

The reality is that the language added to this Resolution, coupled with its sister H. Con. Res. 121, is really aimed at justifying the overthrow of Assad—the result of which would be a complete assault and elimination of the Christians and other religious minorities in Syria.

The fact that this Resolution, which was originally introduced to increase protection for Christians, Yazidis and other religious minorities, has now been hijacked so it becomes a vehicle to increase the likelihood of even greater genocide against those religious minorities is a disgrace.

The reality is that if the Assad government is overthrown tomorrow, every Christian, every Yazidi, and every other religious minority and ethnic minority in Syria will be in greater danger than ever before from ISIS, al-Qaeda, and others who are slaughtering them.

This Resolution is no longer a sincere effort to protect religious minorities. It has become a resolution to give moral legitimacy to ISIS and al-Qaeda's genocidal activities, and would bring about even greater genocide of such religious minorities by eliminating the only area where they now have refuge—in Assad-controlled areas.

DEFINING CERTAIN ATROCITIES AS WAR CRIMES, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, AND GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 14, 2016

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, today we take a step reserved for only the most dire of circumstances.

The so-called Islamic State—or “ISIS”—is committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against religious and ethnic minorities. Yes, genocide. House Concurrent Resolution 75—led by Congressman JEFF FORTENBERRY, Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO, and more than 200 bipartisan cosponsors—declares that fact clearly, and was adopted unanimously by the Foreign Affairs Committee earlier this month.

Our Committee has held many hearings on this group's brutal war to eliminate religious minorities and bulldoze their histories. ISIS's tools include mass murder, beheadings, crucifixions, rape, torture, enslavement, and the kidnapping of children, among other atrocities. ISIS dynamites churches and flattens ancient monasteries. Put simply, their desire is to erase the existence of these groups from their self-proclaimed caliphate, by any means necessary.

The crime of genocide is killing or inflicting other serious harm with the intent to destroy a religious or ethnic group—in whole or in part. ISIS is guilty.

ISIS has clearly stated that it cannot tolerate the continued existence of the Yazidi community, and has followed these statements up with widespread killing and enslavement. Last fall, our Committee Members met with “Bazi,” a young Yazidi woman from Iraq, who bravely recounted her brutal captivity and abuse at the hands of the terrorist group.

ISIS also has made no secret of its “hatred for the cross worshippers.” In one of their

gruesome videos addressed to Christians, an ISIS spokesman taunts the so-called “people of the cross” saying “you will not have safety—even in your dreams—until you embrace Islam.” Next, 15 Christian captives are beheaded on camera.

Sister Diana Momeka, who testified before us after fleeing the ISIS offensive against Mosul, poignantly described a “cultural and human genocide,” and observed that today “[t]he only Christians that remain in the Plain of Niniveh those who are held as hostages.”

Most telling: Ask how many of the ancient, indigenous Christian communities survive in the areas where ISIS has consolidated its control? Experts inform me that the number is zero.

ISIS brutalizes anyone whose beliefs conflict with its own narrow ideology, including fellow Muslims. It has torn the rich religious and cultural tapestry of that region to shreds.

At a hearing four months ago, when Ambassador Anne Patterson, representing the Administration, was asked whether ISIS is committing genocide, she said that we could expect “some announcements on that very shortly.” We are still waiting.

In December, I wrote Secretary Kerry a bipartisan letter, with 29 colleagues, urging that any genocide determination must reflect the full reality of the situation faced by all groups—Yezidis, Christians, and others. The State Department is facing a statutory deadline of March 17th—this Thursday—to provide Congress with an evaluation of the genocide question. Today's consideration puts Congress on record as to how the Secretary of State should rule.

This past week, the Knights of Columbus sent Secretary Kerry an extensive 280-page report that provides both the legal basis and more than 200 pages of detailed, eyewitness documentation to support its conclusion that “ISIS is committing genocide—the ‘crime of crimes’—against Christians and other religious groups.”

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and the European Parliament have found their voices: Both have publicly concluded that Yezidis, Christians, and other minority groups are facing genocide at the hands of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Today, the voice of this body, representing the American people, will be heard.

The House of Representatives led the push to recognize genocide in Sudan in the late 1990s. I remember the critical role we played in that debate. We have recognized genocide in other situations, including Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Sadly, it is time to make this solemn declaration again, to speak the truth about the atrocities of ISIS, and hope that the Administration and the world will do the same, before ISIS has succeeded in its genocidal campaign. And it should go without saying, this brutal terrorist organization and its caliphate ambitions must be shattered.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO APPEAR AS AMICUS CURIAE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE

SPEECH OF

HON. KAREN BASS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I submit this statement to publicly express my strong opposition to H. Res. 639. I will vote against this resolution as I have already signed onto an amicus brief to the Supreme Court supporting President Obama's Executive Action on deferred action.

