

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the distinguished chairman of our Rules Committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), who has been a long-standing champion of Korea, for his eloquent remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KIM).

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

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 459 commemorating 50 years of relations between the United States and the Republic of Korea and commemorating the Korean people for their steadfast commitment to democracy.

As you know, I was born in Korea while it was under occupation by the Japanese military in the late 1930s. I was a little boy in Seoul when the Republic of Korea gained its independence in 1948 and, like many, I witnessed communist invasion from the North in 1950 and the allies' successful liberation of Seoul for good in 1951.

To me personally, the United States has been Korea's strongest and most dependable ally over the last 50 years. From my earliest encounter with the U.S. during the war, I knew I wanted to be an American. Many others like me also came to America and added a special cultural and emotional tie between America and Korea.

Today, the Korean-American community is thriving and serves as a bridge between the U.S. and Korea. I am very proud of that.

The timing of this expression of support by the U.S. Congress for the Republic of Korea could not be better. The people of South Korea are struggling with an extraordinary economic crisis that has affected every segment of society, but they are doing so honorably and with a sense of purpose.

Much of the credit can be attributed to newly elected President Kim Dae-Jung, whose grasp of problems and understanding of what must be done gives me hope for the future of Korea. Implementation of needed reforms will be a painful process, but in the end, one that will result in a much stronger and more competitive Korea, a Korea whose citizens will be more prosperous and more secure in the knowledge that the economic system is a sound one.

However, sadly, the people of South Korea must also contend with an increasingly belligerent North Korea. The recent test firing of the Taepo Dong I missile over Japanese air space ushers in a new era of insecurity in an already unstable region. This overly hostile act has raised tensions considerably among our allies in the Far East. The Taepo Dong I missile was estimated to have a warhead capability of 3,000 pounds and could carry conventional weapons, or weapons of mass destruction.

As the economic meltdown in North Korea continues and the mass starvation being reported accelerates, the always unpredictable regime of Kim

Jong-il will become more desperate and more dangerous.

House Resolution 459 sends a strong signal to the government of North and South Korea, as well as to the 37,000 American troops stationed along the border, that the United States is unwavering in its support of South Korea.

House Resolution 459 is an important symbol recognizing the long and special relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea. This resolution serves as a valuable reminder of our genuine relationship and friendship, and I call on my colleagues to wholeheartedly support this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. KIM) for their eloquent statements. I would be remiss if I did not recognize the fact that many of our colleagues are Korean veterans or veterans of the Korean War, and probably more than anyone in this body would have a greater sense of sensitivity and understanding and appreciation of the sacrifices that our veterans made during the Korean War.

I remember a Chinese proverbial statement saying that there are many acquaintances, but very few friends. Mr. Speaker, I want to exemplify that statement with the fact that during the Vietnam War, as much as I can recall, our Korean friends were the only ones that committed forces sufficient enough to help us fight the Vietnam War. And I think this is truly a real tribute to the people and to the leaders of Korea where there are many acquaintances, but there are very few friends, and when the chips are down, Mr. Speaker, we really know who our real friends are. I want to pay this special tribute, not only to President Kim Dae-Jung, but also to the good people of Korea and to say again that the resolution really, really deserves their attention.

Again, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and I thank the gentleman from New York for his sponsorship of this resolution. Again, I hope that my colleagues will vote in favor of this resolution.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises in strong support of H. Res. 459, a resolution commemorating 50 years of relations between the United States and the Republic of Korea. H. Res. 459 was introduced by the distinguished gentleman from New York, the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations [Mr. GILMAN] on June 5th, and referred to the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific. The people of Korea have no better friend in the U.S. Congress than the gentleman from New York, and this Member commends the gentleman for his efforts to craft a strong bipartisan statement of support for U.S.-Korea relations. This Member is pleased to join his chairman in cosponsoring this important resolution.

