

United States will probably be the main beneficiary of this evolution in China, but it will help the Chinese people some day join our fellowship of democratic nations with a respect for universal human rights.

CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF
IRAN REGARDING 13 JEWISH
CITIZENS

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage about the ongoing activities in the City of Shiraz, Iran. Thirteen Jewish citizens of Iran were arrested on Passover eve in 1999 for allegedly spying for Israel and the United States, despite adamant denials from both countries regarding these trumped-up allegations. These individuals, including rabbis, religious teachers, and community activists, have committed no crime other than openly practicing the Jewish religion. In Iran, members of the Jewish faith are prohibited from holding any positions that would grant them access to state secrets or sensitive materials; thus, there is no possibility that Israel or the United States would employ 13 Jewish individuals to be spies—particularly those living hundreds of miles from the capital city of Tehran. According to the Los Angeles-based Council of Iranian American Jewish Organizations, Iranian officials have even admitted that the charges of espionage were false. "They have never claimed there 13 people were spies. . . . They were very forthright and up front about the fact that this is part of a game, and to show that Iran will not be bullied and that they have ultimate control over their citizens."

The Iranian government's false accusations of spying and arrests of innocent individuals on these sham charges are wholly unacceptable. If these ludicrous charges are allowed to stand, these innocent individuals may be found guilty and executed. The government of Iran must know that the world community is watching and will not stand by idly and accept this treatment of our contemporaries!

Since the arrests over one year ago, the Iranian government has treated these Jewish citizens in a deplorable manner and denied them any due process. Primarily, the government detained these innocent individuals for over one year without being charged. During that time, they were barely allowed any visitors. Moreover, no attorney was allowed to visit or meet with the 13 Jewish citizens. Finally, the three youngest citizens were released on bail, but the other ten Jewish citizens are still being wrongly detained. Inherently unfair, the "judge" is also the investigator, chief interrogator behind bars, prosecutor, and jury in this sham trial. These trials are devoid of public attendance; there is virtually no information or evidence provided, only hollow conclusionary and coerced confessions without any details.

Recent actions have brought further concerns. Just before the "trial" began in early May, a leading Iranian cleric delivered a sermon over state radio declaring, "These people are spies . . . they are Jews and are . . . by nature enemies of Muslims." Most disconcerting, since the beginning of May, these Jewish citizens are beginning to "confess" to

crimes that they did not commit. Now the Iranian government is showing these alleged confessions on television. This vicious propaganda is impacting Jews negatively throughout Iran. Jews throughout the country—even Jewish children—are experiencing harassment on the street, at work, and in school. There are reports of anti-Jewish graffiti and fears of an economic boycott of Jewish-owned shops. This anti-Semitism and persecution of Jews must stop, and it must stop immediately.

The oldest Jewish Diaspora community and the biggest in the Middle East after Israel, Jews lived in peace in Iran for more than 2700 years. In 1979, there were 80,000 Jews living comfortably in Iran. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, however, the Iranian government has consistently articulated anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda. In the last twenty years, seventeen Jews have been executed on charges of spying, and Jewish property has been confiscated. Many of these executions occurred without any trials of the accused. Now, there are only 25,000–30,000 Jewish citizens, and the entire Jewish community is threatened by further state sponsored religious persecution.

In May, we in Congress took steps to emphasize how seriously this sham trial will affect Iran's status in the world community. We wrote to the World Bank and contacted nations on the bank's loan approval board to urge postponement of pending loans for development projects for Iran. Unfortunately, loans to Iran were approved for hundreds of millions of dollars. Our government—President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, rightfully indicated that the World Bank should not have made these loans to Iran at the very time that its government was conducting these sham trials. Nonetheless, Members of Congress or other world leaders will not overlook the outcome of this "trial."

In addition, I am a proud co-sponsor of H. Con. Res. 307, a critical resolution introduced by my New York colleague, Mr. BENJAMIN GILMAN. This important measure expresses the sense of Congress that the Clinton Administration should condemn the arrest and prosecution of these 13 Jewish individuals, demand that the fabricated charges be dropped and the individuals released immediately, and ensure that Iran's treatment of this case is a benchmark for determining the nature of current and future relations between the United States and Iran. We must work quickly and diligently to pass this important resolution.

I stand here to urge the government of Iran to release all 13 wrongly imprisoned citizens and drop all charges against these innocent individuals immediately. I also urge our government to continue to apply pressure to the government of Iran until this anti-Semitic behavior is terminated. We must be vigilant and work tirelessly until the government of Iran has restored freedom and respect to all its people.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT FOSTER,
CLIFTON OPTIMIST YEAR 2000
FRIEND OF YOUTH AWARD

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the deeds of a remark-

able person from my district, Robert Foster of Clifton, New Jersey, who was recognized on Friday, May 12, 2000 at the Optimist Dinner because of his many years of service and leadership. The Clifton Optimist Year 2000 Friend of Youth Award was conferred upon him at a dinner held at the Clifton Boys and Girls Club. It is only fitting that he is honored, for he has a long history of caring, generosity and commitment to others.

Robert was recognized for his many years of leadership in Clifton, which I have been honored to represent in Congress since 1997, and so it is only fitting that these words are immortalized in the annals of this greatest of all freely elected bodies.

Each year the Clifton Optimist Club recognizes a special person for his work with youth. This year the award is bestowed upon Robert, Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton. He is an excellent choice for this honor because he embodies the theme "Friend of Youth" with his dedicated service and affiliations involving the children of the City of Clifton.

Robert is a graduate of Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Leisure Services from the school in 1980.

From the time of his graduation, twenty years ago, until the present day, Robert has worked at the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton, Inc. improving the lives of young people. He began his career as the Teens/Social Recreation Director of the club. In January of 1986 he became the program director for the organization. This change brought him a greater range of responsibility. The time spent working as the Teen/Social Recreation Director instilled in Robert the attributes necessary for him to become a stellar force in the community. It was the small steps in the beginning of his career that taught him the fundamentals that would make him a role model to the youths that he now serves.

Known for a questioning mind and an ability to get things done, Robert was promoted to his current position of Director of Operations in September of 1991. He is responsible for the daily operations of the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton. The club currently serves 2,200 youths from the ages of two and a half to seventeen.

Robert continually touches the lives of the people around him. This is exemplified by his club affiliations. He is a member of the Clifton Optimist Club and is a Clifton Stallions Soccer Club Trustee. In addition, he is a member of the Clifton Board of Recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, Robert's family and friends, the Boys and Girls Club of Clifton, the City of Clifton and me in recognizing the outstanding and invaluable service to the community of Robert Foster.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE STRAFACE—
FORMER DISTRICT 51 SUPER-
INTENDENT

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to thank George Straface for the time he spent as Superintendent of District