Today, Speaker RYAN brought a completely partisan resolution to the House Floor. H. Res. 639 would grant him the power to file an amicus brief with the Supreme Court on behalf of the entire House of Representatives to support the one-sided position of only 26 GOP-controlled states in the partisan lawsuit of *United States v. Texas*. These states are claiming that the Administration did not have the legal authority under the laws of the United States to issue its Immigration Executive Action in November 2014. Speaker RYAN does not reflect my view or the view of many of my fellow colleagues on the Hill.

What Speaker RYAN ignores is that every single Democratic and Republican President since Eisenhower has used that authority to take action on immigration, including six Republican Presidents, and as recently as 2012, the Supreme Court, including Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Kennedy, recognized the legitimacy of Executive Branch discretion in immigration.

Last year, I joined 181 House Democrats in signing an amicus brief in support of President Obama's Executive Action on immigration because the deferred action programs derive from the Executive Branch's longstanding legal authority to exercise discretion in the enforcement of our immigration laws, to take necessary actions to carry out the Executive's authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and to establish national immigration enforcement policies and priorities.

Instead of these divisive and partisan actions, Speaker RYAN should take up comprehensive immigration reform that sets out a path to citizenship for the millions of people leaving in the United States.

CONDEMNING VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA

SPEECH OF

HON. TULSI GABBARD

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 14, 2016

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H. Con. Res. 121.

Make no mistake, this is a War Bill—a thinly veiled attempt to use the rationale of “humanitarianism” as a justification for overthrowing the Syrian government of Assad. Similar resolutions were used in the past to legitimize the regime change wars to overthrow the governments of Iraq and Libya. I will have no part of it. I oppose H. Con. Res. 121 because I oppose more unnecessary, interventionist regime change wars.

We all know that Bashar al-Assad, the President of Syria, is a brutal dictator. But this resolution's purpose is not merely to recognize him as such. Rather, it is a call to action. Specifically, it is a call to escalate our war to overthrow the Syrian government of Assad.

For the last five years, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others have been working hand-in-hand to overthrow the Assad government, supposedly for humanitarian reasons. But how has our war to overthrow Assad helped humanity?

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed. Millions have become homeless refugees. Much of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed. Terrorist organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and others have taken over large areas of the country and are engaging in genocide. And now, the same people who are behind this war to overthrow Assad want to escalate that war, and this resolution is an attempt to gin up public support for such an escalation.

This resolution urges the Administration to create "additional mechanisms for the protection of civilians" which is coded language for the creation of a so-called "no-fly" or "safe zone." The creation of a "no fly zone" or "safe zone" in Syria would be a major escalation of the war. Such a measure would cost billions of dollars, require tens of thousands of ground troops and a massive U.S. air presence, and it won't work. Furthermore, it will likely result in a direct confrontation between the United States and Russia. Fortunately, President Obama has thus far resisted pressure to escalate the war in this way.

The fact is that the main area in Syria where Christians, Alawites, Shiites, Druze, Yazidis and other religious minorities can practice their faith without fear of persecution is in the Syrian territories where Assad maintains control. Therefore, the overthrow of Assad would worsen the genocidal activities by ISIS, al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations against Christians, Alawites, and other Syrian religious minorities.

H. Con. Res. 121 could be used to lay the groundwork for the escalation of the present U.S. military action aimed at overthrowing the Assad government.

Previous Congresses passed Iraq and Libya resolutions, which were used for remarkably similar ends in several ways. The Iraq resolution was introduced in 1998, and it called upon the United States to "take steps necessary, including the reprogramming of funds, to ensure United States support for efforts to bring Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi officials to justice."

The Libya resolution went further, urging "the United Nations Security Council to take such further action as may be necessary to protect civilians in Libya from attack, including the possible imposition of a no-fly zone over Libyan territory." Both of those statements, while not legally binding, were a part of the public campaign that were later used to build support for U.S. military action.

Similarly, H. Con. Res. 121 urging "the Administration to establish additional mechanisms for the protection of civilians and to ensure consistent and equitable access to humanitarian aid for vulnerable populations" could be used for similar ends by a future administration.

Of course, there are many differences in the Iraq, Libya and Syria conflicts, as well as the

military action taken. But if the U.S. learned nothing else in Iraq and Libya, we should have learned that toppling ruthless dictators in the Middle East creates even more human suffering and strengthens our enemy, groups like ISIS and other terrorist organizations, in those countries.

