

were simply shelved. This pattern of impunity by the Guatemalan Government cultivates and perpetuates the cycle of violence.

It has taken pressure from the international community to highlight this gross violation of human rights and force the Guatemalan Government to take steps towards alleviating these problems. Guatemalan officials have recently created a special police commission and prosecutorial unit to solely focus on femicide crimes.

Although these are important and necessary steps, more must be done to address these issues.

It is necessary for this House to focus our attention to Guatemala's passive attitude. This is why I urge my colleagues to join me in voting "yes" on H. Res. 100.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 100.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING ON VIETNAM TO IMMEDIATELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASE POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 243) calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 243

Whereas, on February 18, 2007, Vietnamese police raided the parish house of Father Nguyen Van Ly and confiscated computers, telephones, more than 100 mobile phone cards, and more than 200 kilograms of documents;

Whereas the police moved Father Ly to the remote location of Ben Cui in central Vietnam, where he is under house arrest;

Whereas Father Ly is a former prisoner of conscience, having spent a total of over 13 years in prison since 1983 for his advocacy of religious freedom and democracy in Vietnam;

Whereas Father Ly is an advisor of "Block 8406", a democracy movement that started in April 2006 when hundreds of people throughout Vietnam signed public petitions calling for democracy and human rights;

Whereas Father Ly is also an advisor of a new political party, the Vietnam Progression Party, and one of the primary editors of "Freedom of Speech" magazine;

Whereas, on March 6, 2007, Vietnamese police arrested one of Vietnam's few practicing human rights lawyers, Nguyen Van Dai, who

has defended individuals arrested for their human rights and religious activities, is the co-founder of the Committee for Human Rights in Vietnam, and is one of the principal organizers of the Block 8406 democracy movement;

Whereas, on March 6, 2007, Vietnamese police also arrested Le Thi Cong Nhan, a human rights lawyer, a member of "Block 8406", the principal spokesperson for the Progression Party, and a founder of the Vietnamese Labor Movement;

Whereas Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, and Le Thi Cong Nhan have been charged with disseminating propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam under article 88 of the Penal Code of Vietnam;

Whereas Father Ly was tried and convicted on March 30, 2007, and sentenced to 8 years in prison;

Whereas if convicted, Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison;

Whereas Le Quoc Quan is a lawyer who traveled to the United States in September 2006 to research civil society development as a Reagan-Fascell Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy;

Whereas Le Quoc Quan returned to Vietnam in early March 2007 and was arrested by Hanoi police on March 8, 2007;

Whereas Le Quoc Quan has been charged under Article 79 of the Penal Code of Vietnam which prohibits activities aimed at overthrowing the Government and carries extremely severe prison terms and even the death penalty;

Whereas in none of their activities have Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, or Le Quoc Quan advocated or engaged in violence;

Whereas the arrest of and charges against Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Le Quoc Quan violate Article 69 of the Vietnamese Constitution, which states that "The citizen shall enjoy freedom of opinion and speech, freedom of the press, the right to be informed and the right to assemble, form associations and hold demonstrations in accordance with the provisions of the law";

Whereas Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Le Quoc Quan have been arrested and charged in contravention of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Vietnam is a state party, specifically Article 18 (freedom of religion), Article 19 (freedom of expression) and Article 22 (freedom of association);

Whereas Vietnam recently has imprisoned, detained, placed under house arrest, or otherwise restricted numerous other peaceful democratic and religious activists for reasons related to their political or religious views, including Nguyen Binh Thanh, Nguyen Phong, Nguyen Ngoc Quang, Nguyen Vu Binh, Huynh Trung Dao, Nguyen Tan Hoanh, Tran Thi Le Hang, Doang Huy Chuong, Doan Van Dien, Le Ba Triet, Nguyen Tuan, Bui Kim Thanh and Tran Quoc Hien;

Whereas the United States Congress agreed to Vietnam becoming an official member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2006, amidst assurances that the Vietnamese Government was steadily improving its human rights record and would continue to do so;

Whereas the group of Asian countries at the United Nations have nominated Vietnam as the sole regional candidate for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the 2008-2009 biennium, and pursuant to the United Nations Charter, Vietnam would be required to discharge its duties in accordance with the purposes of the United Nations, including the promotion and

encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; and

Whereas the arbitrary imprisonment and the violation of the human rights of citizens of Vietnam are sources of continuing, grave concern to Congress, and the arrests of Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Le Quoc Quan are part of a trend toward increasing oppression of human rights advocates in Vietnam: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives—

(A) condemns and deplores the arbitrary arrests of Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Le Quoc Quan by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and calls for their immediate and unconditional release and the dropping of all criminal charges, and for the immediate and unconditional release of all other political and religious prisoners;

(B) condemns and deplores the violations of the freedoms of speech, religion, movement, association, and the lack of due process afforded to individuals in Vietnam;

(C) challenges the qualifications of Vietnam to be a member of the United Nations Security Council, unless the Government of Vietnam begins immediately to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all within its own borders; and

(D) strongly urges the Government of Vietnam to consider the implications of its actions for the broader relationship between the United States and Vietnam; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should—

(A) make a top concern the immediate release, legal status, and humanitarian needs of Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Le Quoc Quan;

(B) use funds from the newly created Human Rights Defenders Fund of the Department of State to assist with the legal defense and the needs of the families and dependents of Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Le Quoc Quan;

(C) continue to urge the Government of Vietnam to comply with internationally recognized standards for basic freedoms and human rights;

(D) make clear to the Government of Vietnam that it must adhere to the rule of law and respect the freedom of religion and expression in order to broaden its relations with the United States;

(E) make clear to the Government of Vietnam that the detention of Father Ly, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, Le Quoc Quan, and other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience and other human rights violations are not in the best interest of Vietnam because they create obstacles to improved bilateral relations and cooperation with the United States;

(F) examine current human rights violations by the Vietnamese Government and consider re-imposing on Vietnam the "country of particular concern" (CPC) designation, which was removed on November 13, 2006, pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998; and

(G) in order to advance these freedoms and rights, and to strengthen the long-term relationship between the United States and Vietnam, initiate new foreign assistance programs to advance the capacity and networking abilities of Vietnamese civil society, including—

(i) rule of law programs to train Vietnamese human rights lawyers, judges, academics, and students about international human rights law;

(ii) public diplomacy initiatives to inform and teach Vietnamese citizens about international human rights norms and responsibilities; and

(iii) projects that support organizations and associations that promote the freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and association.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIREs. 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 the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I would first like to commend the distinguished ranking member of the Africa and Global Health Subcommittee, my friend, Chris Smith of New Jersey, for the introduction of this important resolution.

