

SUPPORT BAHAI'S IN IRAN

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday September 20, I introduced the "Baha'i Resolution" which condemns Iran's ongoing repression of its Baha'i community. American Baha'is, who reside in every congressional district, are deeply concerned for the fate of more than 300,000 co-religionists in Iran. The survival of the Baha'i community is threatened by the regime's denial of legal recognition and the basic rights to organize, elect community leaders, educate their youth and conduct the normal activities of a law-abiding community.

Since 1982, the U.S. Congress has adopted six resolutions expressing its concern for Iran's religious persecution of Baha'is. There is good evidence that these congressional resolutions, together with appeals by other nations and the United Nations have helped to persuade Iranian officials to moderate their actions against Baha'is. During the 1980's, more than 200 Baha'is were executed and thousands imprisoned solely on the account of their religious beliefs.

While it is encouraging that the Iranian Government has not continued its barbarous policy of executing people simply for their religious beliefs, the ongoing repression of the Baha'i community continues and must be changed. Baha'is are currently being held under sentence of death merely because of their religious beliefs. It is imperative that we keep pressure on the Iranian officials until Baha'i community is no longer threatened by this repressive government.

The following honorable Members of Congress have already co-sponsored this legislation: LANTOS, SMITH, HOYER, HAMILTON, HYDE, OBESTAR, MEEK, WILLIAMS, GEJDENSON, SCHIFF, NEY, KLUG, DURBAN, MORELLA, ROYBAL-ALLARD, KILDER, MILLER, PELOSI, SPRATT, SLAUGHTER, BATEMAN, MCKINNEY, ENGEL, ABERCROMBIE, and BROWN. I am inserting into the record a copy of the resolution, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

H. CON. RES. 102

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994 the Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all its nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith, Iran's largest religious minority;

Whereas the Congress has deplored the Government of Iran's religious persecution of the Baha'i community in such resolutions and in numerous other appeals, and has condemned Iran's execution of more than 200 Baha'is and the imprisonment of thousands of others solely on account of their religious beliefs;

Whereas the Government of Iran continues to deny individual Baha'is access to higher education and government employment and denies recognition and religious rights to the Baha'i community, according to the policy set forth in a confidential Iranian Government document which was revealed by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1993;

Whereas all Baha'i community properties in Iran have been confiscated by the government and Iranian Baha'is are not permitted to elect their leaders, organize as a commu-

nity, operate religious schools or conduct other religious community activities guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and

Whereas on February 22, 1993, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights published a formerly confidential Iranian Government document that constitutes a blueprint for the destruction of the Baha'i community and reveals that these repressive actions are the result of a deliberate policy designed and approved by the highest officials of the Government of Iran: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) continues to hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all its nationals, including members of the Baha'i community, in a manner consistent with Iran's obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements guaranteeing the civil and political rights of its citizens;

(2) condemns the repressive anti-Baha'i policies and actions of the Government of Iran, including the denial of legal recognition to the Baha'i community and the basic rights to organize, elect its leaders, educate its youth, and conduct the normal activities of a law-abiding religious community;

(3) expresses concern that individual Baha'is continue to suffer from severely repressive and discriminatory government actions, solely on account of their religion;

(4) urges the Government of Iran to extend to the Baha'i community the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants of human rights, including the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and equal protection of the law; and

(5) call upon the President to continue—
(A) to assert the United States Government's concern regarding Iran's violations of the rights of its citizens, including members of the Baha'i community, along with expressions of its concern regarding the Iranian Government's support for international terrorism and its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

(B) to emphasize that the United States regards the human rights practices of the Government of Iran, particularly its treatment of the Baha'i community and other religious minorities, as a significant factor in the development of the United States Government's relations with the Government of Iran;

(C) to urge the Government of Iran to emancipate the Baha'i community by granting those rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants on human rights; and

(D) to encourage other governments to continue to appeal to the Government of Iran, and to cooperate with other governments and international organizations, including the United Nations and its agencies, in efforts to protect the religious rights of the Baha'is and other minorities through joint appeals to the Government of Iran and through other appropriate actions.

