

attacks. And no other ally has contributed more forces to the global war on terror. The United States owes a great debt of gratitude to Prime Minister Blair and to the great people of his nation. We honor their sacrifices and their deep friendship.

NEW THREAT TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS IN INDIA AS WARRANT IS ISSUED FOR SIKH EDITOR

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, recently an arrest warrant was issued by the government of Punjab for Dr. Sukhpreet Singh Udhoke, a practicing physician, International Secretary General of Dal Khalsa USA, and Editor-in-Chief of the Sikh publication *Shamshir-e-Qaum*. Warrants were also issued for two of his associates. This is a blatant violation of the basic rights of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are two of the rights that are basic to democracy, yet they can be suppressed at will in "the world's largest democracy."

Dr. Udhoke's crime was to publish articles in his magazine that criticized the Chief Minister of Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal, and advocated freedom for the Sikhs. For this, he is under the cloud of an arrest warrant. He has had to go underground to avoid arrest.

Madam Speaker, this is frighteningly familiar. It is reminiscent of the tactics of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, or any of the other totalitarian police states around the world which America has always opposed. How can any Member of Congress support such a blatantly authoritarian country?

I would strongly advise the Indian government to withdraw the arrest warrant against Dr. Udhoke. If it does not, it will confirm that it is the tyrannical, authoritarian, repressive regime that the minorities charge that it is, rather than the democracy it proclaims itself to be.

This is unfortunately just the latest chapter in a long line of repression against minorities. We have detailed for many years the tens of thousands of Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Dalits, and other minorities who have been murdered at the hands of the Indian government, as well as the tens of thousands of political prisoners who are held in India, according to Amnesty International. Laws have been passed that prohibit anyone from converting from Hinduism to any other religion. Booklets have been published on how to implicate Christians and other minorities in false criminal cases. Sikhs have been arrested for marches and speeches. A Christian priest was forced to drink his own urine. And the arrest warrant for Dr. Udhoke shows that the repression goes on.

Madam Speaker, India's Constitution, like ours, guarantees freedom of speech and the Indian courts have ruled that peacefully advocating independence for Khalistan (or any other minority nation) is not a crime. So what was the basis for Dr. Udhoke's arrest?

I thank Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, for bringing the Udhoke case to my attention. The Council of

Khalistan has issued a press release condemning the arrest warrant against Udhoke. I recommend it strongly to my colleagues. It shows the truth about how democracy is really practiced in India. The need for the Sikhs of Khalistan, the Christians of Nagaland, the Muslims of Kashmir, and the other minorities within India's artificial borders to claim their God-given right to be free could not be clearer. If they can be arrested for articles they publish, how can they count on the government to protect any of their rights?

It is time for us to speak up and take action. We can help by stopping aid and trade with India until the basic human rights and civil rights of all people are observed. India can start by withdrawing the arrest warrant for Dr. Udhoke and his associates. We should also put the United States Congress on record publicly in support of self-determination for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, the Muslims of Kashmir, the Christians of Nagaland, and all the people seeking freedom in South Asia in the form of a free and fair vote on their status. Isn't that the democratic way?

ARREST WARRANT FOR UDHOKE MUST BE WITHDRAWN

WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 28, 2007.—The Council of Khalistan today demanded that the arrest warrant for Dr. Sukhpreet Singh Udhoke, International Secretary General of Dal Khalsa USA and Editor-in-Chief of the periodical *Shamshir-e-Qaum*, and two of his associates be withdrawn. The arrest warrant was issued by the government of Punjab after Dr. Udhoke printed articles about the persecution of the Sikh Nation and how the Sikh religion is being attacked by the RSS and its political arm, the BJP. He criticized Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal in his articles. The Akali Dal government of Badal is in a political alliance with the BJP. Dr. Udhoke and his associates' persecution has been condemned recently by the World Peace Forum.

Dr. Udhoke is a medical doctor who takes care of the sick as well as being an activist for the interests of the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation. Dr. Udhoke, a resident of the Amritsar district, has been forced underground. He is charged with treason and antinational activities. His magazine, which was on the stands for sale, was removed by the Badal government. This action is a threat to freedom of speech, of the press, and of religion, which are basic democratic and civil rights.

Badal is the Chief Minister. As such, he is responsible for law and order. Yet he was quick to put out an arrest warrant for Dr. Udhoke for exercising his freedom of speech, but he had to be pressured into prosecuting Ram Rahim, the fraudulent baba who was impersonating Guru Gobind Singh, and he has not yet arrested him. This shows what the Badal government's priorities and allegiances are. He is more concerned with arresting those who defend the interests of the Sikh Nation and the Sikh religion than those who violate it. Ironically, despite Badal's begging and pleading, Ram Rahim supported the Congress Party in the recent elections in Punjab.

"The arrest warrant against Dr. Udhoke shows that there is no freedom of speech in Punjab or in India," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "As the late General Narinder Singh said, 'Punjab is a police state.' Only a free Khalistan will allow Dr. Udhoke and all Sikhs to enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and all the rights of free people, rights that are the birthright of all people," he said.

"Badal's conduct is shameful for a Sikh leader," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "He is the leader of a government of the Akali Dal, which was organized to protect the interests of the Sikh Nation, yet he is in bed with the Indian government that is oppressing the Sikhs. Badal is under the complete control of the Indian government, rather than working for the Sikhs. We must free ourselves of corrupt, anti-Sikh leaders like Badal and his friends by liberating Khalistan," he said. "As former Akal Takht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh said: 'If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh.'"

A report issued by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR) shows that India admitted that it held 52,268 political prisoners under the repressive "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act" (TADA) even though it expired in 1995. Many have been in illegal custody since 1984. There has been no list published of those who were acquitted under TADA and those who are still rotting in Indian jails. Additionally, according to Amnesty International, there are tens of thousands of other minorities being held as political prisoners in India.

The MASR report quotes the Punjab Civil Magistrate as writing "if we add up the figures of the last few years the number of innocent persons killed would run into lakhs [hundreds of thousands.]" The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir, tens of thousands of Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, Dalits, Bodos, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

"The Sikh masses and the Akali Dal must rise to the occasion and establish new leadership that works for the interest of the Khalsa Panth and abides by Sikh tradition," said Dr. Aulakh. "Badal and his government have betrayed the Sikh Rehat Maryada, Sikh principles, and Sikh tradition. Their leadership must be rejected for the interests of the Khalsa Panth," he said. "Remember Guru Gobind Singh's words: 'In grieb Sikhin ko deon patshahi.' It is time to realize Guru Sahib's blessing. Only a free Khalistan will put a stop to occurrences like the arrest of Dr. Udhoke," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish. The time is now to launch a Shantmai Morcha to free Khalistan."

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2829) making appropriations for financial services and general government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment by the gentleman from Virginia.

The Office of Special Counsel is a little-known agency with an important mission: it protects Federal whistleblowers from retaliation and enforces the Hatch Act, the law that prevents Federal officials from using Federal resources to engage in partisan politics.