This year, Vietnam's program of economic liberalization and openness took its most dramatic and important step when it joined the World Trade Organization. Just over 30 years after the Communist takeover of Saigon, Vietnam is now looking to promote foreign direct investment and to become a full member of the global economic community.

The U.S.-Vietnam relationship has undergone a similar transformation. U.S. Presidents now regularly visit our once sworn enemy. United States' engagements with Vietnam can and should continue in order to promote a more open and prosperous Vietnam. This will better the lives of the Vietnamese people. Yet, as the U.S.-Vietnam relationship matures, the Government of Vietnam must understand that U.S. principles of democracy, freedom, and human rights will never soften by impressive economic growth rates.

The unacceptable arrest of four innocent Vietnamese citizens by the government for exercising their right of free expression is evidence of how far Vietnam must come before it can be considered a genuine friend of the United States.

The resolution we are considering today demonstrates our commitment to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Vietnam. It does this by calling for the immediate release of these political prisoners, urging the Government of Vietnam to comply with international standards of human rights, and considering the implication of its actions for the broader relationship between the United States and Vietnam.

I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to manage the time on this side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Vietnam has long been known as a major violator of human rights. The U.S. House of Representatives went on record in the 109th Congress condemning and deploring the violations of human rights in Vietnam and strongly urging the Vietnamese Government to consider the implications of its human rights abuses for the broader relationship between the United States and Vietnam. I point out parenthetically that the House almost a year ago to the day passed a resolution that I sponsored similar to this one, H. Con. Res. 320, on April 6, 2006. There was some initial improvement. Regrettably, there has been a snapback to its original and even worsened situation when it comes to human rights observance. That is why I have sponsored H. Res. 243—calling on Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Fr. Ly, Mr. Dai, Mrs. Whan and other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Department of State in its "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" notes that the human rights record in Vietnam remains "unsatisfactory," and that government officials continued "to commit serious abuses." The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom stated in its 2006 annual report that Vietnam "continues to commit systematic and egregious violations of freedom of religion and belief."

However, in November 2006, pursuant to a boatload of assurances and solemn promises that the human rights situation would improve dramatically, Vietnam became the first country to be removed from the list of Countries of Particular Concern, so designated pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act. Late last year, the U.S. Congress agreed to Vietnam becoming an official member of the World Trade Organization, and a group of Asian countries at the United Nations has nominated Vietnam as the sole regional candidate for a nonpermanent seat on the U.S. Security Council.

Despite this flurry of international recognition and tangible economic benefit, despite the hopes of many, including and especially the Vietnamese people, Vietnam has reverted to its repressive practices and has arrested, imprisoned, and imposed lengthy prison sentences on numerous individuals whose only crime has been to seek democratic reform and respect for fundamental human rights in their country.

The crackdown in Vietnam, Mr. Speaker, on religious and human rights activists is unconscionable and of course it is unnecessary. I have been to Vietnam, Mr. Speaker, on many human rights trips, and chaired several hearings on it as well. But on one of the most recent trips, I actually met with Father Nguyen Van Ly who recently got 8 years in prison; I also met with Nguyen Van Dai and about 60 other human rights activists and religious leaders and people who are pressing for reform in that country.

I was struck by how smart, talented, and kindhearted these people were. I believe they are Vietnam's best and brightest and bravest. I was amazed how they harbor no malice, no hate towards the government; nor do they hate the government leaders. They only want a better future for their country, and each and every one of the people I met with was committed, and is committed, to peaceful nonviolent reform.

But just one month ago, on March 30, the government sentenced Father Ly to 8 years imprisonment after subjecting him to a sham trial for distributing "antigovernment materials."

When I met with Father Ly he was under house arrest, he sounded just like the activists I had met and spoke to during the dark years of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. During those years of domination by communism, men like Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa, and Anatoly Shcharansky—people who, like the folks in Charter 77 in the Czech Republic—only wanted freedom, democracy, and human rights. None of them wanted violence, and yet we see that men like Father Ly now get 8 years imprisonment on top of the 13 years he has previously served in the Gulag on trumped-up charges. Jailing dissidents is a window into the malice and evil of the government of Vietnam.

As I mentioned, attorney, Nguyen Van Dai, a tenacious campaigner for human rights who uses the law, international and domestic, to press his cause, nonviolently—he's totally non-violent, hates violence, abhors it, stands up and tries to use the law to try to get remedies for his clients. He, too, is now awaiting a trial which will be another kangaroo court and a sham deal at that.

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Another human rights lawyer, Le Thi Cong Nhan, is a labor activist. And according to reports, she too now will undergo another one of these bogus trials.

We know that Vietnam, due to our robust trade and recently enacted PNTR and their ascension into the WTO, we know that trade will increase between the United States and Vietnam. So when this lawyer seeks to be an activist for what the ILO and all of us in this room believe to be fundamental freedoms like collective bargaining, the secret police raids her office and drags her away. She is now awaiting another one of these kangaroo trials.

Another victim of the crackdown is Le Quoc Quan. Here's a person who just returned to Vietnam in early March after completing a fellowship right here in Washington at the National Endowment for Democracy. He was arrested on March 8, apparently for the crime of engaging in research on civil society development at NED. And all of us who know NED know what a great, completely transparent and human rights rule of law oriented organization NED is, a group funded, by this Congress and by the executive branch. It's a great organization. Quam goes back to victim and is basically arrested soon after his arrival and now he is awaiting a trial as well.

Mr. Speaker, a little over a year ago, a group called Block 8406 devised a statement of human rights principles. It reminds me of Charter 77. Brave men and women banded together united by a statement of principles, human rights concerns. We've seen such expressions in Cuba, we've seen it all over the world in despotic countries. These brave men and women sign on the dotted line, in a way not unlike our own forefathers who signed the Declaration of Independence. In Vietnam's case, they are pertaining for reforms. And openness. And I have read it. It is very, very simple and eloquent and to the point. It's all about human rights and democratization. And for being part of 8406, other activists are now being caught in this dragnet.

I would note parenthetically, Father Ly was also a signer of this Block 8406 a manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam. The 8406 stands for April 8, 2006. That's when they founded this courageous organization.

H. Res. 243, the resolution before us, Mr. Speaker, is intended to send a critical and timely message to the Vietnamese government that these serious violations of basic human rights are absolutely unacceptable and bring profound dishonor on the government of Vietnam.