A THOUGHTFUL PROPOSAL ON UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH IRAN

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, relations between the United States and Iran are and

have remained for the past 15 years at an all-time low. There are disturbing signs that Iran is seeking to develop a nuclear capacity, and clearly Iran has been an unstable influence throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. The United States has—wisely in my view—pursued a policy of seeking to isolate Iran and to limit economic, political, and diplomatic relations with the extremist Iranian Government. We have undertaken a major diplomatic effort to urge our allies in Western Europe and Japan to join us in economically isolating Iran in order to bring about democratic and rational change in Teheran.

Mr. Speaker, I have been among those who have called for strong sanctions against Iran. Earlier this year, I proposed, and my colleagues on the Committee on International Relations accepted, my amendment to the American Overseas Interests Act which would impose tough sanctions, including reduction of foreign assistance, against Russia if that country goes ahead with reported plans to sell advanced nuclear technology to Iran. I have also supported legislation to impose tougher sanctions against Iran and restrict the ability of international oil corporations to deal with the Iranian companies and the Government of Iran.

The position I have taken on these issues involving Iran are taken because of my serious concern with the policies pursued by the Government of Iran, and not from any sense of irreconcilable problems with Iran. There are possibilities for change in Iran—for the evolution of government institutions that will allow the people of Iran to express their wishes through an open and free and democratic process and there are possibilities that will permit the people of Iran to enjoy the full spectrum of human and civil rights to which they are entitled. I would welcome the end of radical Islamic extremism in Iran and rejoice if we could witness the return to serious and responsible participation of Iran in the international community. The positions I have taken on U.S. policies toward Iran are motivated by that desire.

Mr. Speaker, last summer, the Washington Post, July 9, 1995, published an analysis and a thoughtful, but iconoclastic, proposal about the steps that might be taken by the United States in an effort to produce the domestic changes in Iran that will make it possible to bring an end to U.S.—Iranian hostility. I am not certain that this proposal will achieve its objectives, but it has been put forward by a gentleman whose experience, insight, and thoughtfulness I admire greatly. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I ask that this article—"Beyond the Great Satan How the U.S. and Iran Can Mend Their Rift"—be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give it careful and thoughtful consideration.

This excellent article was written by Mr. Hushang Ansary. Mr. Ansary has an extremely distinguished record in business, government service, and diplomacy. He is an international entrepreneur with business interests in the United States, Europe, and the Pacific rim. He worked his way through high school serving as a correspondent for the International News Service and the King Features Syndicate. He later earned a Ph.D. in Economics and International Relations from the University of Seoul, South Korea. After World War II, Mr. Ansary worked in Japan, initially as a business

consultant to Mitsubishi, Japan's largest trading company. In his native Iran under the previous government, Mr. Ansary served as Deputy Minister of Commerce, Minister of Information, Minister of Economics and Finance, and chairman and CEO of the National Iranian Oil Co., which at the time he served as chairman had after-tax earnings of \$18.2 billion. In the diplomatic realm, he served as Iran's roving Ambassador to Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast, and he was also Ambassador to the United States, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the Congress, as well as the leaders of the administration, to read and thoughtfully consider Mr. Ansary's well-reasoned arguments.

BEYOND THE GREAT SATAN

(By Hushang Ansary)

The Clinton administration has taken a series of steps to further isolate Iran and tighten the economic sanctions that could throttle its economy. If successful, these new U.S. initiatives against the Islamic Republic are likely to have a far-reaching impact on the course of events in a region that supplies much of the West's oil needs.

At the same time, U.S. failure to win strong international backing for its containment policy would allow Iran to continue its pursuit of a nuclear development program, one that continues to raise questions.

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has retorted that the United States will be the ultimate loser. And so far, America's European allies and Japan have not been supportive.

The latest move to raise the stakes in a decade and a half of hostility between the United States and Iran is no surprise. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has called Iran an outlaw state. President Clinton has used his executive authority to nullify an agreement between Iran and Conoco. A more alarming hint was dropped in February by Gen. Binford Peay, commander of the U.S. Forces in the Middle East, that the two countries might even become involved in military conflict.

