

fighting off Japanese aggression in the War of the Pacific.

These brave soldiers, who were outmanned and outgunned, helped hold Japanese forces at bay for 2 years, preventing enemy victories in other parts of the Pacific theater.

Following the surrender of Allied forces on the island, Filipino veterans were subjected to some of the harshest treatment in WWII's recorded history.

This is perhaps best symbolized by the Bataan Death March, where over 10,000 veterans—both American and Filipino, side by side—gave the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

That is why I would like to thank my colleague, Representative DARYL ISSA, for offering H. Res. 622.

This important resolution, "Reaffirms, recognizes, and honors the Filipino World War II veterans for their defense of American democracy and important contribution to the victorious outcome of World War II."

And while I proudly support Mr. ISSA's efforts here today, I must point out that there is much more work left to be accomplished in fully honoring and recognizing the sacrifices of our brave Filipino WWII veterans.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, as many of these veterans enter the sunset of their years, America has yet to fully extend health and survivor benefits to them and to their spouses.

Filipino veterans did not abandon America in her hour of need. Nor should we abandon them in theirs.

Congress must pass legislation to correct this inequity immediately. Several bills that more fully honor the sacrifices of these brave veterans, including, H.R. 302, the Filipino Equity Act, introduced by my colleague and fellow Californian BOB FILNER, are pending before this House.

H.R. 302 would restore all benefits promised to Filipino veterans. I call on the leadership of this House to bring H.R. 302 to the floor for a full vote before we adjourn this fall.

The words of this resolution are well deserved and welcomed by all who honor the sacrifices by Filipino veterans of WWII. But it is time we match our words with action.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I also have no other 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 gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 622, as amended.

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. Madam 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 question will be postponed.

CONDEMNING THE REPRESSION OF THE IRANIAN BAHAI COMMUNITY AND CALLING FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF IRANIAN BAHAI'S

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H.Con. Res. 415) condemning the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community and calling for the emancipation of Iranian Baha'is.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 415

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 2000, Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it deploras the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith;

Whereas on March 20, 2006, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ms. Asma Jahangir, revealed the existence of a confidential letter dated October 29, 2005, from the Chairman of the Command Headquarters of Iran's Armed Forces to the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force, stating that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, had instructed the Command Headquarters to identify members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and monitor their activities;

Whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur expressed "grave concern and apprehension" about the implications of this letter for the safety of the Baha'i community;

Whereas in 2005 the Iranian Government initiated a new wave of assaults, homes raids, harassment, and detentions against Baha'is, and in December 2005, Mr. Zabihullah Mahrami died after 10 years of imprisonment on charges of apostasy due to his membership in the Baha'i Faith; and

Whereas beginning in October 2005, an anti-Baha'i campaign has been conducted in the state-sponsored Kayhan newspaper and in broadcast media: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for the October 29, 2005 letter, calls on the Government of Iran to immediately cease such activities and all activities aimed at the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community, and continues to hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding all the rights of its nationals, including members of the Baha'i community; and

(2) requests the President to—

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

(B) emphasize that the United States regards the human rights practices of the Government of Iran, including its treatment of the Baha'i community and other religious minorities, as a significant factor in the foreign policy of the United States Government regarding Iran; and

(C) initiate an active and consistent dialogue with other governments and the European Union in order to persuade the Government of Iran to rectify its human rights practices.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 415, introduced by my colleague from Illinois, Mr. KIRK.

H. Con. Res. 415 condemns the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community and calls for their emancipation. This resolution notes the long-standing concern by Congress for the protection and status of religious minorities in Iran.

The resolution requests that the President call for the Government of Iran to emancipate the Baha'i community and guarantee them basic freedoms in accordance with international and human rights standards and obligations. It emphasizes that Iran's treatment of religious minorities and human rights practices are a significant consideration for the U.S. in formulating our policy toward the Iranian regime.

The Baha'i faith originated in Iran during the 19th century, and their community is one of the largest minorities in religion in Iran. The current government recognizes them as not in true keeping with the faith of the Iranian regime. They are not allowed to practice their faith, and they are further undermined by their inability to maintain contact with Baha'is living abroad.

Baha'is are discriminated against in nearly every sector of Iranian society. In October of 2005, the text of a secret Iranian Government document calling for the identity and monitoring of all Baha'is living in Iran became public. According to Human Rights Watch, Madam Speaker, the anti-Baha'i letter came amid a campaign in the state-run press that began 1 year ago.