It is undeniable that in both Iraq and Libya, humanitarian conditions today are far worse than they were before those governments were overthrown, and ISIS and other terrorist organizations are more powerful, causing even more human suffering.

If the U.S. is successful in its current effort to overthrow the Syrian government of Assad, allowing ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups to take over all of Syria, including the Assad-controlled areas where Christians and other religious minorities remain protected, then the United States will be morally culpable for the genocide that will result.

This is exactly what happened when we overthrew Saddam Hussein in Iraq. It is what happened in Libya when we overthrew Muammar Gaddafi. To do the same thing over and over and expect a different outcome is insanity.

HONORING BLM UKIAH FIELD DIRECTOR RICH BURNS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 21, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I, along with Representative GARAMENDI and Representative HUFFMAN, rise to recognize and honor Director Rich Burns for his great contribution to the designation of the Berryessa Snow Mountain Monument by President Barack Obama on July 10, 2015.

This outstanding accomplishment was made possible by the tireless work of countless advocates. Their commitment to engaging friends, colleagues, local residents, businesses, stakeholders across the country, and policymakers in a coordinated effort to achieve permanent protection was critical to the establishment of the Monument.

Now, the Berryessa Snow Mountain Monument may be counted among the hundreds of pristine parks across the country that represent America's most treasured public resources. The region's unique geological formations will play host for the world's scientists for years to come. Centuries-old archeological sites will draw curious historians and researchers as they piece together the stories of generations past. And avid bikers, hikers, campers, horsemen, and sportsmen will be able to enjoy this landmark that is now forever open and accessible to outdoor enthusiasts from Northern California and beyond.

The Berryessa Snow Mountain Monument serves as proof of the value of the Antiquities Act and the power of the Executive to protect these lands in the face of inaction by Congress. After extensive input from interested parties and substantial evidence of this region's value, the Obama Administration honored the support of stakeholders, and the gravity of conservation.

The legacy of public lands is one of the most important we can leave for future generations. The Berryessa Snow Mountain

Monument is a critical piece of a preservation system that stretches from the Hawaiian Islands to the Maine Coast. It has been a privilege working with Director Burns to further our mutual goal of preserving our nation's great open spaces, and we look forward to collaborating in the future.

MILESTONES AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 21, 2016

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following biographies.

BAKER O'BRIEN

This year's Milestones Award Recipient for the Arts category is Baker O'Brien, an established world-class glass artist and long-time supporter of the arts in Toledo, Ohio. Ms. O'Brien was the sole apprentice of legendary glass-master Dominick Labino and has been mixing, melting, blowing and casting vividly colored glass for over 30 years.

Her work is part of private collections around the world, and some of the more well-known recipients of her work include Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani, Dr. C. Everett Koop, China Wildlife Conservation Association of Beijing, Beijing, China, and concert pianist André Watts.

Ms. O'Brien has also donated her work to a wide variety of local organizations for fundraising. Over nearly 30 years, she has further supported the development of the arts in the Toledo area by educating docents from the Toledo Museum of Art. These docents, who are primarily women, are on the front lines of public arts education. Ms. O'Brien passionately ensures that they have correct and accurate information to pass along to museum patrons regarding both the art and science of glass. Her lectures and demonstrations include a combination of not only the science and history of glass art, but also the Labino Studio. She has served as a guest artist for the museum on numerous occasions.

Outside of her work creating and supporting the arts, Ms. O'Brien has a passion for animals and owns several horses and purebred dogs. This community is truly fortunate to have a local champion for the arts and art education.

KATHLEEN ZOUHARY

Kathleen M. Zouhary is this year's Milestones Awards Recipient for her work advancing women in Business. Ms. Zouhary is a lawyer by trade and became one of the first female partners in the law firm of Fuller and Henry in 1981.

Her distinguished legal career is punctuated by other firsts, such as becoming the first Vice-President and General Counsel for St. Luke's Hospital in Toledo. She also served as the Vice-President and General Counsel for Ohio Care Health System, Inc. Her wisdom and expertise assisted physicians, board members, and executives in fulfilling the mission of providing healthcare to Toledo-area residents. Ms. Zouhary currently owns her own business, Zouhary Dispute Resolution, which provides many forms of dispute resolution services to the financial and health care communities.

In addition to her professional work, Ms. Zouhary has served on the Susan G. Komen Board for many years, the Miami University Board of Trustees, and the Toledo Legal Aid