By the time the last of the American hostages returned home from Tehran just over 15 years ago, even the most optimistic knew that the historic friendship between the United States and Iran had suffered a terrible setback. Successive U.S. administrations have pursued policies of accommodation, military pressure and sanctions against Iran. Some of these policies have backfired, as in the case of the Iran-contra affair. Some have inadvertently provided trading opportunities for others. By and large, this potpourri of U.S. measures has not altered the fundamental positions of Iran.

These measures have, however, helped to push Iran toward international isolation and accelerated the pace of its mostly self-inflicted social and economic ills. Even a policy of critical cooperation, advocated by Germany with French support, has not had the desired effect.

Now that the Clinton administration and the new Republican majority in Congress appear to agree on placing Iran high on the agenda of U.S. foreign policy, is it not time to address the Iranian dilemma at its roots? The United States may hold to its current course of isolating Iran, but it has to reckon with all the international forces at work on this issue. Russian and Chinese nuclear agreements, and German and Japanese debt refinancing, give evidence of the fragility of the administration's approach.

This appears to be a propitious time for a different approach and it is, therefore, worth considering how relations between the Unit-

ed States and Iran might be set on a new course.

Iran is now facing mass unemployment, double-digit inflation, falling productivity and massive foreign debt. The value of the Iranian currency, the rial, dropped from 75 to the dollar in 1977 to 6,000 at one point. Iran's GNP per capita is now less than half its 1977 level.

Iran is also feeling the weight of diplomatic isolation. Sixteen years after the revolution, the only Western head of state to have paid a visit to Tehran is Kurt Waldheim, the former Austrian-president.

Economic and governmental disorder have unleashed political forces beyond the control of the radical clergy. In recent months, Iran has faced a number of industrial strikes and anti-government demonstrations. Important social groups, including lawyers, doctors, bazaar merchants, retired military officers, writers and journalists, having publicly challenged the government and its policies.

Even the Shiite Muslim clergy, initially the backbone of the revolutionary regime, has asserted its independence. Some senior ayatollahs have said publicly that they would support new policy makers and policies capable of turning the economy around and ending the nation's diplomatic isolation.

The constant theme of these dissenting voices is a call for a new political course, one freely chosen by the Iranian people. As the level of dissent rises, there is reason to believe that even some of the more extreme elements of the regime, their customary rhetoric notwithstanding, may now be inclined to consider a plan that would address the country's economic disorder and diplomatic isolation. General elections are scheduled in 1996 and presidential elections in 1997. A workable plan, properly monitored and performance-related, could have a positive effect on these two crucial events.

Such a plan should let the people of Iran normalize the state of the nation. At home, it should aim for democracy, respect for human rights and an agreeable quality of life. Abroad, it would need to restore the image of Iran as a responsible member of the United Nations, ready to live in peace with all other nations.

In the first phase of such a plan, Iran would have to take appropriate steps, in keeping with its constitution, to dismantle the bureaucracy it created to cope with the problems of the early years of the Islamic revolution. These steps should include the rehabilitation of those unjustly deprived of their civil rights on the basis of their political beliefs, the repeal of laws and regulations that discriminate on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity and faith, and the removal of restrictions, often unconstitutional, on freedom of expression, association and election.

The normalization of political life in Iran would facilitate the no less complex task of bringing the country's foreign policy into line with its international obligations. This would, of necessity, include measures to dispel any notion that Iran supports international terrorism and the assassination of dissidents abroad. Iran would also need to cease its campaign against the Middle East peace process, adhere to the now renewed version of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and take steps to make credible its announced decision not to acquire nuclear weapons.

Iran could also facilitate visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross to prisons where it is alleged that prisoners of conscience and members of religious and ethnic minorities are being held, often without charges being filed. It should allow international human rights organizations access to its officials and open itself to the international media in the normal manner.

Linking its response to Iranian performance, the United States would need to give evidence of its own willingness to make positive contributions. First steps would include establishing a timetable for the final settlement of all outstanding claims between the two countries and for the release of the remaining Iranian assets, setting up a procedure in which sanctions against Iran would be lifted in stages and normalizing visa requirements for Iranian nationals visiting the United States.

The United States could encourage the formation of a Council on Trade and Economic Cooperation with Iran with the participation of the leaders of the U.S. business community. The United States might also form an appropriate body to advise on various aspects of U.S. Iranian relations. While policies are obviously formulated by governments, this could help mobilize private resources in the service of the new set of foreign policy objectives as containment gives way to rapprochement.

