

were separated by the war and its aftermath.

By taking up this legislation today, we are giving these Korean-American families hope. This is a long overdue step to help make these families whole again, fittingly on the anniversary of the start of the Korean war.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bipartisan bill to reunite Korean-American families.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, our conversations about the Korean Peninsula are often dominated by North Korea's nuclear and missile policy. While these are important conversations to have, we cannot lose sight of critical humanitarian and human rights concerns on the Korean Peninsula.

This bill is about a very personal and universal issue. It is about family. It is about connection. It is about bringing people together across generations and across borders.

Korean Americans who yearn for the chance to reunite once again with long-lost family deserve a chance to make that dream a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me and support this important bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

As a member of the AI task force, that was pretty cool to watch that actually go down just now for Ms. WEXTON.

For far too long, the totalitarian regime in P'yongyang has denied Korean-American families the opportunity to reconnect with their family members in North Korea.

The Divided Families National Registry Act helps to lay the groundwork for those eventual reunions for which we continue to hope and work for. May that day arrive soon.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I wish to add my voice of support for H.R. 7152, the Korean American Divided Families National Registry Act, introduced by Rep. JENNIFER WEXTON and Rep. MICHELLE STEEL, good friends and colleagues of mine on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

This bill is a very tender-hearted one, for it recognizes the pain which still lingers so many decades after the Korean War Armistice, which divided family members in the North from those in the South.

By creating a registry of those who wish to be united with family members, this bill recognizes the depth of that pain, while offering hope that at some point in the future, a more permanent reunion may be possible.

It also harbors no illusions about the Kim regime in the Communist North, requiring that our State Department raise the reunion issue in any dialogue between the U.S. and the

North, in consultation with our ally, the Republic of Korea, without allowing the North the ability to use this emotionally fraught issue as leverage in negotiations.

In other words, the aims of this bill are limited, and tempered by an understanding of the political dynamics on the peninsula, while taking a practical step towards eventual reunion of family members.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support, and I commend Reps. WEXTON and STEEL for this effort to help Korean-American families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7152, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MCCORMICK. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 901) expressing support for democracy and human rights in Pakistan, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 901

Whereas Pakistan is an important and valued partner of the United States;

Whereas, on December 10, 1948, Pakistan became one of the original signatories to, and supported the creation of, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);

Whereas, on June 23, 2010, Pakistan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);

Whereas, following the end of the most recent period of military rule in 2008, Pakistan completed its first peaceful transition of power between civilian governments led by different political parties in 2013, but the military continues to exert undue influence on the politics of the country;

Whereas, during previous elections, most recently in 2018, election monitors expressed concern about constraints on the freedom of expression and freedom of association and noted allegations of influence by the military-led establishment on the electoral process;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights Practices has often highlighted significant human rights issues in Pakistan across multiple years, including unlawful, arbitrary, and extrajudicial killings, forced disappearance and arbitrary detention by the state or its agents, the taking of political prisoners, serious restrictions on free expression and media, and substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association;

Whereas, on April 9, 2022, the National Assembly voted to remove Imran Khan as Prime Minister through a vote of no-confidence motion;

Whereas, on August 10, 2023, President Arif Alvi dissolved Pakistan's National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to allow for new elections, although the Election Commission of Pakistan subsequently announced the postponement of elections until February 2024 to redraw constituencies of the National Assembly to reflect the 2023 Census;

Whereas, on September 1, 2023, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said the Government "was committed to safeguarding and upholding the rights of all its citizens", and that the Government "would provide constitutional continuity till the next general elections are held in the country";

Whereas, on February 8, 2024, millions of Pakistanis participated in Pakistan's general election, with record numbers of women, youth, and members of religious and ethnic minority groups registered to vote;

Whereas Pakistan's 2024 general election was marked by allegations by credible international and local observers of interference in the electoral process, including electoral violence, intimidation, arrest of political actors, restrictions to freedom of assembly, restrictions on freedom of expression, and restrictions on access to the internet and telecommunications;

Whereas, on February 9, 2024, the Department of State noted that it shared the assessment of observers that the election included "undue restrictions on freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly", condemned "electoral violence" as well as "restrictions on the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms", and called for the full investigation of fraud or interference in Pakistan's general elections;

Whereas the Constitution of Pakistan states that "the Federal Government shall have control and command of the Armed Forces", and the oath taken by members of the Armed Forces swears they will "uphold the Constitution" and "not engage in any political activities";

Whereas an essential safeguard of democracy is civilian command and control of apolitical military and security forces; and

Whereas democracy, development, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) affirms its strong support for democracy in Pakistan, including free and fair elections reflecting the will of the people of Pakistan;

(2) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to strengthen engagement with the Government of Pakistan to ensure democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are upheld;

(3) urges the Government of Pakistan to uphold democratic and electoral institutions, human rights, and the rule of law, and respect the fundamental guarantees of due process, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech of the people of Pakistan;

(4) condemns attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy, including through harassment, intimidation, violence, arbitrary detention, restrictions on access to the internet and telecommunications, or any violation of their human, civil, or political rights;

(5) condemns any effort to subvert the political, electoral, or judicial processes of Pakistan; and

(6) urges the full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities in Pakistan's February 2024 election.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STANTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan resolution expressing support for democracy and human rights in Pakistan.