Madam Speaker, I recommend that all interested parties who want to learn more about the plight of religious minorities in Iran read the recently released "International Religious Freedom Report" published by our Department of State. This report reaffirms the brutal and oppressive nature of the regime in Tehran. The persecution of the Iranian Baha'is is but one grim example in point.

Madam Speaker, as a cosponsor of this resolution, I strongly support the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 415, and I ask my colleagues to vote "yes."

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. First, I would like to congratulate my good friend and colleague, Congressman MARK KIRK, for his leadership and strong voice in the defense of Baha'i communities all over the world. I am proud to be the original Democratic cosponsor of this important resolution.

The Baha'is are Iran's largest religious minority, but because the Baha'i faith is not one of the four religions recognized by the Iran Constitution, Baha'i do not have rights under Iranian law. Iranian courts have ruled that people who injure or kill Baha'is are not liable for damages because the Baha'is are "unprotected infidels." The absurdity of the statement that they are "unprotected infidels" says a great deal about this regime.

Congress has long recognized the plight of this suffering community. Since 1982, we have passed eight resolutions condemning the treatment of the Baha'i in Iran. On March 28 of this year, the White House expressed concern for a worsening situation of the Baha'i in Iran and called on the Government of Iran to respect the religious freedom of its minorities.

Madam Speaker, the situation of the Baha'i in Iran has deteriorated dramatically over the past year with an increase in arbitrary arrests, raids on private homes and imprisonments, a defamation campaign in the government-sponsored press and the continued denial of access to higher education to young men and women of the Baha'i faith.

Iran must grant the Baha'i their full human rights, as this resolution makes crystal clear. Our resolution calls on the Government of Iran simply to grant Baha'i the rights guaranteed by international law. Iran, Madam Speaker, is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and several other human rights treaties, but it is obvious that Tehran has no more intention of observing the requirements of these agreements than it does the nuclear agreements it has signed.

The international community must not be mocked. It must hold Iran to those standards to which it has voluntarily committed itself. In fact, Iran's contempt for basic human rights standards knows no bounds. Earlier this year, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei ordered the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard and the police force to identify Baha'is and collect information on their activities. This is particularly worrisome in light of the Iranian Government's view of the Baha'is as non-persons.

The Anti-Defamation League has called this order "reminiscent of the laws imposed on European Jews in the 1930s by Nazi Germany." Our resolution rightly highlights this order, which was revealed by the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Madam Speaker, the U.S. Congress needs to speak out strongly against

these policies. We cannot stand by quietly as another pogrom against the Baha'is is quietly being prepared by the bigoted regime of Iran. We and the international community must put Iran on notice that such action is utterly intolerable.

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

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the sponsor and author of this resolution.

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, which condemns the Government of Iran's repression of the Baha'i community. I would like to thank my very good friend, Congressman TOM LANTOS, for joining me as the Democratic cosponsor of this important human rights resolution.

The North American Baha'i Temple is located in Wilmette, Illinois, inside my congressional district. It is a magnificent house of worship, gracing Lake Michigan's shoreline.

The Baha'i faith, founded nearly 150 years ago on principles of peace and tolerance, is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. Yet since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Government of Iran has intensified a deliberate campaign of discrimination, harassment, detention, arrest and imprisonment against the 300,000 members of the Iranian Baha'i community.

□ 1545

The plight of the Iranian Baha'is has significantly deteriorated during the last year. On March 20 of this year, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief revealed the existence of a confidential letter by the chairman of the Command Headquarters of Iran's armed services to Iran's intelligence services, military and police. In this letter, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini instructed Command Headquarters to identify all Baha'is and collect any and all information on their activities and addresses.

Our Anti-Defamation League recently compared this secret letter to steps taken against the Jews in Europe in the 1930s, and yet the secret order has not happened in isolation.

Over the past 18 months, Iranian security forces have begun imprisoning Baha'is without charges, and Baha'i youth in Iran have been denied access to university.

Further, since October of 2005, there has been a campaign of vilification against Baha'is in Kayhan, the government-sponsored press.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom recently released in its 2006 annual report citing numerous egregious human rights violations committed by Iranian

Government officials against Baha'is in Iran. The report says that, "In the past year, dozens of Baha'is were arrested, detained, interrogated and subsequently released after, in some cases, weeks or months in detention. Charges typically ranged from 'causing anxiety in the minds of the public and of officials' or 'spreading propaganda against the regime.'"