Over the past fifty years America has maintained a strong, multifaceted relationship with

South Korea that includes a range of security, economic, and political issues. Throughout the Cold War, we have remained close allies and firm friends. The 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty is not only important to the security of South Korea but to the peace and stability of north-east Asia as well.

Despite the recent financial instability, South Korea's economy experienced remarkable growth since the end of the Korean War. Today the United States is South Korea's largest trading partner and largest export market. In turn, South Korea is America's seventh largest trading partner, fifth largest export market, and fourth largest market for U.S. agricultural products.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee with oversight responsibility over the Korean Peninsula, this Member has marveled at the determination of the Korean people to address and speedily resolve the economic difficulties that have caused their financial crisis. The Republic of Korea has made significant strides in reforming, restructuring and opening its economy and breaking the old monopolies that have choked the economy. Also, newly-elected President Kim Dae Jung has committed his administration to making further structural reforms designed to resolve the country's economic and financial problems and restore international confidence in South Korea's economy.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 459 sends a strong message of the importance our bilateral relationship and our commitment to strengthening this partnership as we enter the 21st century. This Member urges adoption of H. Res. 459.

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

Mr. GILMAN. 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 York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 459, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SENSE OF THE HOUSE DEPLORING TRAGIC AND SENSELESS MURDER OF BISHOP JUAN JOSE GERARDI

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 421) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives deploring the tragic and senseless murder of Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi, calling on the Government of Guatemala to expeditiously bring those responsible for the crime to justice, and calling on the people of Guatemala to reaffirm their commitment to continue to implement the peace accords without interruption.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 421

Whereas on December 29, 1996, the Government of Guatemala and the representatives

of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca signed a historic peace accord ending 36 years of armed confrontation;

Whereas the peace accords, which included as the primary goals lasting peace, national reconciliation, and political stability for all Guatemalans, are being successfully implemented;

Whereas the peace accords included the creation of individual commissions to implement a wide range of reforms to the political, social, and judicial systems of Guatemala, including an enhanced respect for human rights and the rule of law;

Whereas, despite the fact that crime and violence remain prevalent in Guatemala, the human rights situation has improved over the last several years, allowing for the creation of special investigative commissions on human rights abuses, the prosecution of those involved in past human rights-related crimes, and the ability of human rights groups to operate with freedom;

Whereas, in recognition that the human rights situation in Guatemala had improved significantly, the United Nations Human Rights Commission voted to remove Guatemala from its list of countries under observation for abuses;

Whereas on Sunday, April 26, 1998, Guatemalan Roman Catholic Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi was brutally and senselessly murdered just 48 hours after presenting a landmark report detailing significant human rights atrocities associated with the 36-year civil war in Guatemala;

Whereas Bishop Gerardi, while considered a common man, dedicated to his ministry, was also considered one of Guatemala's most progressive clergymen, an outspoken human rights advocate, and was the author of the recent report "Guatemala: Never Again", the first comprehensive examination of human rights violations committed during the decades of political violence which engulfed that nation;

Whereas the slaying of Bishop Gerardi casts a pall over the effectiveness of the peace accords and raises questions regarding the national commitment to human rights and freedom of expression; and

Whereas the expeditious and successful resolution of the tragic death of Bishop Gerardi is critical for the continuation of support for the peace accords: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the Government of Guatemala, including the national police and the military, should commit themselves to take all steps necessary to resolve the heinous murder of Guatemalan Roman Catholic Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi;

(2) in order to deter continued human rights abuses, resolve other human rights cases, and improve the citizens' sense of personal security, the Government of Guatemala should continue its efforts to establish effective civilian law enforcement and judicial institutions;

(3) the Government and people of Guatemala should make a renewed commitment to successfully implement the peace accords, especially those accords concerning human rights; and

(4) the United States Government should provide all necessary support to the investigation of the murder of Bishop Gerardi and to continue to support the full implementation of the peace accords.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 421.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 421. I agreed to cosponsor this resolution, having been shocked by the news of the senseless murder of his eminence, Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi.