Since 2001, the United States and Pakistan have maintained a close relationship, working together on counterterrorism and efforts to maintain regional stability.

Pakistan is grappling with massive economic instability due to overwhelming foreign debt, record inflation, and major security threats from Pakistani Taliban and other terrorist groups.

As the nation faces the simultaneous economic and security crises, the people of Pakistan must have their rights respected and their voices heard.

The new government in Pakistan faces many challenges as they work toward reforms to secure economic stability and security for their country. However, progress toward a strong democracy must remain a top priority.

The people of Pakistan have the right to strong democratic institutions, free and fair elections, and respect for their individual freedoms and human rights. Governing institutions must be free from corruption or interference. We need more progress toward all these goals.

I have been pleased to see that allegations of interference in Pakistan's recent elections are being taken seriously. It is essential that this new government commits to rooting out corruption and promoting strong democratic values.

I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for joining me today in introducing this resolution, which has more than 100 bipartisan cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to show solidarity with the people of Pakistan and support this resolution. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 901, expressing support for democracy and human rights in Pakistan, as amended.

Pakistan faces many challenges. I believe the United States can continue to be a partner in meeting those challenges: stabilizing and growing Paki-

stan's economy, strengthening people-to-people ties, addressing the threat of terrorism, and mitigating the risks of climate change.

As we work with Pakistan, it is important that we maintain a dialogue on democracy and human rights. In fact, I believe it is a sign of the strength of our bilateral ties when we can raise these issues frankly.

Pakistan has a long history of constitutional democracy, but as we often see here, constitutional democracy is not easy. Democracies should hold each other accountable and help each other as we all work toward that ideal.

I thank Mr. MCCORMICK and Mr. KILDEE for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and for working with the Foreign Affairs Committee to update it following the Pakistani elections in February.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join in supporting this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Pakistan and the United States have worked together as partners on issues of counterterrorism, trade, investment, and helping to ensure regional stability and security.

It is because of this partnership that the United States must continue to work with the Pakistani Government to ensure democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are upheld in Pakistan and that the fundamental freedoms of the people of Pakistan are respected.

That is why, along with Congressman MCCORMICK, we joined together to introduce H. Res. 901, legislation to affirm the House of Representatives' support for democracy and for human rights in Pakistan.

This resolution calls on the Biden administration to strengthen their engagement with Pakistan on these issues and calls on Pakistani authorities to respect the freedoms of the Pakistani people such as due process, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech.

Our resolution also supports free and fair elections in Pakistan, elections that represent the will of the people of Pakistan.

Unfortunately, Pakistan's most recent election that took place in February was not carried out under conditions that credible election observers considered free or fair.

While there were some bright spots in that election, including the record numbers of women, youth, religious, and ethnic minorities being registered to vote, the election was ultimately clouded by credible allegations of electoral interference, fraud, and violence.

That is why our resolution urges the full and independent investigations of

these claims of interference or irregularities in Pakistan's February election.

H. Res. 901 is supported by over 100 Members of Congress and received a unanimous vote, 50-0, in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

I thank Mr. MCCORMICK, Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member MEEKS, and their staffs as well for bringing this really important legislation to the floor. This resolution sends a strong message.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in passing this to express our strong support for democracy, for the rule of law, and respect for human rights in Pakistan.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges that Pakistan faces are significant, but they are not insurmountable. With continued support and partnership, the United States can help Pakistan navigate these difficulties and strengthen its democratic institutions.

By passing this important piece of legislation, this resolution, we reaffirm our commitment to the values of democracy and human rights that our nations share.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H. Res. 901, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Pakistan deserve the respect of their government. The rule of law, free and fair elections, and civilian command and control of the military are fundamental tenets of democracy. It is essential that the Pakistani Government uphold these ideals.

I encourage the Pakistani Government to continue working to develop strong democratic institutions and protect the rights and freedoms of the Pakistani people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 901, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MCCORMICK. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1630

FALUN GONG PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the