

United States. It is fitting that we consider Prime Minister Blair for this award in the wake of a challenging and historic period for our two nations.

Upon the terrorist attacks of September 11, Prime Minister Blair was the first leader to rush to America's side to provide assistance. His expression of solidarity assured us that we were not alone in the world as a victim of terrorism, and that attacks on our soil were also an assault on the sovereignty of Great Britain, which lost more of its own citizens in the World Trade Center than any other foreign nation. In a very difficult time for our country, Mr. Blair has courageously demonstrated that the U.K. is our staunchest and most steadfast ally by helping us lead the coalition of democratic nations in the defense of our mutual security from terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Together with Great Britain we have made progress toward dismantling the global network of state sponsored terrorism. However, despite considerable public opposition and political fallout in his own country, Prime Minister Blair never wavered from his commitment to the United States and the international coalition to determine whether the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq presented an imminent threat to its neighbors and our troops based on the Middle East. Under the Prime Minister's leadership, Great Britain contributed troops and meaningful support for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. As British troops fought shoulder to shoulder with American troops in Iraq, Mr. Blair made it clear all along that the U.K. shared our values and principles for the mission, particularly when he said, "We go to liberate not conquer . . . and the only flag which will be flown in that ancient land is their own."

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Prime Minister Tony Blair's extraordinary leadership and his nation's enduring commitment to our mutual support of liberty and democracy. I am proud to support H.R. 1511 to authorize the President, on behalf of Congress, to award the Gold Medal to Prime Minister Blair. I also wish to thank the people of Great Britain, the members of the royal armed forces, and their families for their shared commitment and many sacrifices for the preservation of democracy and liberty in a world allied against terror.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with great disappointment that I cannot be present today to speak and vote in favor of H.R. 1511, a bill to award Prime Minister Tony Blair the Congressional Gold Medal. I introduced this legislation on March 31 and have since been working with my colleagues to obtain the necessary 290 cosponsors for floor action. I would like to commend Chairman OXLEY and the Financial Services Committee, as well as Rep. RICHARD BAKER and Rep. CAROLYN MALONEY for their tireless efforts in getting this bill to the floor today.

As we emerge successfully from Operation Iraqi Freedom, it is important to remember that we did not fight this war alone. The brave men and women of the British military have fought and died, side by side, with our American soldiers. Just yesterday, 6 British soldiers were killed in an attack north of Basra. Great Britain, under the leadership of Tony Blair, has paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Prime Minister Blair has ignored political expediency and risked his own career to stand up for what he knows is right. Operation Iraqi

Freedom has freed millions of Iraqis from the oppression of Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship. The Operation has ousted a regime bent on securing and then distributing weapons of mass destruction to those who would use them against the United States, our friends, and the people of Iraq. Despite attempts by many of our "allies" to thwart this noble effort, Prime Minister Blair and Great Britain have remained strong and active players in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

I am deeply honored to play a role in awarding Prime Minister Tony Blair the Congressional Gold Medal and I thank my colleagues in the House of Representatives for joining me.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation to award Mr. Blair with the Congressional Gold Medal. I would like to recognize Mr. Blair's—and Britain's—longstanding staunch support of our nation's democratic ideals.

Whether one supported or opposed the war in Iraq, it is true that under Blair's leadership, Britain has provided extensive military support in the war in Iraq. He has argued passionately and consistently about the threats Saddam Hussein posed in the Persian Gulf and ultimately to the Western world. Honoring Prime Minister Blair with the Congressional Gold Medal would be a fitting tribute to him, the people of Great Britain, and the thousands of British troops who fought valiantly alongside American soldiers in Iraq. We now have a historic opportunity to reaffirm our Nation's friendship with Great Britain, and our mutual commitment to freedom and democracy.