A great deal of progress has been made in Guatemala since the signing of the Peace Accords. It is a terrible tragedy for Guatemala to suffer the loss of one of its most steadfast champions of human rights. This brutal act occurred just as the process of examining the painful legacy of past abuses by security forces and guerrillas was beginning in earnest.

Just days before he was murdered, Bishop Gerardi issued the Catholic Church's report on human rights abuses during Guatemala's 3 decade-long guerrilla conflict.

This past Sunday, The Washington Post ran a prominent story on Bishop Gerardi and on the critically important church report he oversaw, entitled, "Guatemala: Never Again." The Post article chronicles Bishop Gerardi's extraordinary leadership in defending the church and the indigenous peoples of Guatemala who were, to quote the Post story, "Caught in the middle, recruited by both sides, and frequently the victims of harsh, irregular warfare."

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution and especially its call on the government of Guatemala, including the national police and the military, to take all steps necessary to resolve the killing of Bishop Gerardi.

This is an historic opportunity for President Alvaro Arzu to lead his people in breaking with impunity. Reformist elements in the Guatemalan Army who are working to create a professional military, as well as their former guerrilla adversaries in the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Union, the URNG, should seize this opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to resolving this crime.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to fully support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I include at this time for the RECORD the article from the Washington Post which I referred to earlier in my comments.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 6, 1998]

A LOOK AT . . . A MURDER IN GUATEMALA:
THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF BISHOP GERARDI
(By Terri Shaw)

GUATEMALA CITY.—On April 24, Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi stood in front of the altar

of the capital's Spanish colonial style Metropolitan Cathedral to present to his nation the results of a report detailing three decades of horrific civil strife in Guatemala, with information about more than 400 massacres, thousands of murders, rapes and cases of torture. It concluded that 79 percent of the abuses were committed by government forces and 9 percent by the leftist guerrillas opposing them. Entitled "Guatemala: Never Again," the report was based on thousands of interviews conducted with survivors, witnesses and even perpetrators of the abuses.

Gerardi's message accompanying the report was hardly comforting to a nation where many prefer to forget the ordeal of the conflict that ended only two years ago. "Facing our personal and collective reality is not an option that can be accepted or rejected," he declared, knowing that the report would not be well received by supporters of the military, or by the many Guatemalans who have remained aloof from the conflict. "It is a requirement for every human being, for every society that hopes to become human and be free."

Two days later, the bishop was dead. His body was found in the garage of his parish house, his head bashed in with a heavy object. He was 75 years old.

Four months later, the country is still absorbed by Gerardi's death and the details of the murder investigation, which to date has yielded no clear culprit. Opinion is divided over whether the murder was an assassination or a common crime. Competing theories say that Gerardi was killed by members of the armed forces—the initial suspicion of many—or by a priest who lived with him and who has been detained for questioning but not formally charged. While the media here follow the case closely and Guatemalans discuss it avidly, the content of the church's report has largely been overshadowed.

One morning last month, a steady trickle of buyers picked up copies of the four-volume report, priced at \$40, at the headquarters of the Office of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Guatemala next door to the cathedral. But while every Guatemalan I encountered during a recent visit had something to say about the investigation of the murder, only one—a retired banker—said he had actually read the report.

Perhaps no one would have been more disappointed than Gerardi himself. Persuading Guatemalans to face the painful truths about the war was his personal mission. Born in Guatemala City to a couple of Italian descent, Gerardi became a traditional churchman who did not speak out on political issues until the late 1970s when violence between leftist guerrillas and government forces intensified in the mountainous province of El Quiche where he worked. Most residents of the spectacularly beautiful region are Indians who live on tiny subsistence farms and still practice their traditional cultures.

As various leftist rebel groups battled Guatemala's military-dominated governments, these Indians were caught in the middle—recruited by both sides and frequently the victims of harsh irregular warfare.