In the next phase, Iran would resume its quest for democracy that started almost 100 years ago. The Iranian people would be given the opportunity to return to the electoral process and the organization of presidential and parliamentary elections in line with the provisions of Iran's constitution. These elections should be open to political parties of all denominations and conducted in a verifiably fair fashion.

The last phase of the plan would thus begin in an atmosphere of stability, without which all attempts at reviving Iran's economy through domestic and international cooperation will remain tentative and fragile. At this point, the Council on Trade and Economic Cooperation with Iran, having completed its initial studies, would be in a position to sponsor a series of conferences designed to help Iran reintegrate into the world-economy and to realize its economic potential, estimated to reach \$100 billion in annual trade and economic opportunities.

The stage could thus be set for the Middle East to open a chapter in regional economic cooperation—possibly including Central Asia, which hungers for peace and development—an enterprise that could foster opportunities not dissimilar to those in the Pacific Rim nations. Moderate Arab nations too would be helped to accelerate the pace of their social and economic transformation, and the way would be paved for a more constructive relationship between the West and the world of Islam as a whole.

Is this farfetched? It is no more farfetched than the thought of a visit to Jerusalem by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War or the thought in the mid-1980s that the Berlin Wall could be brought down before the end of the decade. The Middle East has always dealt with logjams that block the normal course of its politics through courageous steps that have defied conventional wisdom. History belongs to those who do not merely contemplate the sour aspects of present reality, but labor with persistence to give birth to new possibilities of hope.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY ACT

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, it is now crystal clear: when it comes to cutting corporate welfare the Republican majority in charge of

the 104th Congress does not get it. They are determined to balance the Federal budget during the next 7 years on the backs of the most vulnerable Americans—our Nation's sick, elderly, and children.

Corporate welfare programs in the Federal budget add as much as \$125 billion to the Federal deficit every year.

But Speaker Gingrich and the Republican budget that will be probably be approved by the Republican majorities in the House and Senate cut virtually nothing from corporate welfare over the next 7 years. Instead, they prefer to slash Federal funding for programs for millions of Americans who are struggling to provide for themselves and their families and for some measure of economic security.

Like many Americans, the members of the Progressive Caucus ask this fundamental question: Why won't the Republican majority cut the immense corporate welfare benefits provided every year by the Federal Government to very profitable corporations and wealthy Americans as an essential component of any fair plan to balance the Federal budget during the next 7 years?

This is very unfair. There is a better way. That is why today several members of the 49-member Progressive Caucus and myself introduced legislation to cut \$800 billion in corporate welfare over the next 7 years. We call our legislation the Corporate Responsibility Act and it represents one of the foundations of the 11-part Progressive Caucus Alternative to the Contract With America and the rest of the GOP agenda in the 104th Congress.

We have identified dozens of tax breaks, subsidies, and other Federal benefits for corporations and upper-income taxpayers which should be considered for cutting or elimination. These cuts would save \$570.8 billion over a 5-year period according to estimates by respected economists such as the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Tax Committee of the Congress.

Some of these programs are outright subsidies, such as for Export-Import Bank loans. Others are indirect subsidies through charging less than market rates or nothing at all for goods and services sold to corporations—e.g., uranium enrichment, irrigation water, use of public land for grazing. Still others are indirect subsidies through government Purchases for unnecessary programs, such as the strategic petroleum reserve or the space station.

Tax expenditures are special provisions of the Tax Code which reduce rates, increased deductions, provide advantageous depreciation, or otherwise reduce the taxes corporations and wealthy individuals pay.

A number of reports have been issued on the subject of corporate welfare in recent months, and we have used data from all of them. However, every selection of programs that can be cut involves choices, and the principles that guided our selection should be made clear. In general, we have chosen to favor: Family farms over agribusiness; small businesses over multinational corporations; domestic investment and job creation as opposed to offshore production; consumer health and safety over short-term profitability; and sustainable economic development over environmental exploitation.

We have emphasized supporting the needs of the average working people of America and cutting programs in which taxpayers' money is used to help companies and wealthy individuals who can, and should, be self-sufficient.

