the attention of the chairman and he dismissed that.

About 5 months ago, we had a vote to immunize six witnesses before the committee. At that time we were assured that they would offer testimony that was necessary to the committee. In fact, that immunization of those witnesses allowed an individual to escape prosecution by getting immunity from that committee

ROLE OF PAKISTAN IN THE TRANSFER AND PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to stress my concern this evening over the continued role of Pakistan in the transfer and proliferation of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

Last month, the U.S. State Department determined that sanctions should be imposed on Pakistan pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, and this decision comes in the wake of a determination that entities in Pakistan and North Korea have engaged in missile technology proliferation activities.

According to the notice published in the Federal Register on May 4 of this year, Khan Research Laboratories in Pakistan and the North Korean Mining Development Trading Corporation are subject to sanctions, including denial of export licenses, a ban on U.S. Government contracts with these entities, and a ban on importation to the U.S. of products produced by these two entities. The sanctions are in effect for 2 years.

Now, although these sanctions seem relatively modest, I still want to applaud the Clinton administration for imposing the sanctions on these companies. I hope that enforcement efforts against these and other firms involved in the proliferation of missile technology will remain strong.

As if this recent disclosure, though, about Pakistani nuclear missile technology with North Korea was not shocking enough, there are reports this week that the International Atomic Energy Agency, or the IAEA, is investigating whether a leading Pakistani scientist offered Iraq plans for nuclear weapons. The information, first reported in Newsweek Magazine, has been confirmed by the IAEA. According to the report, in October of 1990, prior to the Persian Gulf War, but after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, while our troops were massing in Saudi Arabia under Operation Dessert Shield, a memorandum from Iraqi's intelligence service to its nuclear weapons directorate mentioned that Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist, offered help to Iraq to ''manufacture a nuclear weapon.'' The document was among those turned over by Iraq after the 1995 defection of Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Lieutenant General Hussein Kamel, who ran Iraq's secret weapons program.

The Pakistani Government has denied the report and the IAEA has not yet made any determination, but this report is part of a very troubling pattern involving Pakistan in efforts to obtain nuclear weapons and delivery systems or to share this technology with unstable regimes.

Recently, Pakistan tested a new missile known as the Ghauri, a missile with a range of 950 miles, sufficient to pose significant security threats to India and to launch a new round in the south Asian arms race. I am pleased that the recently elected Government of India has demonstrated considerable restraint in light of this threatening new development.

While I welcome the sanctions against North Korea, I remain very concerned that China is also known to have transferred nuclear technology to Pakistan. Our administration has certified that it will allow transfers of nuclear technology to China, a move I continue to strongly oppose.

Mr. Speaker, for years many of our top diplomatic and national security officials have advocated a policy of appeasement of Pakistan, citing that country's strategic location. But I think the time has long since passed for us to reassess our relationship with Pakistan. The two developments I cite today are only the latest developments. North Korea, the last bastion of Stalinism, is also one of the most potentially dangerous nations on Earth and the U.S. has been trying to pursue policies to lessen the threat of nuclear proliferation from North Korea, but now we see that Pakistan is cooperating with North Korea on missile technology.

Mr. Speaker, we do not need to be reminded of American concerns over Saddam's regime in Iraq. Now credible reports have surfaced suggesting the possibility of nuclear cooperation between Iraq and a top Pakistani scientist. Concerns about Pakistani nuclear weapons proliferation efforts have been a concern for U.S. policymakers for more than a decade. In 1985 the Congress amended the Foreign Assistance Act to prohibit all U.S. aid to Pakistan if the President failed to certify that Pakistan did not have nuclear explosive devices.

□ 2330

This is known as the Pressler amendment. And it was invoked in 1990 by President Bush when it became impossible to make such a certification. The law has been in force since, but we have seen ongoing efforts to weaken the Pressler amendment, including a provision in the fiscal year 1998 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill that carves out certain exemptions to the law.

Several years ago, $370 million worth of U.S. conventional weapons to Pakistan, which had been tied up in the pipeline since the Pressler amendment was invoked, was shipped to Pakistan. There is also the specter of U.S. F–16s, the delivery of which were also held up by the Pressler amendment, being delivered to Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to say that Pakistan has continued to take actions that destabilize the region and the world. Providing and obtaining weapons and nuclear technology from authoritarian, often unstable regimes, is a pattern of Pakistani policy that is unacceptable to U.S. interests and the goal of stability in Asia.

Pakistan is a country that faces severe development problems and really they should not be involved in this continued proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Its people would be much better served if their leaders focused on growing the economy, promoting trade and investment and fostering democracy. U.S. policy needs to be much stronger in terms of discouraging the continued trend toward destabilization and weapons proliferation that the Pakistani government continues to engage in.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE BURTON COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. BARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, the hour is late. There has been much fanfare this week in Washington over the Burton committee, and the actions that were taken by the chairman of that committee. I just want to reflect on those actions and reflect on that committee which I have served on for the last 5½ years.

My first two years, I served under the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), who is here with us tonight and who has spoken about this issue earlier. For two years Mr. CLINGER headed the committee and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) has headed this committee for the last year and a half.

Earlier this week and late last week there was much criticism of the 19 Democrats on that committee who had voted against immunity. I was one of those Democrats and I am 100 percent comfortable with my vote. There are many times when it is difficult when legislators have to think about whether they are doing the right thing or the wrong thing, and believe it or not, legislators sometimes actually think about this and they are concerned about whether they are doing the right thing or the wrong thing.

I am very confident that what we did on that committee was the right thing to do. And I just want to take a minute to explain the concerns that I and other Members of that committee have had.

