

support it, despite my profound wish that Turkey fully embrace the full diversity represented within its borders. Further, I would like to see the current government of Turkey—as well as the governments of Greece and Armenia—fully and fairly recognize the enduring pain that conflict and hatred have wrought in its territory. I feel that under Prime Minister Erdogan, that process of acceptance and accountability has begun. We in the United States Congress can support a process of authentic reconciliation, and we should.

Turkey is our strong ally and friend. By shoring up our friendship, we can have discussions about the shortcomings we see in our ally. But this resolution fails to meet the basic standard of an enduring alliance, and therefore must oppose it.

THE WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT  
OF 2012

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 14, 2011*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as America prepares for the holiday season, it is important to pause and reflect on what we can do for others as well as ourselves. I hope that Congress will give a gift of life, health and hope by helping people around the world with something that most Americans take for granted: safe drinking water.

Nearly 900 million of the world's poorest don't have clean drinking water, and fully 2.6 billion lack access to improved sanitation. This shortfall poses a significant challenge for development and security around the world, reinforcing a cycle of poverty and instability that represents both a humanitarian disaster and a national security threat.

Water-related diseases are particularly brutal in how they target children: 90% of all deaths caused by diarrheal diseases are children under 5 years of age, mostly in developing countries. In all, 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die every year, more than from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. The economic impacts are devastating: inadequate sanitation in India alone costs that country \$53.8 billion, or 6.4 percent of its GDP every year.

What's more, dirty water directly affects every area of development. Children cannot attend school if they are sick from dirty water, and adults suffering from water-borne illnesses overwhelm hospitals and cannot go to work. Hours spent looking for and collecting clean water mean hours not spent adding to a family's economic well-being. In short, the best intentioned efforts at development fail if the basic necessity of clean water is not met.

In this period of good tidings, there is good news with water. The solution to this problem is cheap and relatively straightforward. We don't have to spend millions searching for a cure. Sometimes something as simple as teaching the value of hand washing, or providing access to technology we already have is all it takes to save millions of lives and increase economic development. What we lack is leadership and accountability.

It's time for Congress to act again. The Water for the World Act of 2012 builds on current U.S. efforts to provide those in need with

greater access to clean water and sanitation. And in this period of tight budgets, it is important that the Water for the World Act doesn't ask for any increase in funding, but rather improves the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of international aid programs. Given the strains on federal resources and the depth of need, it is essential that we are able to target our efforts more efficiently.

The Water for the World Act also gives the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development the tools needed to leverage the investments they are already making by elevating the current positions within the State Department and USAID to coordinate the diplomatic policy of the U.S. on global freshwater issues and to implement country-specific water strategies.

There is nothing more fundamental to the human condition and global health than access to clean water and sanitation. More needs to be done, and it needs to be done well. Taxpayers are rightly demanding better results and greater transparency from foreign aid. This bill provides the tools and incentives to do just that.

URGING TURKEY TO SAFEGUARD  
ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

SPEECH OF

**HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 13, 2011*

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on H. Res. 306, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.

I believe that it is important for Secretary Clinton to discuss issues of religious freedom and equality with her Turkish counterparts, but I regret that Congress often fails to acknowledge the rapidly developing situation in Turkey, where the relationship between religion and state is evolving in positive and dynamic ways.

As a devout Christian and American, I believe that all religions should be treated equally, with dignity and respect, both here in the United States and abroad, and as such, I wish the resolution before us today would have offered a more balanced perspective, acknowledging the positive steps taken by the Turkish government.

Turkey is home to many faiths, and I believe that Turks take questions and concerns about religious freedom and equality very seriously. Turks are no strangers to religious restrictions, discrimination and prejudice, which confront many of their communities abroad.

I would like to commend the government of Turkey for its recent reform of The Law on Foundations, which enables the return of or compensation for immovable properties significant to religious minority communities. Congress should also acknowledge that Turkey has preserved or restored many sites of importance to religious minorities in recent years, and we should encourage the continuation of this important work.

I applaud the Turkish government for easing restrictions on the Greek Orthodox community and the Ecumenical Patriarch, initiatives that have been welcomed by the Hellenic communities in Turkey and the United States and improved relations between Turkey and Greece.

In another example of forward movement that Congress has yet to recognize, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch led worship services in the historic Armenian church on Akhtamar Island near Van for the first time since World War I, attended by thousands of pilgrims from Turkey and abroad.

Congress should welcome Prime Minister Erdogan's commitment to return property to religious minority communities and recognize Turkey's status as a majority Muslim, democratic, secular state where all religions are equal.

The latest International Religious Freedom Report published by the State Department lists areas where the Turkish government has made significant advances, while calling for improvements in areas such as the reopening of the Halki Seminary on the island of Heybeli.

Further improvement is always possible, and as Turkey moves forward with constitutional reform efforts, I am confident that this process will recognize religious freedom, equality and plurality as universal values that should be upheld in every corner of the world.

SUDAN PRESS CONFERENCE

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 14, 2011*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit remarks I delivered at a Sudan press conference today hosted by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

SUDAN PRESS CONFERENCE,

1 P.M., DECEMBER 14, 2011, RAYBURN FOYER

We are surrounded today by photos which convey a dark but familiar story—Sudanese people, brutalized, marginalized and terrorized by their own government.

And yet, it seems this same regime has been afforded the privilege of legal representation in Washington by the Obama administration.

Earlier this week, I was outraged to learn that the genocidal government of Sudan led by Omar Hassan Bashir—an internationally indicted war criminal—now has a lawyer, Mr. Bart Fisher, on retainer in Washington.

According to a news report in Africa Intelligence, Mr. Fisher was hired with the express purpose of trying "to lift American sanctions against it."

In documentation posted on the Department of Justice Web site, it appears that Mr. Fisher was granted a license by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) at Treasury to provide this representation and that he plans to engage in political activities, among them, "Representations (including petitions) . . . to U.S. government agencies regarding sanctions . . ."

If true, I am appalled that this has been permitted and can't help but wonder if Mr. Fisher's political contributions were a factor. The administration should reverse this approval.

Martin Luther King famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

I can't help but wonder what the people of Sudan are thinking at this particular juncture when the administration struggles to find its voice on their behalf, while at the same time seemingly empowering the voice of their oppressors.

Would we even dream of allowing Milosevic, Karadzic or Gaddafi to have representation in the nation's capital?