A summary of this 80-page bill is available through my office. In it, the corporate welfare programs re grouped by the industries which benefit from them and are listed with estimates of their cost over a 5-year budget period based on the sources cited at the end of the summary. Projections were then estimated for an additional 2-year period to have some rough frame of reference for different approaches to balancing the Federal budget over the next 7 years.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR.
CHARLES PATTERSON

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give special tribute to my constituent and dear friend, Dr. Charles Patterson, superintendent of the Killeen Independent School District, Killeen, TX. Dr. Patterson has been named Superintendent of the Year for the State of Texas by the Texas Association of School Boards.

Dr. Patterson has a distinguished list of accomplishments. A past-president of both the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented and the Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, he currently serves as president of the American Society for Curriculum Development and as a board member of both the Military Impacted Schools Association and the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools. In these capacities, he is widely known and respected as a champion for impact aid and as someone who cares about studying and expanding curriculum development.

Dr. Patterson has also distinguished himself in civic service to his community. He is a deacon and Sunday school teacher at the First Baptist Church of Killeen, a past-president of the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Killeen Exchange Club. He is a fine example of someone who is devoted to serving his community and Nation. I extend my sincere appreciation and congratulations for his dedication to excellence and his commitment to guide the future of our youth toward a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, my admiration for Dr. Patterson and my appreciation for his leadership and commitment runs deep. That is why I urge my colleagues to join me today in recognizing and honoring a true gentleman for his contribution to the school children of central Texas and of our Nation.

THE WIPE OUT OF THE CRA IS A
BAD INVESTMENT

HON. HENRY B. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am compelled to comment on some of the provisions in this ill-conceived bill that embody recommendations of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT

The bill before us contains a gratuitous and needless attack on the Community Reinvestment Act [CRA]. Without directly repealing the CRA, the bill nonetheless wipes out the CRA. It is clear that the less than \$30 million in savings achieved by these amendments to the CRA is not the reason, they were contained in the Banking Committee's recommendations—In fact, the committee exceeded its budget targets by billions of dollars. The amendments' inclusion in the reconciliation package was part of a failed scheme by the chairman to free another, wholly unrelated piece of legislation from these gutting amendments because they were sure to incur a veto.

The CRA is a law that simply requires regulated financial institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities they are chartered to serve, including low- and moderate-income communities. It is reported that this law has resulted in the infusion of \$60 billion into credit-starved communities across our Nation.

As a result of complaints from the banking industry about the burden of demonstrating compliance with the CRA, President Clinton ordered the regulators to revise CRA regulations, with an emphasis on performance over paperwork. After a nearly 2 year effort by the Federal Reserve Board, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Office of Thrift Supervision the regulations have been issued and have just gone into effect. Each of these regulators have objected to the committee's action to destroy the CRA. Clearly, we should give these regulations a chance to work before we reevaluate the CRA.

Most importantly, at a time when this Congress is slashing the funding that has assisted low- and moderate-income Americans, it is critical that we save a tried-and-true program that relies on private dollars. To do otherwise would be tragic for communities across this country. Moreover, to dismantle the CRA under the ruse that it is a necessary measure to save money is simply shameful.

HOUSING PROVISIONS

The lion's share of the committee's savings comes from affordable housing programs in the Republican majority's relentless political pursuit of savings at the expense of our Nation's low-income families.

The bill before us gratuitously wipes out the Resolution Trust Corporation [RTC] Affordable Housing Programs for a paltry \$31 million savings—again a savings that is completely unnecessary to meet the targets of the Banking Committee for budget reconciliation. This home ownership program has been a real success story for the RTC. More than 104,000 dwellings have been sold at a value of \$1.5 billion under the RTC Affordable Housing Program, providing shelter to hard-pressed working families of modest means. Although the RTC shuts down after this year, there will still be properties to dispose of after December 31. Once the RTC is shut down, these properties and the Affordable Housing Program will be transferred to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. To wipe out this program will have serious consequences for low-income family home ownership opportunities far beyond the meager savings gained, particularly as direct Federal spending for affordable housing dwindles.

The bill also will permit HUD to sell all HUD-owned multifamily property without providing