

journalists are not crimes only against these individuals; they also impact those who are denied access to their ideas and information.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let these crimes go unpunished. We need to shine a spotlight brightly on the Philippines until those who are responsible are brought to justice. President Arroyo needs to sever any ties she has with the Ampatuan clan and should request an independent investigation by the Philippine National Bureau of Investigation. For far too long the Philippines have suffered from the plague of corruption, impunity, and violence, and it is time for the international community to demand reform.

November 23, 2009, was a sad day in the history of Philippines and a dark day for press freedom. I was proud to support the resolution's passage, which puts the United States on record as condemning this atrocious act and sending our condolences to the families and friends of the victims.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GRAYSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WE ARE LOSING OUR FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier the majority leader, in his dialogue with the Republican whip, stated that perhaps the reason that Republicans were relieved of their responsibility of being the majority in the House of Representatives was because of the substance of legisla-

tion considered at that time, rather than procedure.

Well, I am not going to quarrel with the majority leader, but I would like to change our debate from the past to the present and the future. I would like to examine some common themes that are running through the substance of the legislation that has been presented on this floor during this year.

I might say that my desire to have this hour today was prompted by a discussion I had with a member of my constituency, a woman living in my district, who came up to me at my last town hall meeting. As we were wrapping up the meeting and after I had spoken with a number of individual constituents, I was starting to leave the room when this woman, somewhat older than I, came up to me, and she had tears in her eyes and she literally began to tremble as she began to speak to me. What was noticeable immediately was that she spoke with a heavy Eastern European accent.

She explained to me that decades ago she had had the opportunity to escape from a communist country and come to this country for the freedom that it allowed her. She said, with tears in her eyes, Mr. Congressman, please help us stop what's happened. She said, I fear that we are losing our freedom here in the United States and that my children and my grandchildren will not have the same freedoms that I came to this country for. She also said that she had recently visited friends in Europe, and she said, Mr. Congressman, they are laughing at us. They are seeing us give away our freedoms in this country. Please don't allow that to happen.

I thought that it might be important for us to, on this occasion, pause for a moment and think about what that means. What do we mean when we talk about freedom in this country? What was this concept of freedom or liberty? How was it understood by our Founding Fathers? Well, the best way to try and figure that out, I would suggest, is to go to what we call our founding documents, the primary of which is the Declaration of Independence.

In the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence it says these words, We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness.

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Words that many of us have read as we have studied them in school, per-

haps not studied them enough. These words are not that difficult to understand. Their meanings are not that difficult to ascertain. "We hold these truths to be self-evident": It means that they are easily understood. By applying reason, we can see that these truths exist, not just for us but for all people who have the capacity to reason. The first thing they say is that "all men are created equal." Of course, they meant that in the universal term, that all individuals are created equal.

"That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." Now, the revolutionary aspect of that simple statement was this: Prior to that time, organized governments appeared to suggest that the rights that people had were not given to them by their creator; that is, they did not find themselves within individuals. Rather, all rights were those invested in the government, usually the majestic monarch, who, if they had a religious belief, it was that the monarch had a direct relationship with God far more direct than the individual, and that therefore the monarch decided what rights were given to the people. In other words, individuals only had rights at the sufferance of the government. The revolutionary aspect of this Declaration of Independence was not only that we were declaring our independence from the mother country but we were basing that declaration on self-evident truths that we as individuals had rights given to us directly by our God. This was a transformation of the then traditional thought that the individual was subservient necessarily to the state.

And we went further in this statement, our forefathers did. That is to declare some of those unalienable rights to be life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And then interestingly in this Declaration, our Founders thought it important to say this: "That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men." Not to obtain these rights because the rights already exist. To secure these rights. Government is to be put in a place of protecting those rights that already exist, not to give us those rights. Now, this is revolutionary because it established a relationship in which the people essentially rule. And that's why it said further that governments are instituted among men—meaning men, women, and children—among all, deriving, that is, the governments, their just powers from the consent of the governed. In other words, once again it is the notion of limited government, a government limited in its power only by that which is given to them by the people and the people only give up those rights which they voluntarily decide to give up. And then, of course, when we get to our Constitution, the actual legal document which underlies all of the laws of the United States, it begins with these words:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union,