SUPPORT OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 99, CONDEMNING LACK OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, the House Committee on International Relations at this time is marking up a very important resolution condemning the Cuban government, the dictator Castro, for its latest and ongoing Stalinist crackdown against the internal opposition and the independent press.

Among the scores and scores and scores of well-known dissidents and independent press members who have been arrested in recent weeks are the most distinguished members of the internal opposition in Cuba, and the four best known and also very distinguished members of the internal opposition, Felix Bonne Carcasses, Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, Vladimioro Roca Antunez, and Rene Gomez Manzano. These individuals were tried in a farcical and secret proceeding on March 1, and only a few days ago, this week in fact, Castro announced the sentences: 5 and 4 and 3½ year sentences for those dissidents.

Now, the internal opposition is working intensely and valiantly in Cuba to draw international attention to Castro's deplorable human rights violations and continues to strengthen and grow in its opposition to the dictatorship. At this time of great repression, it is indeed proper and necessary that the international community, as this Congress is doing at this time and will do next week, demonstrates its firm and unwavering support and solidarity with the internal opposition and the independent press.

What is remarkable and unexplainable and condemnable is that while, correctly so, even many of Castro's best commercial allies, such as Canada and the European Union and Latin American states, have rightfully condemned Castro's recent crackdown, and the government of Spain is reevaluating its decision to send the king of Spain there in the next weeks, and the members of the Ibero-American Summit are reevaluating their decision to go to the summit in Havana later on this year, while all that is taking place based on this crackdown by the Cuban dictator, what is the Clinton-Gore administration doing?

The Clinton-Gore administration has reiterated its intent to send the Baltimore Orioles to Cuba. I know that is unbelievable at this stage as well as in ultimate bad taste. I would say it demonstrates a perfidious bad faith. Because while the Clinton-Gore team says that it is a people-to-people exchange, the Baltimore Orioles will be going to Cuba to a stadium filled by Castro's people. Castro will decide who gets to go to the stadium, Castro will be at the stadium, and he will receive the public relations banquets that will be provided to him by virtue of the fact of this diplomatic gesture of the Clinton-Gore administration.

So I call upon the Clinton-Gore administration to stop its hypocrisy. If the administration is going to condemn the crackdown, condemn the crackdown. They should not say they are going to condemn the crackdown and then say they are sending the Baltimore Orioles, which is what they are doing. So I denounce that as hypocritical, and I denounce that as unconscionable.

At this time, more than ever, the Cuban people deserve and merit and require the unwavering support of the international community, including the government of the United States. I call upon this government to act in a way consistent with its moral and legal obligations to stop its hypocrisy; to cancel this game of Mr. Angelos and the other supercapitalists who want to go and do business with the apartheid economy of Castro, and to say that this is not the time, while the dictatorship is in its last gasps, to be sending little baseball games for the pleasure, entertainment and publicity feast of a moribund dictatorship.

So if there is any dignity left in that White House, I say cancel the Orioles' little game and be consistent with the ethical and constitutional and legal requirements of the moment and stand with a people who have suffered for 40 years and are deserving of the same democracy and self-determination and human rights that has spread throughout the rest of the hemisphere.

Mr. Speaker, It is a privilege for me to join my distinguished colleague ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN in sponsoring this important and timely resolution along with its other distinguished sponsors from both sides of the isle.

The Cuban dictatorship's repressive crackdown against the brave internal opposition and the independent press must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. The internal opposition and independent press of Cuba have our profound admiration and firm solidarity.

This resolution by the United States House of Representatives condemns Castro's stalinist crackdown on the brave internal opposition and the independent press, and demands of the Cuban dictatorship, as the entire international community *must,* the release of all political prisoners, the legalization of all political parties, labor unions and the press, and the scheduling of free and fair, internationally supervised elections.

Martin Luther King rightfully declared that an injustice anywhere constitutes an affront to justice everywhere. Now more than ever it is incumbent upon the entire international community, as the U.S. House of Representatives is hereby doing, to demonstrate its firm solidarity with the oppressed people of Cuba and with the brave Cuban internal opposition and the independent press.

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WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, last week the House narrowly passed a watered-down House concurrent resolution originally designed to endorse President Clinton's plan to send U.S. troops to Kosovo. A House concurrent resolution, whether strong or weak, has no effect of law. It is merely a sense of Congress statement.

