

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 295

Relating to continuing human rights violations and political oppression in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 25 years after the fall of South Vietnam to Communist forces.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 2000

Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself, Mr. ROYCE, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Relating to continuing human rights violations and political oppression in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 25 years after the fall of South Vietnam to Communist forces.

Whereas 25 years after the Vietnam War ended, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a one-party state ruled and controlled by the Vietnamese Communist Party;

Whereas the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam continues to violate the liberties and civil rights of its own citizens through arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, and the censorship of peaceful expressions of political and religious beliefs;

Whereas the Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1999 notes that the Govern-

ment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam “continued to repress basic political and some religious freedoms and to commit numerous abuses”;

Whereas the Socialist Republic of Vietnam still retains Article 4 in its Constitution that ensures the supremacy of the Vietnamese Communist Party as the only political party in the country while continuing to enforce an extra-legal administrative decree to detain or place under house arrest any dissidents or civilians for up to two years, without trial, under the pretext of “endangering national security”;

Whereas the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is one of the most repressive and poorest countries in the world, with an average per capita income of \$330, despite the Vietnamese Communist party’s claims of political and economic reforms, or “Doi Moi”, since 1986, and the subsequent lifting of the trade embargo and the provision of economic assistance and credits by the United States since 1995;

Whereas, according to the Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam continues to restrict unregistered religious activities and persecutes its citizens on the basis of their religious affiliation through arbitrary arrests and detention, harassment, physical abuse, censorship, and the denial of the rights of free association and religious worship;

Whereas the Department of State Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999 on Vietnam estimates that “there are from 30 to 50 religious prisoners” but “the number is difficult to verify with any precision because of the secrecy surrounding the arrest, detention, and release process”;

Whereas the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam continues to prevent human rights organizations from unfettered and open investigations of allegations of state-sponsored oppression of the right to worship by its citizens, and has prevented the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, Abdelfattah Amor, from meeting with various religious leaders during his visit to Vietnam in October 1998;

Whereas the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam systematically violates the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in contravention to its standing as a signatory to those agreements and as a member nation of the United Nations;

Whereas April 30, 2000, marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to Communist forces of North Vietnam; and

Whereas it is in the interest of the United States to promote political, religious, and economic freedom throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) requests the President to restate and make
4 clear to the leadership of the Government of the So-
5 cialist Republic of Vietnam—

6 (A) the firm commitment of the American
7 people to political, religious, and economic free-

1 dom for the citizens of the Socialist Republic of
2 Vietnam; and

3 (B) the United States fully expects equal
4 protection under law with all Vietnamese citi-
5 zens, regardless of religious belief, political phi-
6 losophy, or socio-political association;

7 (2) urges the Government of the Socialist Re-
8 public of Vietnam—

9 (A) to implement provisions called for
10 under the International Religious Freedom Act
11 of 1998 relating to conditions in Vietnam;

12 (B) to release all religious, political pris-
13 oners, and prisoners of conscience, and imme-
14 diately ceases the harassment, detention, phys-
15 ical abuse, and imprisonment of Vietnamese
16 citizens who have exercised their legitimate
17 rights to freedom of belief, expression, and as-
18 sociation;

19 (C) to abolish article 4 of the Vietnamese
20 Constitution and repeal any and all regulations,
21 codes, and decrees prohibiting citizens rights to
22 free expression, freedom of association, freedom
23 of the press, and religious worship; and

24 (D) to formally commit to a framework
25 and a set timetable for open and fair elections

1 that will facilitate the ability of Vietnamese citi-
2 zens to peacefully choose their own local and
3 national leaders, free from fear and intima-
4 tion; and

5 (3) commends the Vietnamese-American com-
6 munity for initiating an international memorial to
7 American and South Vietnamese soldiers who sac-
8 rificed their lives for the cause of freedom during the
9 Vietnam War, which is under development and will
10 be located in Westminster, California.

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