I hope that the occasion of Mr. Blair being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal will be an opportunity to invite Mr. Blair to address a joint session of Congress. I have worked with my colleague Mr. ROYCE to encourage our Congressional leaders to invite Mr. Blair to do so, and I can think of no occasion more fitting. In light of Mr. Blair's enduring friendship with the United States, I look forward to hearing his views on the future of Iraq and the Middle East.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1511.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM IN HONG KONG

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 277) expressing support for freedom in Hong Kong.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 277

Whereas Hong Kong has long been the world's freest economy, renowned for its rule

of law and its jealous protection of civil rights and civil liberties;

Whereas the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration explicitly guarantees that all of Hong Kong's freedoms, including press freedom, religious freedom, and freedom of association, will continue for at least 50 years;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China pledged to respect Hong Kong's Basic Law of 1990, which explicitly protects freedom of speech, of the press and of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession, of demonstration, and of communication;

Whereas the Basic Law also explicitly protects freedom of conscience, religious belief, and of religious expression;

Whereas Hong Kong's traditional rule of law, which has guaranteed all of these civil rights and civil liberties, is essential to its continued freedom, and the erosion of that rule of law bodes ill for the maintenance and expansion of both economic freedom and individual civil rights;

Whereas in the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 Congress declared: "The human rights of the people of Hong Kong are of great importance to the United States and are directly relevant to United States interests in Hong Kong. A fully successful transition in the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong must safeguard human rights in and of themselves. Human rights also serve as a basis for Hong Kong's continued economic prosperity.";

Whereas since Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China on July 1, 1997, the Hong Kong authorities have changed the system of electing representatives to the Legislative Council, added appointed members to District Councils, invited the central government to reverse Hong Kong courts, and declined to permit the entry of some American visitors and other foreign nationals whose views are opposed by the People's Republic of China;

Whereas, despite the provisions of the Basic Law which call for a gradual and orderly process toward democratic election of the legislature and chief executive, and which call for universal suffrage, the Government of the Hong Kong SAR and the People's Republic of China have stymied this process;

Whereas the traditional liberties of Hong Kong's 7,000,000 people are now immediately threatened by Hong Kong's proposed "Article 23" laws, which were drafted under strong pressure from the Government of the People's Republic of China, dealing with sedition, treason, and subversion against the Chinese Communist Party, and the theft of state secrets;

Whereas the proposed legislation would give the Hong Kong Government discretion to imprison individuals for "attempting to commit" the undefined crime of "subversion"; would criminalize not only membership in, but even attendance at meetings of, organizations not approved by Beijing; and would threaten freedom of religion, membership in authentic trade unions, political activity of all kinds, and a wide range of public and private expression;

Whereas the proposed legislation would give Hong Kong's Secretary for Security, an appointee of the Government of the People's Republic of China, broad authority to ban organizations it deemed in opposition to the national interest, thereby threatening religious organizations such as the Falun Gong and the Roman Catholic Church;

Whereas under the proposed legislation such basic and fundamental procedural rights as notice and opportunity to be heard could be waived by the appointee of the Government of the People's Republic of China in

Hong Kong if honoring these rights "would not be practicable";

Whereas the People's Republic of China's history of arbitrary application of its own criminal law against dissenters, and its pattern of imprisoning and exiling those with whom it disagrees, provide strong reasons to oppose the expansion of Beijing's ability to use its discretion against Hong Kong's freedoms;

Whereas similar subversion laws in the People's Republic of China are regularly used to convict and imprison journalists, labor activists, Internet entrepreneurs, and academics;

Whereas broad segments of the Hong Kong community have expressed strong concerns about, and opposition to, the proposed new laws;

Whereas those members of Hong Kong's Legislative Council elected by universal suffrage oppose the proposed new laws, but are powerless to stop them against the majority of votes controlled directly and indirectly by the Government of the People's Republic of China;

Whereas the scheduled consideration of these proposals to restrict Hong Kong's freedoms in the Legislative Council on July 9, 2003, makes the threat to its people clear and imminent; and

Whereas it is the duty of freedom loving people everywhere to stand with the people of Hong Kong against this dangerous erosion of its long-held and cherished rights: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns any restriction of the freedom of thought, expression, or association in Hong Kong, consistent with the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992;

(2) recognizes that because Hong Kong exercises considerable influence in international affairs, as a developed economy, financial center, trading entrepot and shipping center, reductions in the existing freedom of the Hong Kong people would be of global significance;

(3) urges the Hong Kong Government and the People's Republic of China to withdraw the proposed implementation of Article 23 of the Basic Law insofar as it would reduce the basic human freedoms of the people of Hong Kong;