Clearly detentions based on claims of causing anxiety or spreading propaganda show a growing weakness in the Iranian regime.

That Congress is considering this resolution today is particularly significant. The Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will address the United Nations General Assembly today to call for all developing countries to join him in confronting the West. It is incumbent on Congress to reveal the real truth about this Iranian leader. We must demonstrate to the international community that while Iran's President has become a ruthless dictator who espouses hatred, discrimination and tyranny, the United States is standing for liberty and toleration and human rights and freedom, especially for Baha'is in Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I would like to thank our ranking member Congressman LANTOS for his friendship and support on this measure, a tireless advocate, a Holocaust survivor, a man who knows when the authorities call for the names and addresses of a particular minority what the next step is.

We have seen this before, and I want to particularly thank Chairman HYDE and Chairwoman ROS-LEHTINEN for their strong support, upon whom this resolution would not be coming to the floor on this crucial day in which the Iranian dictator speaks before the United Nations.

Finally, I would also like to thank Kit Bigelow and Aaron Emmel from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States for their dedication to their afflicted coreligionists inside Iran.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend from Illinois for his most gracious comments, and I am pleased to yield as much time as he might consume to our colleague and my good friend from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Mr. LANTOS for his undying commitment to human rights. It was you and Mrs. Lantos who worked to see a Human Rights Caucus created, and you have kept these issues in front of the Congress, and I salute you for that.

I also salute my colleague Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN for her commitment to human rights. I think it is important that we always bring these issues before the House.

But I think it is also important to relate to Members of Congress the context in which this resolution is occurring and to look back over the last 4 years at a similar context.

The Baha'is in Iran certainly deserve to have a full according of their rights. As a matter of fact, this House has passed eight resolutions that condemn Iran for persecuting the Baha'i faith. At the same time, the House has not passed any resolutions condemning any other Nation for the persecution of the Baha'is.

The 2006 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has identified three nations that persecute the Baha'i faith: Iran, Iraq and Egypt. I have quotes here that I would like to submit for the RECORD that establishes in each case, of Iran, Egypt and Iraq, the objections out of the 2006 annual report. This 2006 annual report also highlights concerns with the treatment of the Baha'i faith in China, Eritrea, Laos and Belarus.

I think it is important to note that the Baha'i faith is one which celebrates peace and human unity. That is why it is significant for us to always defend any religion which is trying to work for peace.

It is, therefore, paradoxical that this resolution is being offered at a time when some in the administration are on a path towards war against Iran.

I would like to submit for the RECORD a copy of the current issue from *Time* magazine which says: "What Would War Look Like?" We are talking about war with Iran, and it says, "A flurry of military maneuvers in the Middle East increases speculation that conflict with Iran is no longer quite so unthinkable." This particular article out of *Time* magazine is very significant. The Navy has said that there is a submarine, a cruiser missile, mine sweepers and mine hunters that are prepared to deploy to the Persian Gulf. It is very serious. A naval blockade of Iran would be an act of war, and if we started with that, Iran would surely escalate.

There have been independent reports published in the *New Yorker* magazine and the *Guardian* that U.S. military personnel have been or are already deployed inside and around Iran gathering intelligence and targeting information, and there are reports published in *Newsweek*, *ABC News* and *GQ* magazine that the U.S. has been planning and is now recruiting members of MEK, a paramilitary group inside of Iran, to conduct lethal operations and destabilizing operations inside Iran. I submit articles from the *New Yorker*, from an antiwar.com Web site, from the *Weekly Standard* with regard to those facts.

Our Director of National Intelligence has said that Iran is a long way away from having a nuclear capability, 5 to 10 years, and that assumes that they are working around the clock, something that has not been proffered. We should keep in mind that last week, according to the *Washington Post*, the U.N. inspectors are disputing an Iran report by a House staff of the House Intelligence Committee which, according to the comment to the IAEA, the Inter-

national Atomic Energy Agency, was "false, misleading and unsubstantiated." I have here a copy of the letter from the IAEA to the House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with respect to misleading and false information that was included in a staff report that is being circulated around Congress, and I submit it for the RECORD.

I have a copy of a letter from myself to CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, he is the chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, which asks for an accounting by the Director of National Intelligence, who was supposed to be charged with the responsibility of reviewing this particular staff report before it reached publication. I submit this for the RECORD.