Gerardi began to take a more open political stand when the army and paramilitary groups allied with it targeted church workers, accusing them of supporting the guerrillas. In 1976, the Rev. William Woods, an American Maryknoll missionary who was working with a peasant cooperative, was killed. A church biography of Gerardi called this the "beginning of systematic persecution against the church in El Quiche." In the early '80s, according to Tom Quigley, a policy adviser to the U.S. Catholic Conference, "Quichie was the Wild West," and scores of priests and lay leaders were killed.

Gerardi tried to persuade military and government officials to moderate the army's brutal methods, but he was unsuccessful. In 1980, he took the unusual step of withdrawing all Catholic religious workers from the province after he himself was shot at.

Gerardi went to Rome for a conference and told Pope John Paul II about the attacks on Indian communities and the church. The pope issued a letter shortly thereafter condemning the violence and Gerardi flew back to Guatemala City, but was turned away at the airport. He went into exile in Costa Rica.

"It is not convenient for me to go back now," he told June Erlick, a reporter for National Catholic Reporter, at the archdiocese in the Costa Rica capital, San Jose, where he was living. "In two days, in four days, in two weeks, I would be dead. And if I weren't, someone close to me would be."

Two years in exile did not radicalize Gerardi, however. He spurned invitations to join groups backing the guerrillas and refused to support about a dozen priests living in Nicaragua who formed what they called a "Guatemala church in exile." In 1982, when it was safer to work in Guatemala, he returned. In 1984 he was named auxiliary bishop, and in 1988 he joined a National Reconciliation Commission that encouraged meetings involving representatives of the guerrillas, the government and other groups, laying the groundwork for the peace accords that finally brought an end to the 36-year war in 1996.

In 1990, he formed the Human Rights Office of the archdiocese and in 1995 began the historic memory project. This effort, which was financed in part by European foundations, involved training 600 lay people who lived where the fighting took place to conduct interviews with witnesses, survivors and, in some cases, perpetrators of abuses. About two-thirds of the interviews were conducted in the languages spoken by the Indians who make up a majority of the Guatemalan population and who are a disproportionate number of the victims of abuses chronicled in the report.

The project—generally called REHMI, its Spanish acronym—was conceived in part as a supplement to the work of a Historic Clarification Commission formed by the peace accords. The commission's mandate was to investigate human rights abuses committed during the conflict, but not to name those responsible. The church's report, on the other hand, does name names and does assign responsibility to the leaders of the guerrilla organizations and of the army and paramilitary groups allied with it.

The REHMI report also demanded that both the army and the guerrillas publicly acknowledge responsibility for abuses and apologize. So far representatives of both groups have admitted only to "errors."

Gerardi's mission remains to be completed. Edgar Gutierrez, who directed the REHMI project, points out that the negotiations that ended the war were conducted by the leaders of the government and the guerrillas, not the people themselves. "The population, in general, remained divided," he said. "Since there is no reconciliation within the population affected by the armed conflict, the church now will work to bring about the reconstitution of the social fabric."

The REHMI report ends with recommendations of ways to help Guatemalans come to terms with their past and live together peacefully. These include concrete measures that could be taken by the government, such as financial restitution and humanitarian aid for survivors, attention to human rights cases in the courts and investigation of the cases of people who disappeared. The report also asks the guerrillas to "clarify the deaths and disappearances it was responsible

for" and "recognize the murders of civilian noncombatants." And it recommends symbolic measures such as commemorative ceremonies and monuments to the victims.

It is a daunting agenda for a traumatized country of 11.6 million where it is easier to forget than forgive—but one that Gerardi did not flinch from promoting. He closed his last speech in the cathedral with a biblical quote that he said was brought to mind by the "memory of these painful facts":

And the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; Am I my brother's keeper?