(4) calls upon the People's Republic of China, the National People's Congress, and any other groups appointed by the Government of the People's Republic of China to leave all revisions of Hong Kong law to a legislature elected by universal suffrage;

(5) urges immediate elections for the Legislative Council of Hong Kong according to rules approved by the Hong Kong people through an election-law convention, referendum, or both;

(6) calls upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to fully respect the autonomy and independence of the chief executive, the civil service, the judiciary, the police of Hong Kong, and the Independent Commission Against Corruption; and

(7) calls upon the United States Government, other governments, the people of the United States, and the people of the world to support freedom in Hong Kong by—

(A) making clear statements against any limitations on existing human freedoms in Hong Kong; and

(B) transmitting those statements to the people and the Government of the People's Republic of China.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 277, the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I know the hard work that the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) has put into this, along with, obviously, the leadership of the Committee on International Relations that have made it possible, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for this resolution to come forward in a timely basis.

Timeliness is critical here. Time is of the essence because of what the Chinese Communist regime is seeking to do precisely in these weeks in Hong Kong. It seems as though, Mr. Speaker, tyranny knows only one modus operandi, to repress the people by any means necessary to prevent dissent. We have seen this all too clearly with the dictator only 90 miles off our shores here, off the shores of the United States. And now a bastion of freedom in the face of one of the most tyrannical regimes in the world is facing a dire threat. Hong Kong may soon have its important freedoms destroyed by the so-called People's Republic of China, the PRC.

In an act of complete cowardice and desperation, the PRC has prepared new legislation called article 23 of the Basic Law which seeks to severely restrict the freedoms of the people of Hong Kong. The communist government in Beijing is pressuring the local government in Hong Kong to pass this legislation before July 9. Freedom of the press and freedom of expression are in great jeopardy because of this legislation. The actions of the Chinese regime fly in the face of promise made by Beijing of "one country, two systems," a 50-year commitment that was made to the world to preserve Hong Kong's respect for human liberties. But a mere 6 years after the British handed Hong Kong to the Communist Chinese, we see that the totalitarianism has no patience. It cannot stand to see the failures of its regime in the very face of the shining example that Hong Kong has been of freedom and civil liberties.

The elimination of freedom of speech holds countless dangers. For example, the recent SARS outbreak in China and many parts of the world was hastened in fact by the PRC's inability to

deal with the truths. The regime's lies and deception hamstrung the world from dealing effectively with the crisis. The truths about the epidemic's extent were unclear; totalitarianism simply could not face or did not know how to face reality. Now, this created a grave health threat in Hong Kong and really for the rest of the world.

Freedom of speech, Mr. Speaker, is important for every aspect of life. It protects individual citizens from the deception that we saw in the example of the SARS crisis by offering multiple important sources of information. The PRC claims that this law it is seeking to impose on the people of Hong Kong is a means to ensure its national security. The rest of the world rightly sees it for what it is, an attempts to roll back liberties that Hong Kong has to thwart any pressure for greater liberties throughout the rest of China.

Now, if the world does not stand up to the PRC now, this will only be the beginning of the tightening of its totalitarian grip on the people of Hong Kong. The United States Government has an obligation to stand with the people of Hong Kong. The State Department must not fail to show the outrage of the American people at the destruction of the most basic liberties which have survived up to now on the island of freedom that is Hong Kong.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to commend my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), and the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), for their strong support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most moving moments of my life in a very sad sense was the 1st of July, 1997, when I was present in Hong Kong with our then-Secretary of State Madelyn Albright as the British flag came down and the flag of Communist China went up. It was a sad moment for all of us who believe in free and open and democratic government and in human rights across the globe.

The people of Hong Kong over the decades have made an enormous contribution to the economic and cultural life of the Asia-Pacific region, and they set the standards for efficiency and honesty and integrity in government. Hong Kong has been enormously helpful to us in the war on terrorism, particularly in cracking down on the use of banks in the Asia-Pacific region to launder funds for the benefit of terrorists.

But Hong Kong's hard-earned international reputation is being severely damaged by the government's pursuit of so-called article 23 antiseditious legislation.

This resolution before us expresses our strong concerns and reservations

regarding these dangerous trends. And I hope that our passage of this legislation will influence consideration of article 23 by the legislature of Hong Kong.

