

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 231

Urging the President to make clear to the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam the commitment of the American people in support of democracy and religious and economic freedom for the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 17, 1997

Mr. ROHRBACHER (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. BURTON of Indiana) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Urging the President to make clear to the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam the commitment of the American people in support of democracy and religious and economic freedom for the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Whereas, since May 1997, non-violent demonstrations supporting democracy, religious freedom, and clean government have occurred throughout Thai Binh, Thanh Hoa, Hung Yen and Nghe An provinces in northern Vietnam and in Long Khanh, Bien Hoa and Ba Ria provinces in southern Vietnam;

Whereas between 100 and 200 leaders of the demonstrations have been arrested;

Whereas the criminal law of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is used to punish advocates of political pluralism and religious freedom, and on April 14, 1997, an administrative decree was signed into law granting enhanced judicial powers to the security forces to place under house arrest or subject to reeducation camps, for up to two years, any civilians expected of “endangering national security”;

Whereas the leaders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are seeking to expand trade relations with the United States;

Whereas there is widespread discontent within the foreign business community in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with some companies pulling out entirely, others freezing new investments, and nearly all complaining about endemic corruption, intransigent bureaucracy, and a lack of clear commitment to legitimate economic reform;

Whereas, in August 1997, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that child labor exploitation is on the rise in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam with tens of thousands of children under 15 years of age laboring in gold and coal mines, often for 14 hours per day with meager or no payment; and

Whereas the United States, as the leader of the free world, has responsibility to promote political and economic freedom throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) urges the Government of the Socialist Re-
3 public of Vietnam to release immediately and uncon-
4 ditionally all political prisoners, including Dr.
5 Nguyen Dan Que, Prof. Doan Viet Hoat, Venerable

1 Thich Quang Do, Reverend Pham Minh Tri, and
2 evangelist To Dinh Trung, with full restoration of
3 their civil and human rights;

4 (2) requests the President to make clear to the
5 leadership of the Government of the Socialist Repub-
6 lic of Vietnam—

7 (A) the firm commitment of the American
8 people to political and religious and economic
9 freedom for the people of the Socialist Republic
10 of Vietnam; and

11 (B) the United States fully expects equal
12 protection under the law to all Vietnamese, re-
13 gardless of religious belief, political philosophy,
14 or previous association; and

15 (3) urges the Government of the Socialist Re-
16 public of Vietnam—

17 (A) to permit all political organizations in
18 the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to function
19 without intimidation or harassment; and

20 (B) to announce a framework and time-
21 table for free and fair elections under the spon-
22 sorship of the United Nations that will allow
23 the Vietnamese people to peacefully choose their
24 local and national leaders.

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