And He said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, for his leadership and management of this bill before the body.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation was introduced and authored by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), and it has the bipartisan support of all of the members of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere as cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution calls for the government of Guatemala to denounce the murder of Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi and to commit to take all necessary steps to resolve the murder. Bishop Gerardi, an auxiliary bishop of Guatemala City, was the author of the Guatemalan Church's narrative on the Civil War, released 2 days before he was murdered outside his home in Guatemala City. It was by far the highest profile murder in Guatemala since the signing of the Peace Accords in December 1996.

Mr. Speaker, "tragic" and "senseless" are appropriate words to define the murder of Bishop Gerardi. There are very few people who worked as hard as he did to bring to Guatemala a new sense of respect for human rights. It is now 5 months since this brutal incident took place, but it is timely that we focus our attention on this murder today.

The investigation of the murder is bogged down and we have heard very little public expressions of frustration from the people in Guatemala in following the investigation. We are right to express our ongoing interest in this case, and our commitment to seeing a successful investigation and prosecution. The United States has already provided substantial assistance to Guatemala and has pledged further support for the implementation of Guatemala's Peace Accords.

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I believe that we pledged \$260 million in assistance over 4 years now, and that support is contingent on all parties remaining committed to the letter

and spirit of the accords. Guatemala's response to Bishop Gerardi's killing is an indicator of the willingness to implement those accords.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we can expect much more progress, and that we ought to continue to follow this case closely as an indicator of the government's commitment to human rights and its commitment to the spirit of the peace accords.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution deserves our support, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting yes on this important resolution.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), who is the original sponsor of this measure.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 421 is a bipartisan effort introduced with the strong support and leadership of the chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BEN GILMAN), and the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, the gentleman from California (Mr. ELTON GALLEGLY).

It expresses the sense of the House of Representatives deploring the tragic and senseless murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi, to call on the government of Guatemala to expeditiously bring those responsible for the crime to justice, and to call on the people of Guatemala to reaffirm their commitment to continue to implement the peace accords without interruption to bring attention.

In some ways it is appropriate that we are considering this resolution today. It was on this day in 1776 that our Second Continental Congress authorized the use of the name "the United States" for our young Nation. Historians tell us no other subject more appropriately demonstrates one of the important steps taken by our Founding Fathers in our Nation's move towards independence and freedom.

Just as we have achieved that goal, Bishop Gerardi's report, which was a monumental, historic report entitled "Guatemala: Never Again," was and is an important step in Guatemalans' efforts at achieving their peace and their freedom.

As we may recall, late in the evening on Sunday, April 26 of this year, Bishop Gerardi was brutally bludgeoned to death in his garage as he returned from his usual Sunday night dinner with his sister and her family.

Specifically, the skull of Bishop Gerardi was crushed by a wedge of concrete. The autopsy revealed that the Bishop had been bashed in the head repeatedly, and in the face, at least 17 times. Mr. Speaker, the Bishop's face was bashed so badly that another priest living in the church's compound could only recognize his body by a ring on one of the fingers.

This attack occurred just 2 days after Bishop Gerardi, one of Guatemala's, and indeed, our world's, foremost

human rights activists, released a report providing the most extensive account of human rights atrocities committed during the 36-year civil war that plagued the country until the peace accords were signed in December of 1996.

One aspect of that agreement called for the conflict to be investigated to determine the truth for historical purposes. This effort was led by the Bishop. This report indicated that while both the Guatemalan military and the guerillas committed war crimes, the military was responsible for most of the deaths, almost 80 percent of the 150,000 unarmed civilians killed during the civil war, and for the disappearance of at least 50,000 more. Additionally, the document also detailed how at least 1.5 million people were victimized, to varying degrees.

Almost immediately after word of this attack became public, Guatemalan President Arzu formed a commission to investigate the Bishop's death. At the same time, our FBI sent several people to Guatemala to assist the government with their investigation. Since those agents' return, the FBI has sent other agents to the country to assist in the investigation as needed.