If last week's meager debate and vote are construed as merely an endorsement, without dissent, of Clinton's policy in Yugoslavia, the procedure will prove a net negative. It will not be seen as a Congressional challenge to unconstitutional presidential war power. If, however, the debate is interpreted as a serious effort to start the process to restore Congressional prerogatives, it may yet be seen as a small step in the right direction. We cannot know with certainty which it will be. That will depend on what Congress does in the future.

Presently, those of us who argued for Congressional responsibility with regards to declaring war and deploying troops cannot be satisfied that the trend of the last 50 years has been reversed. Since World War II, the war power has fallen into the hands of our presidents, with Congress doing little to insist on its own constitutional responsibility. From Korea and Vietnam, to Bosnia and Kosovo, we have permitted our presidents to ''wag the Congress,'' generating a perception that the United States can and should police the world. Instead of authority to move troops and fight wars coming from the people through a vote of their Congressional representatives, we now permit our presidents to cite NATO declarations and U.N. resolutions.

This is even more exasperating knowing that upon joining both NATO and the United Nations it was made explicitly clear that no loss of sovereignty would occur and all legislative bodies of member States would retain their legal authority to give or deny support for any proposed military action.

Today it is erroneously taken for granted that the President has authority to move troops and fight wars without Congressional approval. It would be nice to believe that this vote on Kosovo was a serious step in the direction of Congress once again reasserting its responsibility for committing U.S. troops abroad. But the President has already notified Congress that, regardless of our sense of Congress resolution, he intends to do what he thinks is right, not what is legal and constitutional, only what he decides for himself.

Even with this watered-down endorsement of troop deployment with various conditions listed, the day after the headlines blared ''the Congress approves troop deployments to Kosovo.''

If Congress is serious about this issue, it must do more. First, Congress cannot in this instance exert its responsibility through a House concurrent resolution. The President can and

will ignore this token effort. If Congress decides that we should not become engaged in the civil war in Serbia, we must deny the funds for that purpose. That we can do. Our presidents have assumed the war power, but as of yet Congress still controls the purse.

Any effort on our part to enter a civil war in a country 5,000 miles away for the purpose of guaranteeing autonomy and/or a separate state against the avowed objections of the leaders of that country involved, that is Yugoslavia, can and will lead to a long-term serious problem for us.

Our policy, whether it is with Iraq or Serbia, of demanding that if certain actions are not forthcoming, we will unleash massive bombing attacks on them, I find reprehensible, immoral, illegal, and unconstitutional. We are seen as a world bully, and a growing anti-American hatred is the result. This policy cannot contribute to long-term peace. Political instability will result and innocent people will suffer. The billions we have spent bombing Iraq, along with sanctions, have solidified Saddam Hussein's power, while causing the suffering and deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi children. Our policy in Kosovo will be no more fruitful.

The recent flare-up of violence in Serbia has been blamed on United States' plan to send troops to the region. The Serbs have expressed rage at the possibility that NATO would invade their country with the plan to reward the questionable Kosovo Liberation Army. If ever a case could be made for the wisdom of non-intervention, it is here. Who wants to defend all that the KLA had done and at the same time justify a NATO invasion of a sovereign nation for the purpose of supporting secession? ''This violence is all America's fault,'' one Yugoslavian was quoted as saying. And who wants to defend Milosevic?

Every argument given for our bombing Serbia could be used to support the establishment of Kurdistan. Actually a stronger case can be made to support an independent Kurdistan since their country was taken from them by outsiders. But how would Turkey feel about that? Yet the case could be made that the mistreatment of the Kurds by Saddam Hussein and others compel us to do something to help, since we are pretending that our role is an act as the world's humanitarian policeman.

Humanitarianism, delivered by a powerful government through threats of massive bombing attacks will never be a responsible way to enhance peace. It will surely have the opposite effect.

It was hoped that the War Powers Resolution of 1973 would reign in our president's authority to wage war without Congressional approval. It has not happened because all subsequent Presidents have essentially ignored its mandates. And unfortunately the interpretation since 1973 has been to give the President greater power to wage war with Congressional approval for at least 60 to 90 days as long as he reports to the Congress. These reports are rarely made and the assumption has been since 1973 that Congress need not participate in any serious manner in the decision to send troops.

It could be argued that this resulted from a confused understanding of the War Powers Resolution but more likely it's the result of the growing imperial Presidency that has developed with our presidents assuming power, not legally theirs, and Congress doing nothing about it.

Power has been gravitating into the hands of our presidents throughout this century, both in domestic and foreign affairs. Congress has created a maze of federal agencies, placed under the President, that have been granted legislative, police, and judicial powers, thus creating an entire administrative judicial system outside our legal court system where constitutional rights are ignored. Congress is responsible for this trend and it's Congress' responsibility to restore Constitutional government.

As more and more power has been granted in international affairs, presidents have readily adapted to using Executive Orders, promises and quasi-treaties to expand the scope and size of the presidency far above anything even the Federalist ever dreamed of.

We are at a crossroads and if the people and the Congress do not soon insist on the reigning in of presidential power, both foreign and domestic, individual liberty cannot be preserved.

Presently, unless the people exert a lot more pressure on the Congress to do so, not much will be done. Specifically, Congress needs a strong message from the people insisting that the Congress continues the debate over Kosovo before an irreversible quagmire develops. The President today believes he is free to pursue any policy he wants in the Balkans and the Persian Gulf without Congressional approval. It shouldn't be that way. It's dangerous politically, military, morally, and above all else undermines our entire system of the rule of law.

UNTIMELY DEATH OF HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL STAR, JOHN STEWART

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

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support and sympathy for the family of John Stewart, a young Indianapolis man who promised to bring glory to the game of basketball. Unfortunately and most tragically, last Friday night he collapsed at a basketball game and died from an undetected enlarged heart.

John Stewart just turned 18 years old, was an amazing young man gifted with enormous natural talent and he used those talents to the fullest. He was very friendly, had a good sense of humor. He was loved by both students and teachers at Lawrence North High School. He measured a full 7 feet tall and tipped the scales at nearly 300 pounds.

From 1995 to 1997, John was a ball boy for the Indiana Pacers. The Pacers continued to provide John Stewart with shoes even after his days with the team because his feet were so large his family had a hard time finding shoes that would fit him. It was reminiscent of Shaquille O'Neal, who had given his shoes to a young man not because they could not afford to buy size 16–17 shoes but because in the marketplace those sizes were very difficult to locate. John Stewart had led Lawrence North 24 to 2, with 22 points and 13 rebounds. The third-quarter numbers were 10 points and 7 rebounds.

The case of John Stewart reminds us how imperative it is to understand before kids enter the world of athletics, especially something as strenuous as basketball, that they have to have a thorough heart evaluation to forego a cardiac condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. It is a disease of the heart that has some genetic tendencies. It causes a very enlarged heart. The normal treatment for that, of course, is to avoid strenuous physical activity.

John Stewart was second-ranked Lawrence North's star center. He collapsed Friday during the Wildcats' Class 4A regional championship game with Bloomington South at Columbus. Unfortunately, he never regained consciousness. He had also been awarded a scholarship to attend the University of Kentucky during the next school season.

So I wanted to say on behalf of the many people who will not have an opportunity to express their support for the John Stewart family, his mother, his father, his sisters, his brothers, his aunts and his grandparents, and to all of the students who are in shock and in bereavement at Lawrence North that there is a passage of scripture that often refers to a situation like this in that ''death has no democracy, it visits anyone regardless of what their ages are.''

But it could be that John Stewart's life was cut off prematurely to alert this Congress, this country, to the need for allowing children to have thorough heart examinations before they go in. The passage of scriptures says that perhaps John may have laid down his life so that others may live.

In closing, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, I would simply recall for the John Stewart bereaved family at this time the words that the poet who reminds all of us, ''for every drop of rain that falls a flower grows''; and certainly John Stewart has brought in the rain where a flower will grow, and said, ''somewhere in the darkest night a candle glows.''

John Stewart's remains will be laid to rest on Friday. And unfortunately, I cannot attend the Hershey event with my colleagues because I will be attending John Stewart's going home services if you will. But he does remind me that for every drop of rain that falls a flower grows and somewhere in the darkest night that a candle glows.

I know wherever John Stewart's spirit is at this time, regardless of the pain