

106TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 295

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 4, 2000

Received and referred to the Committee on Foreign 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 April 30, 2000, marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to Communist forces of North Vietnam;

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 Government 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 2 years, without trial, under the pretext of “endangering national security”;

Whereas the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is one of the most politically repressive and poorest countries in the world, with an average annual per capita income of \$330;

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 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 Universal Declaration of Human Rights in contravention of its status as a member of the United Nations;

Whereas the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam systematically violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in contravention of its status as a signatory to that agreement; 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 that—

6 (A) the American people are firmly com-
7 mitted 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 cease violations of religious freedom
10 as defined by the International Religious Free-
11 dom Act of 1998;

12 (B) to release all religious prisoners, polit-
13 ical prisoners, and prisoners of conscience, and
14 immediately cease the harassment, detention,
15 physical abuse, and imprisonment of Viet-
16 nameese citizens who have exercised their legiti-
17 mate rights to freedom of belief, expression,
18 and association;

19 (C) to allow all Vietnamese citizens the
20 right to free expression, freedom of association,
21 freedom of the press, and religious worship; and

22 (D) to formally commit to a framework
23 and a set timetable for open and fair elections
24 that will facilitate the ability of Vietnamese citi-
25 zens to peacefully choose their own local and

1 national leaders, free from fear and intima-
2 tion; and

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

Passed the House of Representatives May 3, 2000.

Attest:

JEFF TRANDAHL,

Clerk.