These human rights violations cannot be overlooked. They cannot be trivialized. These human rights violations which are ongoing, and they occur as we meet here today, cannot continue without equally serious consequences. It also urges our Government to make human rights a top priority in our bilateral relations with Vietnam. I do believe this recent snap back to human rights abuse underscores the unwitting naivete on the part of some who think if we just trade, if we just open our pocket books, dictatorships will automatically matriculate into democracies and freedom loving human rights respecting countries. It hasn't happened anywhere. Not in the PRC, it has not happened in Vietnam and it is not happening anywhere where that naive view is embraced.

So we've got to send some clear messages. Human rights do matter. And we will stand up for those who are mistreated. We will stand with the oppressed and not with the oppressor.

Finally, I've heard it from informed and very reliable sources that some of the recent jailees, the human rights activists that are now behind bars suffering torture and mistreatment, that they are being told that the United States really doesn't care about them; that we've walked away. I have heard this on a couple of occasions from people who have very good inside information. They are actually being taunted with that kind of mantra.

I want to tell the persecuted—you are not forgotten. It's a bipartisan expression today, you are not forgotten. We care deeply about these human rights activists and we will not forget you. And we will do all that is humanly possible, God willing, to effectuate your release and hopefully, some day, see a free and democratic Vietnam.

At this point in the RECORD, I would like to include 8406—manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Human Rights.

MANIFESTO 2006 ON FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR VIETNAM BY 118 DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS INSIDE VIETNAM—APRIL 8, 2006

DEAR COMPATRIOTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF VIETNAM: We, the undersigned, representing hundreds of Vietnamese democracy activists inside Vietnam and all those Vietnamese citizens yearning for True Democracy for Vietnam, hereby unanimously proclaim the following:

I. THE CURRENT REALITIES OF VIETNAM

1. In the August 1945 Revolution, the entire Vietnamese nation made a choice for national independence and not socialism. Vietnam's Declaration of Independence on September 2, 1945 did not contain a single word about socialism or communism. The two mainsprings behind the success of that Revolution were the Vietnamese people's aspiration for national independence and also the desire to fill the power vacuum that existed after the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, following their overthrow of the French colonial administration on March 9, 1945.

It is thus clear that the Vietnamese communists had abandoned the main objective of the August Revolution. As a result, the Vietnamese peoples' aspiration for self-determination was disregarded. There have been two occasions, one in 1954 in North Vietnam and the other in 1975 in all of Vietnam, when there were good opportunities for the Vietnamese nation to set a new course towards a true democracy. Sadly, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), failed to take advantage of those opportunities. This failure is due to the well-known fact, as propounded by Lenin, that once a dictatorship of the proletariat has been installed, its very first function is to foster violence and repressive terror!

2. On September 2, 1945 in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, President of the Interim Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, solemnly declared to the [Vietnamese] nation and the world that: "All men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, among them the Right to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," undying words taken from the U.S. Declaration of Independence of 1776. Interpreted broadly, this sentence can mean that all nations are created equal and that they are entitled to Life, Freedom and Happiness. The 1791 French Declaration on Human and Civil Rights also proclaims: "All people are born free and have equal rights, and they must re-

main free and equal in all rights." These are undeniable truths . . ." (This quote is taken directly from the September 2, 1945 Vietnamese Declaration of Independence).

Nevertheless, the communist government of Vietnam began to trample upon these sacred rights the moment they came to power.

3. By February 1951, the Vietnam Workers Party (VWP, now rechristened the CPV) proclaimed in a Manifesto at its Second Party Congress that: "The ideology of the VWP is Marxism-Leninism." This was something that was even more clearly expressed in the Party Bylaws, under the rubric of "Goal and Leading Principles": "The Vietnam Workers Party takes the ideology of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin and the thought of Mao Zedong in combination with the revolutionary realities of Vietnam to be its ideological foundation and compass for all Party activities.

Since then, especially in the North after 1954, and in the entire country after April 30, 1975, the specter of Communism has been imposed on the Vietnamese nation. For all practical purposes, this specter has been used to deprive the Vietnamese people of all their human rights. And even today, its overwhelming influence is evident in the spiritual as well as the material spheres of the Vietnamese nation.

II. UNIVERSAL LAWS AFFECTING ALL SOCIETIES

1. History has demonstrated that under every totalitarian regime, whether communist or non-communist, all democratic rights and freedoms are mercilessly repressed, the difference being only in the degree of repression. Unfortunately, to this day the Vietnamese nation is still one of the few that is under the rule of a totalitarian communist regime. This fact is unabashedly declared in Article 4 of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) Constitution, which says: "The CPV . . . follows Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Ho Chi Minh, and it is the leading force of the state and society." It is on the basis of this article that democratic rights and freedoms of the Vietnamese people have been extremely curtailed.

2. The power structure in Vietnam rejects competition and totally minimizes the possibility of its replacement by something else. This record has helped accelerate the degeneration of government, and its transformation from what it started out to be. Because there are no rules and principles regarding fair competition in the current political culture of the country, election after election, people have not been allowed to choose the most deserving individuals and political parties to represent them. For that reason the leadership, management and operational set-ups become ever more corrupt, and can now be compared to a creaky piece of equipment from the center down to the localities. As a result, Vietnam is now a nation that has fallen way behind other nations in the region and in the world. In the prevailing environment, this shameful national performance and other nation-wide problems are beyond correction. The problem of all problems, the source of all evils, resides in the fact that the CPV is now the one and only political force leading Vietnam! The realities of history have shown that any country, once it has fallen into the orbit of Communism, ends up in ruin and misery. The Soviet Union itself, the very cradle of world communism, has, together with other former Eastern European countries valiantly overcome its own weaknesses to rediscover the correct path leading them forward.

3. We all understand that no one can remake history, but it is possible to redirect its course. What is even more important is that through history's lessons, one can find the correct orientation for the nation's future. The path chosen by the CPV for the Vietnamese nation was designed in haste, and

thoughtlessly imposed. That is why today, it is necessary to choose once again a new path for our nation. And a path chosen by the entire nation must necessarily be better than the one chosen by just one person or one group of persons. Given that the CPV is, after all, only one component of the nation, it should not claim to speak on behalf of the entire nation! Considering that for almost half a century, from 1954 to 2006, the ruling party in Vietnam has usurped the voice of the nation, it is by no means a legitimate government! Why? Because there had simply not been a single free election during all that time in Vietnam.