This insidious bill proposed by the government in Hong Kong goes a long way towards giving the chief executive appointed by a Beijing-packed committee broad authority to ban organizations if they are prohibited to function in mainland China for "national security" reasons.

If this legislation in Hong Kong should pass, it is very likely that the government of Hong Kong will immediately face pressure from Beijing to ban the Falun Gong movement. Hong Kong representatives of evangelical Christians, labor unions, human rights organizations will find that they may also be banned in Hong Kong, as American labor activist Harry Wu was prohibited from entering Hong Kong just last year.

The ability of targeted organizations, perhaps I should say persecution organizations, to obtain a public hearing can be waived by the Hong Kong chief executive if he deems such public hearings as not practicable.

Mr. Speaker, Hong Kong's strength is its commitment to the rule of law. The legislation proposed by the Hong Kong Government calls that commitment into serious question. The democratic forces in Hong Kong, including my good friend Martin Lee, are fighting for Hong Kong's democratic future and its free and open way of life. We in this body must support their battle.

Our resolution has the strong support of both the Democratic and Republican leadership of our House, and I urge all of my colleagues to support its passage.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, today's resolution introduced by my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), and many, many co-sponsors on freedom in Hong Kong, raises a sober question for all of us to ponder. How does a state balance a need to protect itself from acts of sedition with the equally important need to protect the civil liberties of its citizens?

This very same issue arose in the early days of our own Republic, in the year 1798 to be exact. The Adams administration and the Federalist-controlled Congress used the excuse of the extreme revolutionary fervor coming across the Atlantic from France to pass a series of legislative measures known collectively as the Alien and Sedition Act. These measures were seen as effectively nullifying the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Public uproar was such that Congress repealed one of the measures and allowed the rest to die a natural death through expiration.

The point here is that all governments, as we are acutely aware of after the tragic events of September 11, have the imperative to protect their institutions and citizens from sedition, treason, and terrorism.

The question raised, however, is does article 23 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, to be considered by the Hong Kong Legislative Council this coming July 9, go beyond legitimate security needs? Does it, like the Alien and Sedition Act, threaten the civil liberties of the body politic as a whole? There are disturbing indications that the answer to these questions is an affirmative "yes."

The American Congress expressed its clear concern for the preservation of human rights for the people of Hong Kong through adoption of the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992. When Hong Kong ended British rule on July 1 of 1997 and was returned to the sovereignty of the Chinese people, an important pledge was given. That pledge was that for the next 50 years under a "one-country, two-systems" formula, Hong Kong would continue to independently exercise those economic and political freedoms which had evolved there over time.

Those who feared the worst on that July day now almost 6 years ago, the sounds of jack boots in the street of Hong Kong found that their fears were largely unfounded. There was no immediate descent of the Bamboo Curtain. Instead, however, like drops of water falling upon a rock, there has been a slow erosion of those democratic qualities which made Hong Kong unique.

American citizens of certain political or philosophical persuasions have been denied entry. An internationally respected Hong Kong newspaper whose owners turn their eyes towards Beijing have fired its most effective and outspoken journalists.

An American citizen released from a Chinese prison found the attitude of the administration at the Hong Kong university where he taught so hostile that he relocated to the United States. Ever so slowly, the rock of freedom is being washed away by these slow, but steady, drips of tyranny.

Article 23 in its present form is a major step in that erosion. This view is held not only by the overwhelming majority of the American Congress. Internationally respected Hong Kong leaders, including political leaders like Martin Li, and religious leaders like Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph Zen have reached the same conclusion, that article 23, as it is presently constructed, will open the door to a slow, steady decline of liberty in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong men and women in the street have also voiced their concerns over the implementation of article 23 and its corrosive effect on the right to peaceful assembly, such as is annually done on the streets of Hong Kong on June 4, the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Mr. Speaker, as a symbol of hope for the future of China, Hong Kong has great significance beyond that of a small urban enclave of international trade and commerce.

□ 1215

What happens there is closely watched in Taiwan, in Beijing and in greater Asia beyond. A slow twilight, sunset of liberty in Hong Kong, therefore, will have repercussions and very negative ones far beyond its own borders.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield as much time as she might consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader who has spent her professional life fighting for human rights and specifically fighting for human rights for the people of Hong Kong.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on International Relations for yielding the time and for his tremendous leadership.

