there to do something about it; they led the effort in aircraft carriers and submarines and jets going over there to do something about it. Yet, in this episode, they are very, very quiet. There is just a huge inconsistency there. I think that this resolution gets at that inconsistency.

The other thing that this resolution gets at is the fact that with these civilian atrocities, I think that there is breach of the Helsinki agreement, there is breach of the Geneva Convention, there is breach of a number of different international standards that Russia has signed on to, and the result of the signing of those agreements is that it is then permissible for them to get U.S. taxpayer funding indirectly through the IMF. I think the answer has to be a very strong no.

As we may remember, last year Russia received $4.5 billion through the IMF; and indirectly, that means Americans are helping to finance these atrocities. So I think there is a giant inconsistency here. The issue needs to be raised. This resolution does so.

I thank the chairman for both granting me the time and for leading the efforts on this.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, but I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS).

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me this time.

I will respond to my friend who has just spoken, because this is the last time to engage in cheap partisan rhetoric. There is an enormous difference between Kosovo and Chechnya; and the difference between Kosovo and Chechnya is not the difference in the suffering of the innocent civilians, but in the obvious fact that Russia today has a vast reservoir of nuclear weapons; it is still a nuclear superpower. It would be utterly irresponsible on the part of our government not to recognize this difference. We simply cannot ignore or pretend that we are unaware of military realities. We have taken on the regime of Milosevic because this was a dictatorship of most limited military capabilities. No one in his right mind would advocate engaging in military action against a nuclear-equipped Russia.

What we have to do is what we are doing here and what our administration is doing: denouncing the uncivilized actions of the Russian military; calling for a cease-fire; calling for the Russians to accept Western assistance so that the long-suffering people of Chechnya will be able to get through this winter.

We did not start the war in Chechnya, neither did Congress nor this administration. Chechen terrorists started this particular military engagement, and to take this opportunity to slam the administration, I think, is singularly inappropriate and out of place.

This body is effective when it speaks with a bipartisan voice.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, would it be possible for the gentleman from California, Mr. LANTOS, to get his time back?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The gentleman may request unanimous consent to retrieve his time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim my time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) has 4 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) has 12½ minutes remaining.

The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) may proceed on his own time.

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

I had earnestly hoped that we can pass a resolution on denouncing excessive Russian military action, the mindless assassination of innocent civilians on a bipartisan basis without taking cheap shots at our administration, which is no less concerned by these developments as are Members of this body, every single Member of this body, the gentleman on the other side, and myself included. I would hope that we can conclude this debate by recognizing the irresponsible action of the Russian government, by criticizing their action, by calling for the restoration of peace in the region, and avoiding any partisan attacks which are so uncalled for in this particular situation.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LANTOS. I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman's efforts. He has been such a great advocate for human rights around the globe. My only point is this: I am not ignoring the nuclear realities that exist in the former Soviet Union. My simple point is this, and I do not mean this as a political cheap shot: there has been a disparity where the administration has been concerned in talking about the human rights of Kosovars and the human rights of the people in Chechnya. All I am suggesting is that maybe if we looked at a squeeze on IMF funding, it might get their attention. That is all I am raising.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, if I may reclaim my time, I am very happy to have this clarification from my friend.

It is important to be discriminating in the arena of foreign policy. When the outrages are perpetrated by Milosevic and his thugs, there are no overriding reasons why the United States should act with great caution or should speak with great caution. With respect to Russia, we have a tremendous range of issues on the plate, most importantly the presence of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in Russian possession. It would be utterly irresponsible for our government not to be cognizant of this fact in taking positions on the matter of Chechnya.

If my friend will look at the statements of the appropriate officials of our Department of State and the White House on this issue, he will find to his satisfaction that the Chechen outrages have been denounced by our government as they should have been; but at the same time, a different policy is called for vis-a-vis Serbia and vis-a-vis Russia.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield for one more minute, I am in complete agreement on his pronouncements. I guess the divergence here is on what has been actually done, because in Kosovo, very strong action was taken. My suggestion is that a limit, a freeze, on IMF funding is a very limited and curtailed activity. It is something we could do, but it has not been talked about from the administration. What I am looking for from the administration is simply action. That is all.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF).