On the basis of the above realities and the stated universal laws, being fully conscious of our responsibilities as citizens, and faced with the nation's fate, we would like to declare the following to our compatriots both inside and outside of Vietnam:

III. OBJECTIVE, METHODS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR STRUGGLE

1. The highest objective in the struggle to fight for freedom and democracy for the Vietnamese nation today is to make sure that the present political regime in Vietnam is changed in a fundamental way, not through incremental "renovation" steps or, even worse, through insignificant touch-ups here and there. Concretely speaking, it must be a change from the monolithic, one-party, non-competitive regime that we have at the present time to a pluralistic and multiparty system; one in which there is healthy competition, in accordance with the legitimate requirements of the nation, including at least a clear separation of powers among the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of government. This would be in tune with international criteria and the experiences and lessons Mankind has learned from highly respected and successful democracies.

The concrete objective is to re-establish the following fundamental rights of the people:

The Freedom of Information and Opinion as defined in the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified on December 16, 1966, and endorsed by Vietnam on September 24, 1982, Article 19.2: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of opinion; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice." This means that political parties, organizations and individuals all have the freedom to express their opinions through the printed media, radio, television and any other mass media without having to wait for prior approval by the government.

The Freedom to Assemble, form Associations, Political Parties, Vote and Stand for Elected Offices as defined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 25: "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity (a) to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) to vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors." This means that political parties of every orientation are allowed to fairly compete in a genuine pluralistic and multiparty democracy.

The Freedom to participate in Independent Labor Unions and the Right to Legitimate Strikes in accordance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by the United Nations on December 16, 1966, Articles 7 and 8: "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of

just and favorable conditions of work . . . , the right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests . . . [including] the right to strike . . ." These Labor Unions must be independent of, and in practice, not subservient to the state.

The Freedom of Religion as defined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include the freedom to have or adopt a Religion or Belief of his choice, and the freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching." These religions must also operate independently; they cannot be made the instruments of the state.

2. The method of this struggle must be peaceful and non-violent. The Vietnamese nation must itself be actively engaged in it. Of course, we are extremely thankful for the warm and ever more effective support of all our friends in the world. Using modern information media and through ever larger international exchanges, we will seek in every way to help our compatriot to fully understand the issues involved. Once this has been achieved, they surely will know how to act appropriately and effectively.

3. This struggle is meant to make the Right Cause triumph over the Bad Cause, and, Progress over Backwardness. There are popular movements that are currently trying to use the laws of life and the tendencies of our time in order to defeat those evil forces that are trying to go against these tendencies and laws. Whether the CPV marches hand-in-hand with the Nation or not will depend on whether it is objective, fair, enlightened and modest enough to accept the principle of equality in a fair competition. The one-party political regime must be once and for all buried in the dustbin of history. From such a departing point, the Vietnamese nation will be able to find its best citizens and the most capable political organizations after each election to lead it. The "total triumph of the right cause" principle will be established, and one's individual life will become better, our society more humane, and our Compatriots will live together on more friendly terms.

We hope that this Manifesto would foster the positive contributions of our compatriots living outside of Vietnam and the support of our international friends. We are sincerely grateful and call on the United Nations, national parliaments, governments, international organizations and our friends all over the world to continue supporting enthusiastically and effectively this fully legitimate struggle. This will soon help bring our Fatherland, Vietnam, to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with civilized, moral, prosperous and free countries in today's community of Mankind—Unanimously declared in Vietnam on 8 April 2006.

Dr. Nguyen Xuan An, Hue; Teacher Dang Van Anh, Hue; Prof. Nguyen Kim Anh, Hue; Writer Trinh Canh, Vung Tau; Teacher Le Can, Hue; Teacher Tran Thi Minh Cam, Hue; Teacher Nguyen Thi Linh Chi, Can Tho; Teacher Nguyen Viet Cu, Quang Ngai; Writer Nguyen Dac Cuong, Phan Thiet; Teacher Tran Doan, Quang Ngai; Teacher Ho Anh Dung, Hue; Dr. Ha Xuan Duong, Hue; Attorney Nguyen Van Dai, Hanoi; Dr. Ho Dong, Vinh Long; Businessman Tran Van Ha, Da Nang; Dr. Le Thi Ngan Ha, Hue; (Mrs.) Vu Thuy Ha, Hanoi; Teacher Tran Thach Hai, Haiphong; Teacher Dang Hoai Anh, Hue; Dr. Le Hoai Anh, Nha Trang.

Prof. Nguyen Ngoc Anh, Da Namg; Rev. F.X. Le Van Cao, Hue; Rev. Giuse Hoang

Can, Hue; Rev. Giuse Nguyen Van Chanh, Hue; Prof. Hoang Minh Chinh, Hanoi; Dang Quoc Cuong, MA, Hue; Businessman Ho Ngoc Diep, Da Nang; Ms. Le Thi Phu Dung, Saigon; Prof. Truong Quang Dung, Hue; Ex-Col. Pham Que Duong, Hanoi; Kt (Architect?) Tran Van Don, Phan Thiet; Rev. Phero Nguyen Huu Giai, Hue; Teacher Le Thi Bich Ha, Can Tho; Teacher Le Nguyen Xuan Ha, Hue; Eng. Do Nam Hai, Saigon; Kt (Architect?) Tran Viet Hai, Vung Tau; Eng. Doan Thi Dieu Hanh, Vung Tau; Teacher Phan Thi Minh Hanh, Hue; Writer Tran Hao, Vung Tau; Teacher Le Le Hang, Hue.

Nurse Che Minh Hoang, Nha Trang; Teacher Le Thu Minh Hung, Saigon; Rev. Gk Nguyen Van Hung, Hue; Teacher Le Thi Thanh Huyenh, Hue; Mai Thu Huong, MA, Haiphong; Candidate Nguyen Ngoc Ke, Hue; Nguyen Quoc Khanh, MA, Hue; Prof. Tran Khue, Saigon; Writer Bui Lang, Phan Thiet; Mr. Le Quang Liem, Head, Traditional Hoa Hao Buddhist Church, Saigon; Rev. G.B. Nguyen Cao Loc, Hue; Teacher Ma Van Luu, Haiphong; Rev. Tadeo Nguyen Van Ly, Hue; Teacher Cao Thi Xuan Mai, Hue; Writer Ha Van Mau, Can Tho; Writer Le Thi Thu Minh, Can Tho; Teacher Nguyen Anh Minh, Saigon; (Mrs.) Bui Kim Ngan, Hanoi; Rev. G.B. Le Van Nghiem, Hue; Rev. Dominic Phan Phuoc, Hue.