Because the investigation is still ongoing, we would do more harm than good by commenting on any of the various paths the investigation has taken so far. Rather, what we must do is to continue to provide the Guatemalan government and the people the necessary support to help solve this murder, to bring to justice those responsible for committing it, and to continue implementation of the peace accords.

The question in this resolution for human rights activists throughout the world that must be answered is not who murdered Bishop Gerardi, but rather, who ordered Bishop Gerardi murdered.

In one of his last public speeches, he closed with a biblical quote brought to mind by the memory of the painful facts of his report. He said, "And the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood cryeth unto me from the ground."

Mr. Speaker, the voice of Bishop Gerardi's blood cries to the people of Guatemala and to the world from the ground to determine and to call for justice to be brought. We must not and should not let this murder destroy the peace so many people have worked so hard to bring about.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, our colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, is unfortunately detained

today, but I will be submitting a statement on his behalf under leave previously obtained.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, in December, 1996, the Government of Guatemala and representatives of the UNRG signed a historic peace agreement ending some 36 years of armed confrontation.

Since that historic day, peace and the implementation of the peace accords, especially with respect to political stability, national reconciliation, the observance of human rights and freedom of expression, have made significant gains in Guatemala. In fact, in recognition of the progress being made on human rights, the United Nations Human Rights Commission recently removed Guatemala from its list of countries under observation for abuses.

Unfortunately, the progress toward reconciliation in Guatemala was rudely shattered on April 26 when Roman Catholic Bishop Juan Gerardi, a leading human rights crusader and author of a recently released report detailing the human rights abuses committed during the years of conflict, was brutally and senselessly murdered outside his residence in Guatemala City.

The murder shocked the people of Guatemala and called into question national attitudes about human rights on the part of some in that country.

House Resolution 421, introduced by our Colleague, KEVIN BRADY of Texas, expresses our outrage over this murder and calls on the Government of Guatemala to do everything in its power to resolve this crime and bring those responsible to swift justice.

To that end, I want to commend President Arzu for acting quickly to establish a high level Commission to help in the investigation, and the efforts made to date to resolve the murder. However, progress has been slow and the effort continues to need the strong support and cooperation of the police and military.

Equally important, however, is that this bill calls on the government and people of Guatemala not to give up on the peace and reconciliation process and to make a renewed commitment to carry out the provisions of the peace accords despite this tragic and unfortunate set back.

On May 13, the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee marked up this resolution and unanimously adopted it.

I urge passage of this resolution.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 421, deploring the murder of Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi, and I thank the gentleman from Texas, Mr. BRADY, for having introduced this resolution.

I join with all of the people of Guatemala in mourning and deploring the brutal murder of Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi, the head of the Catholic Church's human rights office. Many of us who have followed developments in Guatemala since the signing of the historic peace agreement in 1996 are deeply concerned about the negative impact which the slaying of Bishop Gerardi will have on the process of peace and reconciliation in Guatemala.

This would be especially unfortunate because the Guatemalan government has shown great determination to implement the broad-ranging commitments laid out in the peace accords since the signing of the accords. There have been many positive evaluations from the U.N. Mission in Guatemala and other inter-

national and Guatemalan organizations of the political will that the Arzu government has demonstrated and of important advances in the peace process.

The murder of Bishop Gerardi took place less than two days after he had presented the Catholic Church's landmark report, "Never Again," on the human rights violations committed during the civil war. The report documented the killings, disappearances, and massacres of the more than 30-year war, assigning blame for more than 80 percent of them on the security forces. Given Guatemalan history and the timing of the murder, there is widespread presumption in Guatemala of official involvement in the murder. This belief, and shortcomings in the investigation of the crime, has cast a pall over the peace process and chilled the climate of respect for human rights.