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I rise in strong support of this resolution. I have visited Chechnya. I was in Chechnya from May 28 to June 2 of 1995. And while I am not here to attack anyone, I think at this time it is fair to say that this administration could have done more to be a force in Chechnya.

One of the recommendations that we made after our trip was that the administration appoint a prominent American with negotiating experience such as former Secretary of State James Baker, or former Senator George Mitchell, who frankly probably deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for what he has done in Ireland, or former Senator Sam Nunn, to help bring the Chechnya situation to a close.

We were in the village of Samashki where a massacre took place, and the people came up and told us about the Russian soldiers who came into the village and took the heroin that they carry when they are wounded and mixed the heroin with fruit juices and injected it into their veins and shot up the whole time. We have pictures of the town on video. We have the interviews with the people. Now, if my colleagues looked at The Washington Post the other day, the Russian soldiers have gone back into the same town and have bombarded the town.

□ 1545

So rather than laying blame, although I do think the administration could have done more, I think it would be important to do what the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) said, what I heard him say, which is to put some pressure on the government with regard to aid.

I think the situation is different than Kosovo, although I was one of the 31 Republican Members that voted for the bombing of Kosovo. But there are a large number of people, and I believe for many, the fact that Chechnya is so far away and the fact that they are Muslims and the fact that few people have visited there, the fact that very few people are willing or able to speak out on the part of the West, makes it a difficult issue.

So this resolution is very, very good. I hope it passes with a unanimous vote. I would also ask that perhaps the administration could pick one person with strong negotiating skills, who would go not with a club, but go to Russia and try to do everything possible to stop the shelling and the bombing. If they do not, this winter will be so brutal.

I would be one who would support aid by the Western governments, including ours, to the people who have gotten out of there and gone into Ingushetia. But we should do more, and bring some pressure on the Russians to stop the activity which is taking place. With that, I hope the resolution passes with a unanimous vote.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all colleagues to vote for this concurrent resolution. I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). 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, H. Con. Res. 206, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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 and the

Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING DIABETES

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 325) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of increased support and funding to combat diabetes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 325

Whereas diabetes is a devastating, lifelong condition that affects people of every age, race, income level, and nationality;

Whereas diabetes is a serious disease that has a devastating impact, in both human and economic terms, on Americans of all ages;

Whereas an estimated 16 million Americans suffer from diabetes, and millions more are at greater risk for diabetes;

Whereas the number of Americans with diabetes has increased nearly 700 percent in the last 40 years, leading the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to call it the ''epidemic of our time'';

Whereas approximately 800,000 people will be diagnosed with diabetes in 1999, and diabetes will contribute to an estimated 198,000 deaths this year, making diabetes the sixth leading cause of death;

Whereas diabetes costs our Nation an estimated $105 billion each year;

Whereas more than 1 out of every 10 health care dollars in the United States and about 1 out of every 4 medicare dollars is spent on the care of people with diabetes;

Whereas more than $40 billion a year in tax dollars are spent treating people with diabetes through medicare, medicaid, veterans care, Federal employee health benefits, and other Federal health programs;

Whereas diabetes frequently goes undiagnosed and an estimated 5.4 million Americans have the disease but do not know it;

Whereas diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, blindness in adults, and amputations;

Whereas diabetes is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and birth defects and shortens average life expectancy by up to 15 years;

Whereas 800,000 Americans have type one diabetes, formerly known as juvenile diabetes, and 15.2 million have type two diabetes, formerly known as adult onset diabetes;

Whereas 18.4 percent of Americans age 65 years or older have diabetes and 8.2 percent of Americans age 20 years or older have diabetes;

Whereas Hispanic, African, Asian, and Native Americans suffer from diabetes at rates much higher than the general population, including children as young as eight years old who are now being diagnosed with type two diabetes;