I have a copy of a *Washington Post* article which characterizes the U.N. inspectors' dispute with Iran or the U.N. inspector disputing the Iran report by the House panel.

Why am I submitting all this in the context of a resolution that has to do with standing up for the rights of the Baha'i to practice their faith? Because, once again, the Baha'i would not want this resolution to be used as part of a series of steps to encourage an attack on Iran. I can state that with certainty, knowing the Baha'i religion as I do, and yet we are seeing a series of steps, covert operations affecting Iran, preparation of bombing targets having already occurred, preparations for a naval blockade. I mean, this all points to the United States moving in a direction of attacking Iran. That is antithetical to the spirit of the Baha'i faith, which we are here today to stand up for.

There will be other resolutions that will relate to Iran which will be on the floor of the House this afternoon, and I expect to be speaking to those as well.

I want to say that, as the Speaker may be aware, it was 4 years ago I warned this House that the administration was taking steps to take this country to war against Iraq, and they had not made their case, and we actually went to war against Iraq based on false pretenses.

I am once again stating to the people of this Congress that we ought to be very careful about these series of initiatives which this administration is putting forth at this time so that we have to be aware that if they are making a case for war based on these resolutions, we should be very careful about what our intention is in passing these resolutions.

I want to thank the gentleman from California for the opportunity to point out these matters relevant to Iran.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 415, condemning the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community and calling for the emancipation of Iranian Baha'is.

I have long been an advocate of a free, independent, and democratic Iran; an Iran that does not destabilize the region, that does not

threaten its neighbors, and that honors its commitments to the international community, especially on the issue of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Since 1982, Congress has declared eight times that it deplors the religious persecution of the Baha'i community in Iran and that we hold the government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, especially members of the Baha'i faith. It is with dismay that I state that this persecution continues unabated and that the time has come for us as a nation of conscious to take action.

Since the Iranian revolution in 1979, the Iranian government has demonstrated its propensity to engage in systematic persecution and discrimination of the more than 300,000 Baha'is who live in Iran. Baha'is constitute Iran's largest religious minority and over the past quarter century, more than 200 Baha'is have been summarily executed or condemned to death. Thousands more have been imprisoned, detained, assaulted, and harassed.

On March 20, 2006, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief revealed the existence of a confidential letter dated October 29, 2005, from the Chairman of the Command Headquarters of Iran's Armed Forces stating that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, had instructed the Command Headquarters to identify members of the Baha'i faith in Iran and to monitor their activities. The U.N. Special Rapporteur expressed "grave concern and apprehension" about the implications of this letter for the safety of the Iranian Baha'i community.

For years, I have been a supporter of the democratic movement in Iran, and today more than ever, the people of Iran need to be supported, empowered, and protected. In 2005, the Iranian government initiated a new wave of assaults, home raids, harassment and detentions of members of the Baha'i faith; 129 Baha'is are currently awaiting trial for, among other things, charges of "creating anxiety in the minds of the public and those of the Iranian officials." I find this simply unacceptable and call on my colleagues to condemn this form of religious repression.

The only effective way to achieve lasting peace and prosperity in the region, along with effectuating reforms in Iran's polity, is assisting the Iranian people in general and members of the Baha'i faith in particular in their quest to achieve political, social, and religious liberty.

Every government can be judged with the way in which it treats its ethnic and religious minorities. The current Iranian government gets a failing grade for its treatment of the 300,000 Baha'i who live throughout the regions of Iran. I hold the government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of the Baha'i community and call on the government of Iran to cease repressive activities aimed at Iran's Baha'i. I consider the Iranian government's human rights record as a significant factor in our foreign policy towards Iran and call for President Bush and the leaders of nations around the world to demand that the government of Iran emancipate the Baha'i community by granting those rights guaranteed to them by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights covenants.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution condemning the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community and calling for the emancipation of Iranian Baha'is.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time. We yield back the balance of our time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I also have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 415.