Rev. Giuse Cai Hong Phuong, Hue; Eng. Ta Minh Quan, Can Tho; Rev. Giuse Tran Van Quy, Hue; Dr. Tran Thi Sen, Nha Trang; Eng. Hoang Son, Haiphong; Prof. Nguyen Anh Tai, Da Nang; Dr. Ta Minh Tam, Can Tho; Pastor Pham Ngoc Thach, Saigon; Teacher Van Ba Thanh, Hue; Tran Manh Thu, MA, Haiphong; Writer Hoang Tien, Hanoi; Rev. Tephano Chan Tin, Saigon; Writer Ton Nu Minh Trang, Phan Thiet; Dr. Nguyen Anh Tu, Da Nang; Teacher Le Tri Tue, Haiphong; Businesswoman Nguyen Thi Hanh, DaNang; Prof. Dang Minh Hao, Hue; Writer Tran Manh Hao, Saigon; Rev. Giuse Nguyen Duc Hieu, Bac Ninh; Teacher Van Dinh Hoang, Hue.

Prof. Nguyen Minh Hung, Hue; Teacher Phan Ngoc Huy, Hue; Teacher Do Thi Minh Huong, Hue; Nurse Tran Thu Huong, Da Nang; Prof. Nguyen Chinh Ket, Saigon; Teacher Nguyen Dang Khoa, Hue; Ex-Major Vu Kinh, Hanoi; Teacher Ton That Hoang Lan, Saigon; Dr. Vu Thi Hoa Linh, Saigon; Rev. Phero Phan Van Loi, Hue; Teacher Nguyen Van Ly, Haiphong; Teacher Cai Thi Mai, Haiphong; Teacher Nguyen Van Mai, Saigon; Teacher Phan Van Mau, Hue; Teacher Ma Van Minh, Hue; Dr. Huyen Ton Nu Phuong Nhen, Da Nang; Dang Hoai Ngan, MA, Hue; Teacher Le Hong Phuc, Haiphong; Eng. Vo Lam Phuoc, Saigon; Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, Saigon.

Rev. Augustino Ho Van Quy, Hue; Dr. Vo Van Quyen, Vinh Long; Hoa Hao Lay preacher Le Van Soc, Vinh Long; Rev. Phao Lo Ngo Thanh Son, Hue; Eng. Do Hong Tam, Haiphong; Prof. Nguyen Thanh Tam, Hue; Teacher Nguyen binh Thanh, Hue; Hoa Hao Lay preacher Nguyen Van Tho, Dong Thap; Prof. Dr. Tran Hong Thu, Saigon; Ex-Officer Tran Dung Tien, Hanoi; Teacher Nguyen Khac Toan, Hanoi; Teacher Che Thi Hong Trinh, Hue; Dr. Doan Minh Tuan, Saigon; Nurse Tran Thi Hoai Van, Nha Trang; Teacher Ngo Thi Tuong Vi, Quang Ngai; Ho Ngoc Vinh, MA, Da Nang; Teacher Nguyen Le Xuan Vinh, Can Tho; Eng. Lam Dinh Vinh, Saigon.

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

Mr. SIRE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) who

has been a leader on global human rights for 27 years, and that especially relates to Vietnam.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. SMITH, and for Mr. SMITH's faithfulness to be over here.

This institution is frankly changing. It is changing before our eyes. This institution, on both sides of the aisle, almost doesn't seem to care anymore on these issues of fundamental human rights. This institution needs a little bit of Ronald Reagan.

Many of you voted to give this government PNTR. Read the letter. The conditions have changed dramatically. They're worse today than when you gave them PNTR. And yet this place is almost empty. Nobody seems to care anymore.

Father Ly is in jail. The American Ambassador ought to be fired. This administration has done a horrible job.

Let me just read some of the things that have gone on since we gave them PNTR and the President went over there. February 18, 2007, the second day of Lunar, Father Ly was banished to a remote secluded area. Does the Congress care? Does the administration care?

March 5, 2007, security forces in Saigon told Mrs. Bui Ngoc Yen that they had an order to arrest her husband.

March 8, 2007, Reverend Nguyen Cong Chinch were brutally assaulted by the security forces.

March 8, 2007, two prominent human rights activists and lawyers, Mr. Nguyen Van Dai and Ms. Le Thi Cong Nhan were arrested in Hanoi, told they would be detained for 4 months.

March 9, 2007 Mr. Tran Van Hoa, a member of the People's Democracy Committee, summoned by the security forces and threatened with "immeasurable consequences," that's in quotes.

March 10, 2007, Do Nam Hai, an engineer writing under the pen name Phuong Nam, one of the leading members of the Alliance for Democracy told by security forces he could be indicted any time.

March 10, the same day, state security forces raided the home of Ms. Tran Khai Thanh, a writer.

March 12, 2007, do you get a pattern here? Can anyone see a pattern sort of developing here?

The Congress gave them MFN. Probably a majority on both sides gave them MFN. But do you see a pattern here?

March 10, state security forces.

March 12, lawyer Le Quoc Quan, a consultant on local government for the World Bank was arrested in his hometown.

April 5, 2007 the Vietnamese authorities in Hanoi rudely prevented Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, from your side of the aisle, from meeting with several dissidents' wives at a gathering organized at the Ambassador's house.

Now this Ambassador, frankly, and Mr. LANTOS, and we have a bill that's coming up, this Ambassador has failed

to turn the American Embassy into an island of freedom. During the days of Ronald Reagan, one of the greatest presidents we have ever had, not only in modern times, but in all times, turned the American Embassy in Moscow into an island of freedom that dissidents felt comfortable coming, and they were invited.

This Ambassador is just the opposite. He's silent. Dr. Martin Luther King said silence is the real danger. You expect the silence of your enemies, but you don't expect the silence of our friends.

Furthermore, the Hanoi government still has a large number of dissidents that are in jail.

Lastly, and I'm going to read a letter that I'm going to put in the RECORD that we sent to Secretary Rice the other day. The Vietnamese American community, a young but energetic group comprised of more than 1 million citizens, should be included in future dialogues with U.S. government officials. They know the history, the culture and the values of Vietnam. They also scrutinize the history and the tactics of communism and the Communist government's habits at the negotiating table.

I sincerely believe that the history of Vietnam must inform our approach to this and all other aspects of foreign policy. And the Vietnamese American community is a tremendous asset in this regard. Quite frankly, this administration, when Ambassador Marine leaves, ought to put a Vietnamese American in who understands these issues. So I'm going to submit this in the RECORD.

But these are important issues. This Congress just can't give these people human rights. And frankly, there is a whole shift taking place. I saw the other day, and if I'm wrong, I'll correct it for the record, that Steven Spielberg is now representing the Chinese government for the Olympics. One of Spielberg's greatest movies was the movie that he did with regard to what took place by Nazi Germany, Schindler's List.

Well, now there's a Schindler's list operation going on in China. There are 42 Catholic bishops that are in jail with China, with priests. And for those who might think it might be amusing, China is the one that's trying to do nothing with regard to the genocide in Darfur. 400,000 people have died. The head of China goes to Khartoum 2 months ago with a bold announcement. The announcement is they are going to build a new palace for the Sudanese that are bringing about genocide. Genocide in Darfur.

There are 46,000 house church leaders, leaders, committed leaders, house church leaders that are in jail in China today. In Tibet, it's against the law to have a picture of the Dalai Lama, and the Chinese public security police sent three public security police to my district spying on Rebiya Kadeer. If you read the Washington Post editorial last

week, spying on Rebiya Kadeer in Fairfax County. Her three kids have been arrested. She's a Muslim. Her three kids have been arrested. So I just see, and I want to thank Mr. SMITH for doing this, but frankly, for the Congress just to grant MFN to this fundamentally evil government, and for us to just sort of move on and just kind of not care anymore, it just is really troubling. When we fail to speak out for the least, we fundamentally fail to speak out for everyone. And so let me just say, I didn't know this was coming up, and I just caught it and came over here. I want to thank Mr. SMITH for his faithfulness in being involved. And frankly, any Member that voted to give these guys PNTR, on both sides of the aisle, man, you've got a great responsibility now to really do something on these people. These are dissidents that are in jail. They are being suffered.

And frankly, I end by saying we ought to do more the way that Ronald Reagan did in the 1980s. Speak out on human rights, religious freedom and those values. And with that, you ought to call a roll call vote on this because, frankly, this government is so dense that if they see a voice vote they won't even think it it's important. There ought to be a roll call vote so we can send a message on behalf of Father Ly, a Catholic bishop, a Catholic priest who's done nothing, and all these other people. And frankly, this ambassador ought to be shown the door. And we ought to put somebody in who represents the values of this country. Quite frankly, it ought to be a Vietnamese American who can go over there and advocate on behalf of those who are being persecuted.

DEAR SECRETARY RICE: I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the worsening human rights situation in Vietnam in recent months. After joining the World Trade Organization in January 2007, the politburo of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) has carried out a large-scale brutal campaign of arrest against the nascent movement for democracy in Vietnam. Ignoring all international criticism and strenuous protests of the Vietnamese people, inside Vietnam and abroad, the communist regime in Hanoi has shamefully pushed ahead with its crackdown. The following events were particularly disconcerting to me:

On February 18, 2007, the second day of the Lunar New Year, which is the most sacred time in Vietnamese culture, the communist security forces raided Father Nguyen Van Ly's office within the Communal Residence of the Hue Archdiocese. Father Ly was later banished to a remote, secluded area in Hue.

On March 5, 2007, security forces in Saigon told Mrs. Bui Ngoc Yen that they had an order to arrest her husband, Professor Nguyen Chinh Kiet, who is a leading member of the Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights in Vietnam. Professor Kiet was in Europe at the time campaigning for democracy and human rights in Vietnam.

On March 8, 2007, Reverend Nguyen Cong Chinch and his wife were brutally assaulted by security forces of Gia Lai Province in the Central Highlands, who then arrested Reverend Chinch on undisclosed charges.

Also on March 8, 2007, two prominent human rights activists and lawyers, Mr. Nguyen Van Dai and Ms. Le Thi Cong Nhan,

were arrested in Hanoi and were told that they would be detained for four months as part of an undisclosed investigation.

On March 9, 2007, Mr. Tran Van Hoa, a member of the People's Democracy Party in Quang Ninh Province, and Mr. Pham Van Troi, a member of the Committee for Human Rights in Ha Tay, were summoned by security forces and threatened with "immeasurable consequences" if they do not stop their advocacy for human rights in Vietnam.

On March 10, 2007, Do Nam Hai, an engineer writing under the pen name Phuong Nam and one of the leading members of the Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights in Vietnam, was told by security forces that he could be indicted at any time for activity against the State.

Also on March 10, 2007, state security forces also raided the home of Ms. Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, a writer, on the grounds that she advocated for "people with grievances" against the government. They took away two computers, two cell phones, and hundreds of appeals that she had prepared for victims of the government's abuses.

March 12, 2007, lawyer Le Quoc Quan, a consultant on local governance for the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and Swedish International Development Agency, was arrested in his hometown, Nghe An, less than a week after he returned from a fellowship at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. His whereabouts are unknown at this time.

On April 5, 2007, the Vietnamese authorities in Hanoi rudely prevented Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) from meeting with several dissidents' wives at a gathering organized at the U.S. Ambassador's home. The police reportedly used very hostile and undignified manners to intervene in the meeting.

Furthermore, the Hanoi communist regime is still imprisoning many political dissidents and labor advocates such as Nguyen Vu Binh, Huynh Nguyen Dao, Truong Quoc Huy, Nguyen Hoang Long, Nguyen Tan Hoanh, Doan Huy Chuong, the religious leaders of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, Cao Dai, Hoa Hoa, and more than 350 lay people of the Protestant churches in the Central Highland.

The Vietnamese-Americans in my district, as well as all across the country, are very angered and distressed by what they perceive as a new and aggressive plan of the Hanoi government to reverse the progress of human rights in Vietnam. They believe that Ambassador Marine and his staff are not doing enough to stop these blatant violations of human rights.

It seems to me that the Vietnamese government is conducting this crackdown on advocates of human rights and religious freedom because it believes that the U.S. has no further leverage in the region. Now that Vietnam has been admitted to the WTO, and met with the Holy See, they believe they can respond in this brutal fashion to supporters of democracy and freedom and we will not respond.

I hope that you will make clear to the Vietnamese authorities that we will not stand by while this violence and intimidation continues. I believe the State Department should consider putting Vietnam back on the list of Countries of Particular Concern, and perhaps also consider canceling the planned visit of the Vietnamese president and prime minister later this year if the human rights situation in Vietnam has not improved.

I appreciate the recent comments by Sean McCormack at Voice of America expressing deep concern about the March 30 trial and sentencing of Father Ly. I ask that you continue pressing these issues with the Vietnamese government, including the need to

respect the basic human rights of all Vietnamese citizens, especially the freedom of information, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion. The Vietnamese people should be able to choose their own leaders through free and fair elections and to use the Internet freely without any censures or restrictions.

I also ask that you encourage the Vietnamese authorities to release all political prisoners and religious leaders who are currently imprisoned because of their peaceful expression of their ideas or to fight for their religious beliefs. Among these prisoners are Father Nguyen Van Ly, Pastors Nguyen Cong Chinh and Hong Trung, lawyers Nguyen Van Dai, Le thi Cong Nhan, Le Quoc Quan, Messieurs Truong Quoc Huy, and Nguyen Hoang Lon.

Lastly, I believe the Vietnamese-American community, a young but energetic group comprised of more than one million citizens, should be included in future dialogues with U.S. government officials. They know the history, culture and values of Vietnam. They also have scrutinized the history and tactics of communism and the communist government's habits at the negotiating table. I sincerely believe that the history of Vietnam must inform our approach to this and all other aspects of foreign policy, and the Vietnamese-American community is a tremendous asset in this regard. I respectfully request that you invite a small representation of the Vietnamese-American community to join the U.S. delegation in next month's human rights dialogue.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

[From washingtonpost.com, Apr. 26, 2007]

INHERITED PERSECUTION: CHINA IMPRISONS THE SON OF A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Last week China sentenced Ablikim Abdureyim to 9 years in prison. His crime? Having a human rights activist for a mother.

His mother, Rebiya Kadeer, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, had been warned. When she was released from her imprisonment in 2005 to the United States, she was told to keep quiet about China's treatment of Uighurs, a Turkic-language Muslim minority. Or else. Instead, for the past 2 years this former entrepreneur has been shouting from the rooftops about China's oppression of her people. She has talked to Congress, the European Parliament and anyone else who will listen about the forced abortions, the harassment and killings, the thousands of Uighurs imprisoned for supposed treason or "terrorism." She herself was imprisoned for 6 years for mailing publicly available newspaper articles to her husband in America, an act China deemed "endangering of state secrets." Right now the Chinese government can't get its hands on her, so it is going after her children in China instead.

Ms. Kadeer's sons Alim and Kahar Abdureyim were convicted last fall of "tax evasion," which she says they confessed to after being tortured. Ablikim Abdureyim, the son sentenced last week, was officially convicted in January of "instigating and engaging in secessionist activities." According to the state-run news agency Xinhua, these "secessionist activities" chiefly consisted of asking Yahoo's "Uighur-language webmaster" to post articles on its site—a peculiar allegation considering that Yahoo has neither a Uighur-language webmaster nor a Uighur-language site.

The Chinese Embassy claims that Ablikim Abdureyim's "legal rights were protected during the trial" and that the trial was open to the public. But his family says that he

was denied a lawyer (against Chinese law) as well as any contact with his family since his arrest last August. His family was not even notified about his trial; relatives officially learned of it only when Xinhua ran an article about his conviction nearly 3 months after the fact. If, despite the evidence, China still wants to claim that Mr. Abdureyim's trial was "open" and fair, fine: Let it prove it by giving him an open and fair appeal.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I just yield myself 2 final minutes to close.

First of all, let me thank Mr. WOLF, Chairman WOLF for his very eloquent and passionate statement. And I think by injecting China into this debate as well, there is a modus operandi by both of those countries to talk a good game about human rights while doing absolutely nothing, as a matter of fact, by doing just the opposite. It is doublespeak. It is Orwellian, and unfortunately, it is what is happening on the ground today.

Let me also say that when I visited dissidents, several of whom were under house arrest in Ho Chi Min City, Hue and Hanoi, I was struck by the heart breaking vulnerability of those individuals and their families, because the secret police don't just go after the individual. They target their families, their kids, their brothers their sisters-in-law, their nephews and nieces. It is widespread. The bullies inflict maximum, they being the communist regime, maximum pain on the individual and his or her family.

I'll give you an example of just how it works. One of the individuals who downloaded "What is Democracy" from the Internet, which was on the U.S. embassy Web site, translated and then resent it out, got 5 years in prison. He was recently let out. But his wife Vu, who I met in a Hanoi restaurant with at least three bully boys sitting about 5-10 feet away taking her picture, from the secret police, told me again and again how fearful she was that she would be targeted—and hit. She rides a motor bike; she feared that they would run her down. Modus operandi, again, of the secret police.

□ 1630

Sure enough, just a few weeks ago, she was hit on the road by the police. Would you say that was an accident? If you think that is an accident, I will sell you the Brooklyn Bridge.

Mr. Speaker, human rights abuse is getting worse in Vietnam. It is widespread. It is pervasive. And it has got to be stopped. We need to speak out with one voice. The administration needs to speak out with one voice.

This resolution has a number of action clauses in it. I hope it is taken seriously both in Hanoi as well as down at Foggy Bottom.

We need to help those suffering individuals. We are their last best hope. Let's work for them because they deserve our—and Vietnam's—respect and protection.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from New Jersey for the time.

I rise in support of Mr. SMITH's resolution.

I was listening to another dear friend whom I greatly admire, Mr. WOLF, and I want to thank once again Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and Mr. WOLF of Virginia for consistently being the voices for the oppressed throughout the world.

Martin Luther King said, "An injustice anywhere is an affront to justice everywhere." And that is what this resolution is about. The men and women who are languishing in the prisons in Vietnam, those being tortured, the people being tortured because of their religious beliefs, because of their views on issues, because of their political aspirations for democracy, they are being tortured systematically; and that regime needs to be condemned not only by history but by the Congress of the United States. And that is why I support so strongly this resolution by Mr. SMITH.

And it is appropriate, as Mr. WOLF did, to bring out the torture also being committed by the regime in China, mainland China. That is also a fascist communist regime. These regimes continue to be communist, but by opening the economy, they manage to get massive investments from Big Business throughout the world.

And I heard Mr. WOLF talk about how now Mr. Spielberg apparently is lobbying for the Chinese communist regime. It doesn't surprise me, after having met for hours with Fidel Castro and having said that that was one of the greatest experiences of his life, comparable to the birth of his child. So it doesn't surprise me.

It doesn't surprise me about Big Business going into Vietnam and China and getting profits from the exploitation of the workers by the communist regimes.

So I want to simply thank the gentleman for the time, and I am in strong support of this resolution. It is consistent with the best traditions of the Congress of the United States.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with our colleagues a letter I recently sent to Secretary Rice regarding the recent crackdown on advocates of human rights and religious freedom in Vietnam. Even now, Vietnamese authorities are continuing to harass these activists, including by blocking our ambassador's meetings with the wives of detained dissidents. We must speak out against this repression.