First, I have to go back a year and a half when the committee was formed and started this investigation. We argued that there were problems, and that there are problems, but those

problems did not occur exclusively on the Democratic side of the aisle and if we were going to have a true investigation, it should be an investigation in the fund-raising practices of both the Democrats and the Republicans.

We were realistic because we realized that the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), who had a reputation of being highly partisan, would not go along with that. And we recognized that he was the man who held the gavel and that he could do what he wanted, so we had to live with that. And I understand that and I accept that.

But I expected and I think that the other committee members expected the one thing that is imperative for any committee chairman in this building, and that is that the person is fair. And that is where this committee has failed miserably because I do not think that the chairman or the committee have run a fair investigation.

We have had other complaints over the last year and a half, but time and time again the chairman said, well, this is the way that I am going to run the committee, and basically squashed the complaints of the minority. Again, we lived with that because we understand the rules.

But it was two weeks ago when the chairman made a statement in his home town that was the straw that broke this camel's back, because he used a phrase in describing the President that I frankly am not comfortable in mentioning in public. And he said, ''That is why I am out to get the President.''

Now, when someone is a member of the committee and walks into that committee room and knows that the chairman's goal is to get the President, they lose all belief in the system that he is running because he has basically publicly said that he is not interested in running an investigation to look for truth. What he is interested in is getting the President.

Back in October before he made those statements, I and every other Member of that committee, every other Democrat on that committee, had voted for immunity for several witnesses. As it turned out, one of those witnesses should not have received immunity because of other legal problems that he had. But we went along with the committee chairman because we felt that we had to be acting in good faith and we had to act fairly.

But when the committee chairman says that he is out to get the President, from the perspective of this Member all the credibility of that committee is gone. It is impossible for me to have confidence in this committee, when I know that the goal of this committee chairman is to get the President.

It is not an attempt to find the truth, it is not an attempt to be fair, it is not an attempt to listen to all Members, and I think what we have seen with some of the committee staff reflects that.

Last year one of the leading employees on that committee left because of the tactics of the committee. As was mentioned earlier, the head legal counsel of the committee earlier this week advised Chairman BURTON not to release the tapes, the Hubbell tapes and he did. I respect Mr. Bennett, who is the lead counsel, and I think he was trying to do the right thing.

But any doubts that anyone could have over whether we did the right thing in voting against immunity I think had to be really put to the side when we talk about the actions that took place this last weekend. When Chairman BURTON released portions of tapes and only those portions that tended to incriminate the President or tried to incriminate the President, but did not release portions of the tapes that would have showed the other side of the story, he showed not only to the committee members, not only to the members of this body, but he showed to the entire American public that this is not a search for the truth because if it were a search for the truth he would have released all relevant parts of those telephone conversations. He would not have excluded those portions of the conversations that tended to exonerate the President. But again that was not the purpose and that has never been the purpose of this committee, and that is why I feel comfortable with what we are doing.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THREATENED BY PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for half the time between now and midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to discuss an issue that is of critical importance to our Nation and to every American family. The issue is religious freedom. Specifically, I want to comment on Federal legislation that I believe will do great damage to our Bill of Rights and to the cause of religious liberty.

The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) has introduced a constitutional amendment that, if passed into law, would for the first time in our Nation's history amend our cherished Bill of Rights, which has for over 200 years protected Americans' religious, political and individual rights.

The House could vote on this amendment as early as next month. The gentleman from Oklahoma has mislabeled his work the Religious Freedom Amendment. More appropriately, it should be called the Religious Freedom Destruction Amendment.

That is why so many religious organizations such as the Baptist Joint Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the United Methodist Church are strongly opposing the Istook amendment. In fact, these and many other religious organizations and education groups, known as the Coalition to Preserve Religious Liberty, are opposing the Istook amendment because it will harm religious freedom in America.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the Istook amendment is the worst piece of legislation that I have seen in 15 years in public office. It is dangerous because it threatens our core religious rights and literally tears down its 200-year-old wall that our Founding Fathers built to protect religion from intrusion by government.

That is why I have been active and will continue to be active in the bipartisan coalition of House Members and religious leaders to defeat this ill-designed measure.

Mr. Speaker, the Istook amendment would allow satanic prayers, it would allow animal sacrifices to be performed in public schoolrooms, even in elementary schools with small children. It would step on the rights of religious minorities and allow government facilities to become billboards for religious cults.

Mr. Speaker, America already has a religious freedom amendment. It is called the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It is the first pillar of the Bill of Rights. It is the sacred foundation of all our freedoms.

The first amendment begins with these cherished words: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

For over two centuries that simple but profound statement has been the guardian of religious liberty, which is perhaps the greatest single contribution of the American experiment in democracy.

□ 1140

To tamper with the First Amendment of our Bill of Rights has profound implications. In the name of furthering religion, the Istook amendment would harm religion. In the name of protecting religious liberty, it would damage religious freedom.

With no disrespect intended, if I must choose between Madison, Jefferson, and our Founding Fathers versus the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) on the issue of protecting our religious liberty, I shall stand with Madison, with Jefferson, and our Founding Fathers. I shall stand in the defense of our Bill of Rights.

Mr. Speaker, if history has taught us nothing else, it has taught us that the best way to ruin religion is to politicize it. Our Founding Fathers did not mention God in our Constitution, not out of disrespect, but out of total reverence. It is that same sense of reverence that should move us in this House to protect the First Amendment, not dismantle it.

Some have suggested that the Istook amendment is necessary because they allege that ''God has been taken out of public places and schoolhouses.'' I