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 question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF IRANIAN CONSTITUTION OF 1906

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 942) recognizing the centennial anniversary on August 5, 2006, of the Iranian constitution of 1906.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 942

Whereas in 1906, one hundred years ago, the people of Iran rose in a peaceful democratic revolution against arbitrary, despotic rulers;

Whereas the people of Iran chose to confront these rulers with peaceful assemblies of thousands of people in the public spaces of Iran until these rulers received their demands;

Whereas these rulers bowed to the wishes of the people on August 5, 1906, and issued a decree for the convocation of a freely elected assembly, the Majles, to write a democratic constitution;

Whereas the Iranian constitution, written pursuant to the decree of 1906, was a democratic instrument providing for—

(1) the establishment of an independent judiciary;

(2) the establishment of an independent legislature with members directly elected by the people;

(3) socio-political progress, including the separation of religion from the affairs of government; and

(4) the commitment of the government to the territorial integrity of Iran;

Whereas the maneuvering of the imperial powers and a fundamentalist clergy crushed the democratic aspirations represented in the constitution of 1906;

Whereas the Iranian constitution of 1906 has nevertheless remained in the forefront of the aspirations of the Iranian people throughout decades of a long struggle towards progress, civil society, and democracy;

Whereas those ideals were abolished by the clerical-led dictatorship of the Ayatollahs in 1979; and

Whereas August 5, 2006, would be an appropriate day to recognize the centennial anniversary of the Iranian constitution of 1906: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the centennial anniversary of the Iranian constitution of 1906;

(2) is mindful of the democratic revolution of 1906 that led to the drafting of the Iranian constitution; and

(3) expresses its profound hope that the people of Iran will once again enjoy a democratic government in the spirit of the Iranian constitution of 1906.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 942 introduced by my friend, my colleague Mr. KING from Iowa. H. Res. 942, Madam Speaker, recognizes the centennial anniversary on August 5 of the Iranian Constitution of 1906.

□ 1600

The resolution acknowledges the democratic revolution of the Iranian people going back 100 years. It notes the democratic political system created from this movement, with clearly defined separation of powers. Finally, the resolution expresses the hope that the people of Iran will be inspired by their democratic history and once again enjoy democratic rule.

You might be surprised to learn that Persia was the first country in the Middle East to introduce a constitution and create a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament and popular sovereignty in 1906. The then-Shah signed the electoral law and the fundamental law of Persia that established an independent legislature and an independent judiciary.

While the constitutionalist movement was temporarily undermined in 1908 during the reign of Mohammed Ali Shah Qajar, it was later rescued by the reign of his son.

The ideals of the constitutional revolution were abolished with the demise of the dynasty and the rise of an absolute monarchy in 1925, and then with the Iranian revolution in 1979.

Madam Speaker, this resolution is an opportunity for the American people to send a positive message to the Iranian people about their indigenous democratic tradition. We hope that this tradition will be an inspiration for the Iranian people as they seek to increase their political freedoms.

I strongly support the passage of this resolution. I thank Mr. KING for introducing it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I want to congratulate my friend and distinguished colleague from Iowa, Congressman KING, for introducing this important resolution commemorating Iran's democratic revolution of 1906. I want equally to congratulate my friend and committee colleague, Mr. BLUMENAUER, who introduced the resolution on the very same topic at virtually the same time.

The issues raised by the King and Blumenauer resolutions are both simple and complex. On the one hand, it is important simply that we commemorate the events of 1906, a popular uprising that led to the drafting of a constitution brimming with democratic guarantees.

Indeed, this was a heady time for tens of thousands of Iranian liberals, as the writings of the esteemed contemporary British scholar Edward G. Browne make abundantly clear.

Recalling these events reminds us that the yearning of the people of the Middle East for democracy has a long and storied history. In fact, there were other significant manifestations of democratic sentiment in the Middle East in the late 19th and early 20th centuries including both in Egypt and in the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time, we cannot help but acknowledge that the high hopes of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution were quickly dashed on the shoals of reactionary resistance, foreign interference, and the lack of unity among the constitutionalists. Iran has gone through many permutations since 1906, but it has experienced very little democracy.

Today's Iran is a far cry from that envisioned by the revolutionaries and constitution writers of a century ago. The Iran of today is an authoritarian, intolerant, theocratic regime in which ultimate authority rests with the clergy, and a minority of clergymen at that.

There are elections and there is a parliament in Iran, but candidates must first be approved by an unelected clergy. The democratic promise that Iranians set out for themselves in 1906 remains unfulfilled, but it is not forgotten. It stands as a beacon of democratic hope for Iran and for others throughout the Middle East.

At a time when we have committed our resources to supporting the emergence of a liberal, tolerant Middle East, it is very appropriate that we recall one of the earliest efforts in that region to establish a constitutional democratic regime. And we honor those Iranians who struggled for positive change. That is why I support this resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do likewise.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am so pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman