

concern for their own people the Chinese authorities resort to their usual "policy of merciless repression", whereby they are labelled as "splittists" and as a result arrested and imprisoned. They have no opportunity to speak out the truth. The recent execution of Lobsang Dhondup and the death sentence given to Tulku Tenzin Delek without due process of law are clear examples of this policy, which cannot resolve the problem and therefore must be changed.

It is my sincere hope that the Chinese leadership will find the courage, vision and wisdom for new openings to solve the Tibetan issue through dialogue. Looking around the world we cannot fail to notice how unattended conflicts with ethnic roots can erupt in ways that make them extremely difficult to solve. It is, therefore, in the interest of the People's Republic of China to address such issues. A new creative initiative to resolve the issue of Tibet would serve as a very convincing sign that China is changing, maturing and becoming more receptive to assuming a greater role on the global stage as a reliable and forward-looking power. A constructive approach to the issue of Tibet provides important opportunities to create a political climate of trust, confidence and openness, both domestically and internationally. Such an expression of Chinese leadership during this time of deep anxiety over international conflicts, terrorism and ethnic strife in the world will go a long way to impressing and reassuring the world.

It is necessary to recognize that the Tibetan freedom struggle is not about my personal position or well being. As early as in 1969 I made it clear that it is up to the Tibetan people to decide whether the centuries-old institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. In 1992 in a formal announcement I stated clearly that when we return to Tibet with a certain degree of freedom, I would not hold any office in the Tibetan government nor any other political position. However, as I often state, till my last day I will remain committed to the promotion of human values and religious harmony. I also announced then that the Tibetan Administration-in-Exile should be dissolved and that the Tibetans in Tibet must shoulder the main responsibility of running the Tibetan government. I have always believed that in the future Tibet should follow a secular and democratic system of governance. It is, therefore, baseless to allege that our efforts are aimed at the restoration of Tibet's old social system. No Tibetan, whether in exile or in Tibet, has any desire to restore old Tibet's outdated social order. On the contrary, the democratisation of the Tibetan community started soon upon our arrival in exile. This culminated in the direct election of our political leadership in 2001. We are committed to continue to take vigorous actions to further promote democratic values among the ordinary Tibetans.

As far back as the early seventies in consultation with senior Tibetan officials I made a decision to seek a solution to the Tibetan problem through a "Middle Way Approach". This framework does not call for independence and separation of Tibet. At the same time it provides genuine autonomy for the six million men and women who consider themselves Tibetans to preserve their distinctive identity, to promote their religious and cultural heritage that is based on a centuries-old philosophy which is of benefit even in the 21st century, and to protect the delicate environment of the Tibetan plateau. This approach will contribute to the overall stability and unity of the People's Republic of China. I remain committed to this realistic and pragmatic approach and will continue to make every effort to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

The reality today is that we are all interdependent and we have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences, whether between individuals, peoples or nations, is through a political culture of non-violence and dialogue. Since our struggle is based on truth, justice and non-violence and is not directed against China, we have been fortunate to receive increasing worldwide sympathy and support, including from amongst the Chinese. I express my appreciation and gratitude for this consistent solidarity. I would also like to express once again on behalf of the Tibetans our appreciation and immense gratitude to the people and the Government of India for their unwavering and unmatched generosity and support.

With my homage to the brave men and women of Tibet who have died for the cause of our freedom, I pray for an early end to the suffering of our people.

THE DALAI LAMA.

HOUSE RESOLUTION 342, THE MOSQUITO ABATEMENT FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in great support of H.R. 342, the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act.

Mr. Speaker, mosquito borne-diseases are increasingly plaguing the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), last year alone there were more than 5,000 people infected with mosquito borne-illnesses such as Dengue Fever and the West Nile virus.

As a member of Congress, I am greatly concerned with the West Nile virus's rapid spread nationwide. Out of my concern for the victims of West Nile virus and other mosquito borne diseases, I not only cosigned legislation and letters seeking grants and research dollars to combat this deadly virus, but I also wrote a letter to Dr. Julie Gerderding, the CDC's director. In the letter, I expressed the importance of the CDC, the NIH, and Congress to work cooperatively to communicate the concerns and resolutions in combating these deadly viruses.

Considering West Nile virus is prevalent during the summer and early fall, it is imperative that the necessary steps are taken in the virus's prevention and vaccination before the onset of the next summer season. Mr. Speaker, I believe H.R. 342, the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act, would do exactly that.

Essentially, H.R. 342 would establish two temporary grant programs to help state and local governments assess mosquito problems, and coordinate and operate mosquito control programs. This measure would also authorize \$100 million in FY2003, and such sums as necessary each subsequent year through FY 2007, for these grants.

While Florida was not as severely affected as Illinois or Michigan last year by the West Nile virus, Florida certainly has the propensity to be dramatically affected by this virus due to its annual warm climate. The increasing growth of outbreaks and spread of West Nile

virus each year qualifies it as a public health threat that is likely to be with us for years to come. Addressing the problem now through H.R. 342 will provide benefits in the future, and most importantly save lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the M.A.S.H Act.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MOURNING DOVE HARVEST ACT

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2003

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before the House today to reintroduce the Mourning Dove Harvest Act, a bill that will give individuals who reside in all states a fair and equal opportunity to hunt mourning doves.

Hunters in states north of the 37th parallel often find that mourning doves already have migrated south for the winter by the time hunting season opens on September 1st. It is not uncommon for the fall hunting season to last less than one week or even one day in such northern states as Idaho, Montana and Washington. Many sportsmen unable to follow this migration are left without a hunting opportunity. States south of the 37th parallel, meanwhile, have a full season and ample opportunity to harvest these birds. Hunters in Mexico have the additional advantage of no harvest limits. Passage of this bill is the first step toward creating a season that will give residents of northern states an equal opportunity.

The designated hunting season for mourning doves that begins September 1st and ends March 10th is the result of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which in turn stems from the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1916. The Treaty signed by the United States, Canada, Mexico, Great Britain, Japan and Russia covers a multitude of migratory birds, including mourning doves. There is little legislative history justifying the selection of this fall opening date, and migration routes, hunting practices and conservation efforts have changed significantly in the 86 years since the Treaty's ratification. The last week in August has been identified as a period when these birds are not nesting, but are preparing for their annual southern migration.

Passage of this bill will allow hunters in states north of the 37th parallel to hunt mourning doves seven days earlier—during a time when their migration south is about to begin. Hunters in the north will be on a more equal footing with their counterparts in the south.

Scientists have found that regulated hunting has no significant effect on the mourning dove population.

This legislation amends the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and asks the Secretary of State to begin discussions with the signatories of the Migratory Bird Treaty to include this change in the Treaty.

It is important to note that (1) this legislation offers hunters in the north a more equal opportunity to harvest mourning doves; (2) the mourning dove is the most widely distributed and harvested game bird in North America; (3) in states north of the 37th parallel, mourning doves often begin their southern migration prior to September 1st, the opening day of the hunting season; (4) this change will not impact the mourning dove population.