

I urge my fellow Americans to keep the men and women of our Armed Forces in their thoughts and prayers as they fight to make America and the world safer.

#### LIBERTY WILL PREVAIL

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last night President George W. Bush spoke with vision and courage and in keeping with the highest ideals of this Nation and its storied history. It is clear that the long nightmare of the Iraqi people is about to come to an end. Diplomacy may have failed, but liberty will prevail.

Saddam Hussein was offered disarmament and peace. He has chosen exile or war.

As our troops labor in encampments across the Middle East, let us, in every form of prayer and petition, labor in prayer on behalf of them, their families, our leaders, and innocent civilians in harm's way in the difficult days that lie ahead.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:00 p.m. today.

#### CONDEMNING THE PUNISHMENT OF EXECUTION BY STONING AS A GROSS VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 26) condemning the punishment of execution by stoning as a gross violation of human rights, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 26

Whereas death by stoning continues to be imposed as a form of punishment in several countries, as documented by the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices of the United States Department of State;

Whereas the brutal sentence of death by stoning is applied to women who have been accused of adultery, some of whom are coerced into prostitution, or even raped;

Whereas execution by stoning is an exceptionally cruel form of punishment that violates internationally accepted standards of human rights, including those set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

Whereas women around the world continue to be disproportionately targeted for dis-

crimatory, inhuman, and cruel punishments by governments who refuse to protect the rights of all their citizens equally;

Whereas in some places stoning has also been invoked as punishment for "blasphemy", thereby suppressing religious freedom and diversity and stifling political dissent;

Whereas, in July 2002, Amnesty International referred to execution by stoning as "a method specifically designed to increase the victim's suffering";

Whereas, in 2002, the European Union, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Australian Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, the President of Mexico, the Congress of the Deputies of Spain, and other world leaders each condemned stoning and called for clemency for individuals sentenced to stoning; and

Whereas, in 2002 there were acquittals or dismissals of sentences to death by stoning; Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) condemns the practice of execution by stoning, and calls upon the international community to recognize this practice as a gross violation of human rights;

(2) requests that the President formally communicate this resolution to governments imposing this cruel punishment and urge the suspension of sentences of death by stoning; and

(3) requests that the President direct the Secretary of State to work with the international community toward the repeal of stoning laws and adherence to international standards of human rights.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

□ 1415

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. 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 material on H. Con. Res. 26.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution condemning the punishment of execution by stoning as a gross violation of human rights. I am a proud cosponsor of this resolution, and I commend the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) for her work on this issue. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, I am pleased that the House is taking this action.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt that stoning is a gross violation of human rights. When someone is put to death by stoning, they are guaranteed a slow, painful, cruel death. Stones are carefully chosen so they are large enough to cause maximum pain, but not so large as to kill the condemned immediately.

Stoning brings out the worst in human nature. It may surprise many that this barbaric practice has entered the 21st century, but it has. Sharia law governs family law in a wide range of countries. It is only applied to criminal offenses in a handful of states.

In Nigeria, 12 of the country's 36 states put Sharia criminal law into effect in recent years, displacing Nigeria's secular laws.

The case of Amina Lawal, a young woman sentenced to death by stoning for adultery, has brought international attention to Sharia-mandated stoning. Her case is pending. We all hope she is spared this brutal treatment.

This resolution rightfully condemns the practice of stoning and calls upon the President and Secretary of State to work with their counterparts toward the repeal of stoning laws and adherence to international standards of human rights.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

First I would like to congratulate my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), the principal author of this important resolution, for bringing it to our attention. She is a valued member of our committee, and I want to thank her personally for this important initiative.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad commentary on the 21st century that we have seen the resurgence under Islamic Sharia religious law of the practice of execution by stoning, where an individual is buried up to his or her neck in sand, and witnesses are invited to throw stones until that person is dead, while shouting, "God is great." It is the ultimate oxymoron on the face of this planet that as a human being is buried up to her neck in sand and is pelted with stones, the phrase can be heard "God is great."

The stones in this vile practice are carefully chosen so that they are large enough to cause horrendous pain, but not so large as to kill the condemned individual immediately. Victims of stoning are guaranteed a slow, torture-filled death. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, their children are forced to watch.

This past year, the world was horrified as mothers were tried, convicted and subjected to this horrible death sentence. The fact that these women have been given the recourse to court appeals does not make the punishment any more acceptable. Execution by stoning violates all international standards of human rights and decency.

We must let the world know, Mr. Speaker, that civilized nations and the United States in particular reject with disgust and horror this form of punishment. I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 26.

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