DEAR SECRETARY RICE: I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the worsening human rights situation in Vietnam in recent months. After joining the World Trade Organization in January 2007, the politburo of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) has carried out a large-scale brutal campaign of arrest against the nascent movement for democracy in Vietnam. Ignoring all international criticism and strenuous protests of the Vietnamese people, inside Vietnam and abroad, the communist regime in Hanoi has shamefully pushed ahead with its crackdown. The following events were particularly disconcerting to me.

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dom because it believes that the U.S. has no further leverage in the region. Now that Vietnam has been admitted to the WTO, and met with the Holy See, they believe they can respond in this brutal fashion to supporters of democracy and freedom and we will not respond.

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I appreciate the recent comments by Sean McCormack at Voice of America expressing deep concern about the March 30 trial and sentencing of Father Ly. I ask that you continue pressing these issues with the Vietnamese government, including the need to respect the basic human rights of all Vietnamese citizens, especially the freedom of information, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion. The Vietnamese people should be able to choose their own leaders through free and fair elections and to use the Internet freely without any censures or restrictions.

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Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the U.S.-Vietnam Caucus, dedicated to strengthening the bilateral relationship between the United States and Vietnam, I strongly support efforts to help Vietnam improve its human rights record and I support this resolution. Nothing would do more for this important relationship that continued steps by Vietnam towards respect for free speech, human rights, religious freedom and democratization. I have raised this issue at the highest levels of Vietnam's government and continue to do so at every opportunity.

However, given that Vietnam has made significant progress over the last decade, I wish that we could have passed the version as introduced, which focuses on the steps Vietnam needs to take, rather than this Committee-passed version which now includes unhelpful language about placing certain sanctions and restrictions on the U.S.-Vietnam relationship. I

continue to believe that the path of engagement and honest dialogue will be a more fruitful avenue for the advancement of human rights and democracy in Vietnam.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 243, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CINCO DE MAYO

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 347) recognizing the historical significance of the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 347

Whereas May 5, or Cinco de Mayo in Spanish, is celebrated each year as a date of great importance by the Mexican and Mexican-American communities;

Whereas the Cinco de Mayo holiday commemorates May 5, 1862, the date on which the Battle of Puebla was fought by Mexicans who were struggling for their independence and freedom;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo has become one of Mexico's most famous national holidays and is celebrated annually by nearly all Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, north and south of the United States-Mexico border;

Whereas the Battle of Puebla was but one of the many battles that the courageous Mexican people won in their long and brave struggle for independence and freedom;

Whereas the French, confident that their battle-seasoned troops were far superior to the almost amateurish Mexican forces, expected little or no opposition from the Mexican army;

Whereas the French army, which had not experienced defeat against any of Europe's finest troops in over half a century, sustained a disastrous loss at the hands of an outnumbered, ill-equipped, and ragged, but highly spirited and courageous, Mexican force;

Whereas after three bloody assaults upon Puebla in which over a thousand gallant Frenchmen lost their lives, the French troops were finally defeated and driven back by the outnumbered Mexican troops;

Whereas the courageous and heroic spirit that Mexican General Zaragoza and his men displayed during this historic battle can never be forgotten;

Whereas many brave Mexicans willingly gave their lives for the causes of justice and freedom in the Battle of Puebla on Cinco de Mayo;

Whereas the sacrifice of the Mexican fighters was instrumental in keeping Mexico from falling under European domination;

Whereas the Cinco de Mayo holiday is not only the commemoration of the rout of the French troops at the town of Puebla in Mexico, but is also a celebration of the virtues of individual courage and patriotism of all Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who have fought for freedom and independence against foreign aggressors;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo serves as a reminder that the foundation of the United States is built by people from many nations and diverse cultures who are willing to fight and die for freedom;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo also serves as a reminder of the close spiritual and economic ties between the people of Mexico and the people of the United States, and is especially important for the people of the southwestern States where millions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans make their homes;

Whereas in a larger sense Cinco de Mayo symbolizes the right of a free people to self-determination, just as Benito Juarez once said, "El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz" ("The respect of other people's rights is peace"); and

Whereas many people celebrate during the entire week in which Cinco de Mayo falls: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes the historical struggle for independence and freedom of the Mexican people and requests the President to issue a proclamation recognizing that struggle and calling upon the people of the United States to observe Cinco de Mayo with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

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

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

I would like to begin by applauding the efforts and the leadership of the author of the resolution, Congressman JOE BACA, who is also the chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, the Cinco de Mayo holiday commemorates the May 5, 1862, victory of a vastly outnumbered Mexican Army under the command of General Ignacio Zaragoza over Napoleon III's regiments at the Battle of Puebla.

The triumph of the Mexican people over the French in this battle has come to symbolize the fight for freedom and justice. To most of us in the United States, this holiday is expressed through the enjoyment of Mexican and Mexican American culture, the food, the music, and the customs. This resolution encourages continuing those

celebrations, but it also reminds us that Cinco de Mayo is a tribute to the contributions that the Mexicans and Mexican Americans have made and continue to make across our Nation.

We take pride in these achievements and in the continuing dedication of thousands of Mexican American men and women in uniform.

Cinco de Mayo reminds us that the foundation of the United States is built by people from many nations and diverse cultures willing to fight and die to make ours a stronger and freer world.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to congratulate Mr. BACA, my good buddy, for sponsoring this resolution. And I want to say very briefly that our side supports moving forward with this resolution of the gentleman from California, which recognizes the historical significance of Cinco de Mayo.

Our good neighbors to the south, Mexico, and we here in the U.S.A. have many things and values in common, and we ought to celebrate and share them together, as this resolution does today. Cinco de Mayo is an important holiday celebrated to commemorate May 5, 1862, the date Mexicans fought the Battle of Puebla to end their struggle for independence and freedom.

So let us recognize the historic struggle for independence and freedom of the Mexican people as symbolized by this important holiday and celebrate and rejoice together the holiday of Cinco de Mayo.

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California's 43rd District, chairman of the Committee on Agriculture's Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry.

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleagues and my friend ALBIO SIRES for yielding me the time. I would also like to thank Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN and then, of course, my friend DAN BURTON and the leadership for their support and their effort in bringing this bipartisan resolution to the floor.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 347, a resolution honoring the significance and impact of Cinco de Mayo. This Resolution 347 recognizes the Cinco de Mayo holiday, which commemorates May 5, 1862, the date in which the Battle of Puebla was fought by Mexicans who were struggling for their independence and freedom.

While Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexican Army's victory over