Whereas there is currently no method to prevent or cure diabetes and available treatments have only limited success in controlling its devastating consequences;

Whereas reducing the tremendous health and human burden of diabetes and its enormous economic toll depends on identifying the factors responsible for the disease and developing new methods for treatment and prevention;

Whereas improvements in technology and the general growth in scientific knowledge have created unprecedented opportunities for advances that might lead to better treatments, prevention, and ultimately a cure;

Whereas after extensive review and deliberations, the Diabetes Research Working Group—established by Congress and selected by the National Institutes of Health—has found that ''many scientific opportunities are not being pursued due to insufficient funding, lack of appropriate mechanisms, and a shortage or trained researchers'';

Whereas the Diabetes Research Working Group has developed a comprehensive plan for diabetes research funded by the National Institutes of Health and has recommended a funding level of $827 million for diabetes research at the National Institutes of Health in fiscal year 2000; and

Whereas the House of Representatives as an institution and Members of Congress as individuals are in unique positions to help raise public awareness about the need for increased funding for research and for early diagnosis and treatment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the Federal Government has a responsibility—

(A) to continue to increase research funding, as recommended by the Diabetes Research Working Group, so that the causes of, and improved treatment and cure for, diabetes may be discovered;

(B) to endeavor to raise awareness about the importance of the early detection and proper treatment of diabetes; and

(C) to continue to consider ways to improve access to, and the quality of, health care services for diagnosing and treating diabetes;

(2) all Americans should take an active role in fighting diabetes by using all the means available to them, including watching for the symptoms of diabetes, such as frequent urination, unusual thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, extreme fatigue, and irritability; and

(3) national and community organizations and health care providers should endeavor to promote awareness of diabetes and its complications and should encourage early detection of diabetes through regular screenings, education, and by providing information, support, and access to services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter on House Resolution 325.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 325. Over 16 million Americans suffer from diabetes and its complications. Tragically, diabetes is one of the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. I call it the silent disease, if you will, the silent killer.

As we all know, insulin is not a cure for diabetes. Therefore, we must increase funding for the research necessary to end this terrible disease. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Health and Environment of the Committee on Commerce and a member of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus, I am committed to achieving that goal. I have endorsed, along with so many others, a proposal to double Federal funding for the National Institutes of Health over 5 years.

The budget agreement passed by Congress last year made a sizeable downpayment toward that goal by providing a 15 percent increase in funding for the NIH. I am hopeful that we can continue that promising trend this year.

I have heard from many constituents about the lack of sufficient funding for diabetes research. I had the opportunity to share these concerns directly with Dr. Harold Varmus, the NIH Director, in a meeting in my office earlier this year.

I was also pleased to secure enactment of new preventative health benefits under Medicare as part of the 1997 balanced budget law. Under these provisions, which were based on legislation which I helped to author, Medicare beneficiaries who are diabetic are reimbursed for outpatient self-managing training and supplies, such as blood testing strips.

House Resolution 325 serves to remind us all of the terrible toll diabetes extracts each year in our Nation. We should also take this opportunity to commend the tireless efforts of advocates of diabetes research. Mr. Speaker, for the millions of people whose lives have been touched by diabetes, we must renew and strengthen our commitment to end this terrible disease.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of House Resolution 325.

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

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as the co-chair of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus and as an original cosponsor of this legislation, I would especially like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) for his tireless efforts on behalf of this resolution. A similar resolution passed the other body 93 to zero, and I commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) for bringing this quickly to the attention of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, there are several forms of diabetes, as we all know. I would like to focus in my remarks on how diabetes affects the lives of the children of this country.

Juvenile diabetes or Type I diabetes represents only a small percentage of the total cases of diabetes, yet the mortality of Type I diabetes is more than double the mortality of Type II diabetes. This disease affects over 1 million children nationwide. It strikes when they are young and it stays with them the rest of their lives. Type I diabetes is one of the most costly chronic childhood diseases, and it is one you never outgrow.

In Type I diabetes, someone's pancreas produces little or no insulin. Although the causes are not entirely