What an honor it is to be on the floor today with my friend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the vice chair, I understand, of the Committee on International Relations, and with the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), two champions of human rights every place in the world. By their leadership and their tireless energy, boundless I would say, on behalf of freedom, they have set an example, freed people, made the world a freer place, and we are all in their debt.

I am pleased to join my colleague the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) as well as we speak to the issue of the preservation of freedom in Hong Kong. So it is with appreciation to all of my colleagues here present on the floor and to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), who is one of the authors of the resolution, that I join in calling for the preservation of freedom in Hong Kong, keeping promises made to the people of Hong Kong.

Mr. Speaker, when the Sino-British Joint Declaration was initiated in 1997, it guaranteed the preservation of freedoms basic to life in Hong Kong. Just 5 years later, those freedoms, freedom of press, freedom of religion, freedom of association, are under assault.

The House must act today to make clear to the Hong Kong government and to the People's Republic of China the seriousness with which the United States views any action that would subvert the promise of human rights contained in the joint resolution.

The draft provisions to implement Article 23 of Hong Kong's basic law would give Beijing the ability to determine what types of organizations could exist in Hong Kong and which views could be expressed. Many of us received a delegation led by Martin Lee, the very distinguished democracy advocate in Hong Kong, just a few weeks ago,

where they expressed their concern and the impact that this action would have on Hong Kong, as we have known it, as a dynamic society where business has flourished because information has been able to flow freely.

This action is a significant threat to Hong Kong's autonomy and to the freedoms that make it a center for the exchange of information and ideas. It is an even greater concern because the movement toward popular democracy, as required under the basic law, has not begun.

I commend President Bush on the administration's forceful opposition last Thursday to the Article 23 proposal. The administration statement emphasized that: "Hong Kong's special status, endorsed by the United States under the Hong Kong Policy Act, depends on the local authorities' protection of human and civil rights and the preservation of the territory's autonomy. The United States opposes any law that threatens the territory's unique identity, including the current version of Article 23 legislation." That is from the President's statement.

Hopefully, after leaders in Hong Kong and Beijing reflect seriously on those words and the strong sentiments contained in the legislation we are considering today, they will move to amend the proposal to preserve the freedom of the people of Hong Kong that they were promised.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the leadership again of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), and the leadership of the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) in introducing this legislation. I was pleased to join him in doing so.

The Committee on International Relations has provided an opportunity for the House to go on record in favor of the preservation of human rights in Hong Kong in opposition to actions that threaten them. I urge overwhelming adoption of this measure to underscore our commitment to the cause of freedom in Hong Kong.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), my good friend.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

Today, I rise in strong support of the Hong Kong resolution. I doubt many of us in this Chamber will forget the Cold War and the United States' dedication to protect any country threatened by a Communist regime.

Today, I ask, have we forgotten the image of that one Chinese student blocking a barrage of tanks or the hurriedly erected plaster Lady Liberty proudly emulating our own Statue of Liberty displayed so prominently as a symbol of the Chinese people's desire to be free? How can we ever forget the hundreds of Chinese martyrs killed on that warm June night in Tiananmen Square 14 years ago?

Because we are a Nation that does not forget the human tragedy and sufferings committed by Communist regimes in the last century, we cannot watch silently today as the freedoms enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong are being stripped away.

Prior to 1997, Hong Kong was not only an economic powerhouse, it served as a beacon of hope that one day rule of law, transparency and a republican form of government would be a reality in the People's Republic of China. However, rather than adopting Hong Kong's free society, China now flexes its oppressive muscles over Hong Kong themselves, depriving them not only of the freedom of speech, religion and association agreed to by the British and Chinese Government in 1997, but these freedoms that are guaranteed because they are inalienable and endowed to all members of the human race. As our President has said, that freedom is a right of every person and the future of every Nation.

Today, I rise to join in solidarity with the often lonely voice of Hong Kong's Bishop Joseph Zen, who is a tireless advocate of the people of Hong Kong and a vocal fundamental critic of the Chinese government's disregard of the fundamental rights of the governed. Bishop Zen risks his own life by speaking with moral authority, and his commitment to protect the dignity of each human person should be supported.