It is a measure of great progress in democratic government and respect for human rights that few believe that the murder of the Bishop was carried out by institutions of the State. Nonetheless, there is concern that the government has not sufficiently investigated the role which former and current military officials may have had in the crime; two suspects, a retired military officer and a current officer, were named several weeks ago by Church sources as having been involved, but they have still not been questioned. In addition, petitions to exhume the body of Bishop Gerardi to evaluate conflicting autopsy reports have not been acted on by the courts, even though every passing day makes it more likely that an autopsy would not clarify outstanding questions. The crime scene was not properly secured to assure the reliability of forensic evidence collected.

It is critical to the success of the peace process, and to the faith of the Guatemala people in the institutions of democratic government, that this case be fully investigated and that all clues be followed, regardless of where the evidence leads. The investigation must be complete, credible, and transparent, and the Guatemalan people must have faith that it will be carried out in such a manner.

In addition, there can be no better way for the government and the people of Guatemala to honor the life and work of Bishop Gerardi than to maintain a clear and strong commitment to fully implement the peace accords.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 421, and I commend the Gentleman from Texas, Congressman BRADY, as well as the cosponsors of this important resolution for their work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, before us today is legislation which highlights one of the most tragic losses in the fight for human rights world-wide. The violent death of Guatemala's outstanding spiritual leader and human rights defender, Monsignor Juan Jose Gerardi, the Bishop who served as General Director of the Guatemalan Archbishop's Human Rights Office, is not only a tragic loss for Guatemala, but also for the process of reconciliation in civil-worn torn Guatemala and its search for truth.

I previously had an opportunity to express to Bishop Gerardi's coworkers and the Guatemalan people the condolences of the U.S. Congress and the American people for the tragic loss of Bishop Gerardi, and would like to take this opportunity to do so again.

Mr. Speaker, Bishop Gerardi was murdered on April 26th, 1998—only two days after he publicly presented the report "Guatemala:

Never Again." This report represents an outstanding and extremely difficult effort to establish the death toll of 36 years of civil war, which is estimated to be at least 150,000, in addition to some 50,000 estimated disappearances. This crucial report—which clearly placed the blame for the majority of human rights abuses during the civil war upon the Guatemalan army—was prepared by the inter-diocesan project, Recovery of Historical Memory (REMHI), which the Bishop coordinated. Needless to say, there is complete documentation for only a small number of cases, and the efforts by the Archbishop's Human Rights Office will continue. Let us never forget that these staggering estimates reflect the suffering and pains of hundreds of thousands of individuals, families, and loved ones, which no statistics can ever do justice.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to take this opportunity to thank my good friends and distinguished colleagues, Congresswomen NANCY PELOSI of California and CONNIE MORELLA of Maryland, as well as Congressman GEORGE MILLER of California for leading a recent delegation in conjunction with the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, which went to Guatemala to examine the impact of the murder of Bishop Gerardi on the future of the peace process and to check the status of the investigation launched by the Guatemalan authorities. Our resolution today clearly shows to all parties involved how seriously we in the United States Congress and in the U.S. government take these brutal efforts to silence this human rights activist. The guilty parties must be brought to justice.

While the world mourns the tragic loss of Bishop Gerardi, the efforts to implement the peace process must continue. Only by establishing the basic democratic principle of accountability will the Peace Accords be successful. Otherwise, the removal of Guatemala from the U.N. Human Rights Commission list of Countries under observation for human rights abuses could prove to be premature.

In order to assist the people in Guatemala to achieve the goals expressed in the peace accords, I have introduced H.R. 2635, the Human Rights Information Act, which provides Truth Commissions, such as the one in Guatemala, with the necessary information to document and prosecute human rights abuses which occurred in their country. The bipartisan Human Rights Information Act is currently cosponsored by 92 of our distinguished colleagues in the House. I commend the outstanding human rights leadership of my friend and colleague, Congressman STEVEN HORN, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology, for holding a hearing on this bill. I hope it will be possible to mark up this bill as soon as possible, before we run out of time in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 421.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof),

the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONCERNING THE NEW TRIBES MISSION HOSTAGE CRISIS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 277) concerning the New Tribes Mission hostage crisis.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 277