Congress must send a clear message to the Chinese Government that we expect them to abide by the premise of Hong Kong's basic law which grants gradual progress towards the democratic election of the legislature and chief executive. Furthermore, the United States must continue the fight against communism, an oppressive regime that denies each individual his or her dignity and holds countries that violate human rights accountable.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution because it protects what America has, what America stands for and what Hong Kong does not want to lose, the gift of freedom.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) for his important resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we reverse the balance of our time.

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

While we are waiting for the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), the prime author of this legislation, to arrive here let me just again reiterate a few things.

I like many others have followed the ongoing human rights abuses by the People's Republic of China, and many of us had hoped, and this hope is now at grave risk, that Hong Kong might avoid the same kind of repressive regime visited upon it that other people in the People's Republic of China live with and endure each and every day.

Our hope is that the Chinese Government, especially with its work in the

WTO, with its attempt to join the world leaders as a major player, that it would respect the democratic rights of Hong Kong and learn from it. Hong Kong can be a beacon for them not only economically, but also in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The dictatorship in Beijing really has nothing to fear but fear itself by giving in, it seems to me, to basic and fundamental human rights.

Over time, if the PRC were to do that, they certainly would be respected, but if they do the opposite, they will be held in contempt, and what this resolution says, it is a cautionary flag, do not do it, do not bring the repressive policies that you have foisted upon your own people to the people of Hong Kong. The PRC has already promised, as we all indicated earlier, that there would be at least a 50-year hiatus where at least a semblance of freedom would be experienced.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), my friend and colleague.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chairman for yielding me the time.

I rise in support of H. Res. 277, expressing the sense of this House in support of freedom in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is a jewel. We are all admirers of Hong Kong on both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans.

Hong Kong has had for years what is probably the freest economy in the world, and along with that they have had civil rights and civil liberties of which Hong Kongers themselves have been jealously protective. Nothing has changed in that respect except that under the one country-two systems formula the government of the People's Republic of China is getting ahead of themselves by many decades.

They promised 50 years, and instead, they are now seeking to replace the traditional civil law of Hong Kong with a subversion law, with a national security law that will take away fundamental rights of speech, association, membership in labor unions, journalists doing their job. The scope, the breadth, the discretion given to the executive in this proposed law is absolutely breathtaking, and we feel compelled for this reason because these legal changes are imminent in Hong Kong to express ourselves in support of the people of Hong Kong.

An article in the South China Morning Post just this Saturday reported on a controversy ignited by two causes here in America: first, this resolution, the fact that it has been reported by the Committee on International Relations and has come to the floor; and second, a White House statement in support of freedom in Hong Kong. In response to these modest congressional and presidential expressions of support for freedom, noting that the Article 23 legislation being considered in Hong Kong "could harm local freedoms and autonomy over time," a spokesman for

the foreign ministry in the People's Republic of China said that other nations should not interfere in the debate about free expression in Hong Kong because it is an "internal affair."

With all due respect to the PRC foreign ministry, the freedom of people to think, to express themselves, to belong to organizations, to associate with others is not an internal affair. It is a fundamental human right. The human dignity of the people of Hong Kong is of itself sufficient reason to approve this resolution, but if that were the sole justification for this resolution, then we would probably be considering thousands like it.

A second reason we act today is because it is in the interests of the United States to do so. In the Hong Kong Policy Act, approved unanimously by both Houses of Congress and signed by the President on October 5, 1992, the United States declared that, "Hong Kong plays an important role in today's regional and world economy. This role is reflected in strong economic, cultural and other ties with the United States that give the United States a strong interest in the continued vitality, prosperity and stability of Hong Kong."

Our law also declares that "support for democratization is a fundamental principle of United States foreign policy. As such, it naturally applies to United States policy toward Hong Kong. This will remain equally true after June 30, 1997," that of course being the date of the handover from the British to the Chinese of the territory of Hong Kong.

Finally, the law says, "The human rights of the people of Hong Kong are of great importance to the United States and are directly relevant to United States interests in Hong Kong. A fully successful transition in the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong must safeguard human rights in and of themselves.

"The United States should play an active role, before, on, and after July 1, 1997, in maintaining Hong Kong's confidence and prosperity, Hong Kong's role as an international financial center, and the mutually beneficial ties between the people of the United States and the people of Hong Kong."

That is why we are here today. If we think back to the time prior to the handover, prior to 1997, we were assured that this could not happen, that it would not happen, and yet through an excretion of changes in the law, through inroads that are being made on the traditional freedoms that Hong Kongers have enjoyed, so slowly perhaps as to be imperceptible but now this one fell swoop suddenly very noticeable, the PRC is taking away the freedom of one country-two systems, that was guaranteed in 1997.

□ 1230

Our former colleague, Connie Mack, warned us in 1994, on the 10th anniversary of the Sino-British Declaration on

the question of Hong Kong, of the failure of the Communist Government of China to respect the declaration, even as of that date: "Immediately after signing the Joint Declaration, the PRC started working on the Basic Law, Hong Kong's post-1997 'mini-constitution.' The Basic Law was enacted not by Hong Kong's Legislative Council, the Legco, but by Beijing's rubber stamp National People's Congress that contravened the Joint Declaration. It subordinates the Legco to a Beijing-appointed executive; assigns a power of judicial interpretation to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, rather than to Hong Kong's courts; and it requires a law against 'subversion,' a concept unknown in the common law."

It is that illegitimate law against subversion that today the House revisits. This is what is about to take place in Hong Kong. If the world is silent, as this interruption, as this deprivation of freedom moves forward, then our liberties, too, will be at greater risk.

Hong Kong is a jewel for the entire planet. It is our hope that the freedom that Hong Kong has traditionally enjoyed will spread northward throughout the People's Republic of China, that that will be the ultimate result of one country, two systems, not the other way around. But what is happening now, as we meet here today, is that this island of freedom is being weighted down by the long-standing rule of the Communist Party in the People's Republic of China; that the law is simply a tool of the party itself and not independent.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the careful consideration that this Chamber is giving to this resolution. I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations for bringing this resolution to the floor in a timely fashion, and I expect that all of our colleagues will vote in support of freedom at this important time in both China's history and our own.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for H. Res. 277, a resolution supporting freedom and democracy in Hong Kong.

Throughout its modern history, Hong Kong has stood as a beacon of freedom and stability. With the Hong Kong people's ingenuity and hard work, the territory became a stable and prosperous democracy.

Since Hong Kong's 1997 change of status, the citizens of Hong Kong have faced the challenge of maintaining their civil liberties and democratic self-governance. While the Basic Law guarantees Hong Kong fifty-years of self-governance and freedom, the Beijing-appointed government of Hong Kong has been working to limit freedom in the territory.

I strongly support the goals of H. Res. 277. As a long-time friend and supporter of Hong Kong, I believe we must continue to support the Hong Kong people's efforts to preserve and advance the cause of freedom and democracy. I applaud the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) for sponsoring this resolution and I will continue to work with my colleagues

to protect and advance freedom, democracy, and the rule of law in East Asia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The time of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) has expired.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time having expired, the question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 277.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT ESCALATION OF ANTI-SEMITIC VIOLENCE WITHIN PARTICIPATING STATES OF OSCE IS OF PROFOUND CONCERN AND EFFORTS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO PREVENT FUTURE OCCURRENCES

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 49) expressing the sense of the Congress that the sharp escalation of anti-Semitic violence within many participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is of profound concern and efforts should be undertaken to prevent future occurrences.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 49

Whereas the expressions of anti-Semitism experienced throughout the region encompassing the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have included physical assaults, with some instances involving weapons or stones, arson of synagogues, and desecration of Jewish cultural sites, such as cemeteries and statues;

Whereas vicious propaganda and violence in many OSCE States against Jews, foreigners, and others portrayed as alien have reached alarming levels, in part due to the dangerous promotion of aggressive nationalism by political figures and others;

Whereas violence and other manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination can never be justified by political issues or international developments;

Whereas the Copenhagen Concluding Document adopted by the OSCE in 1990 was the first international agreement to condemn anti-Semitic acts, and the OSCE participating States pledged to "clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and discrimination against anyone as well as persecution on religious and ideological grounds";

Whereas the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its meeting in Berlin in July 2002 unanimously adopted a resolution that, inter