Whereas Mark Rich, David Mankins, and Rick Tenenoff of the Sanford, Florida, based New Tribes Mission were abducted on January 31, 1993, from the Kuna Indian village of Pucuro in the Darien Province of Panama;

Whereas the wives and children of these American citizens, Tania Rich (daughters—Tamra and Jessica), Nancy Mankins (son—Chad, daughter—Sarah), and Patti Tenenoff (son—Richard Lee III, daughters—Dora and Connie), have lived the past 5 years without knowledge of the safety of these 3 men;

Whereas Mark Rich, David Mankins, and Rick Tenenoff presently are believed to be the longest held United States hostages;

Whereas this kidnapping represents a gross violation of the 3 missionaries' human rights and is not an isolated incident in Colombia where, since 1980, 83 innocent Americans have been held hostage by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN);

Whereas the FARC and the ELN guerrilla groups in Colombia have both been designated terrorist organizations by the Department of State;

Whereas Colombia is engaged in a high-level conflict with these guerrilla insurgency groups, a number of whom are protectors of the deadly drug trade;

Whereas the FARC has recently threatened officials of the United States Government and kidnapped additional United States citizens in Colombia;

Whereas the region of Colombia where the 3 American missionaries are believed to be held is controlled not by the Colombian Government, but rather by the FARC;

Whereas on December 9, 1997, the President of Colombia stated on an internationally televised episode of Larry King Live that the FARC "in some ways have admitted indirectly that they have the missionaries";

Whereas Human Rights Watch has stated that "The FARC has an obligation to unconditionally free the 3 missionaries, with all necessary guarantees" and Amnesty International has declared their "request that the FARC respect international humanitarian norms, guarantee the life and physical safety of the missionaries and unconditionally free them and all other hostages";

Whereas congressional inquiries regarding the 3 missionaries have been made to United States Government entities, including, the White House, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

Whereas congressional inquiries regarding the 3 missionaries have been made to Amnesty International, Pax Christi, His Holiness the Pope John Paul II, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has provided assurances that their Colombian delegation "is still actively working in favor of the missing members of the New Tribes Mission";

Whereas 58 Members of Congress and Senators signed letters to 8 different heads of

state, including Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Spain, Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, and Portugal, in attendance at the Iberian-American Conference in Venezuela in November of 1997, requesting any and all assistance in order to bring about a favorable outcome to this unfortunate event;

Whereas no official confirmation of life or death has been made by any United States Government entity, nongovernmental organization, foreign government, or religious institution;

Whereas the distinction between a "terrorist activity" and a "criminal activity" perpetrated on an American citizen traveling abroad should not be a limiting factor in terms of United States governmental investigation; and

Whereas every consideration to safety and prudence regarding action by the United States Government, foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations, international institutions, and other groups in this matter should be of the highest priority: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the President of the United States and his emissaries should raise the kidnapping of Mark Rich, David Mankins, and Rick Tenenoff of the New Tribes Mission and other American victims in Colombia to all relevant foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations, and religious institutions at every opportunity until a favorable outcome is achieved;

(2) the international community should encourage any and all groups believed to have information on this case to come forward to help the families of the kidnapped missionaries;

(3) all appropriate information obtained by the United States Government, foreign governments, international institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and religious institutions should be turned over in a timely basis to the New Tribes Mission crisis response team;

(4) a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the President, the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Director of Central Intelligence, the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, the President of the United Mexican States, the President of the Republic of Panama, the King of Spain, the President of the Republic of Venezuela, the President of the Republic of Guatemala, the President of the Republic of Colombia, the President of the Republic of Portugal, and His Holiness Pope John Paul II; and

(5) a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the New Tribes Mission, Amnesty International, Pax Christi, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. 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 matter on House Concurrent Resolution 277.

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

There was no objection.