around the world. The U.S. must be a strong advocate of human rights, particularly when basic freedoms are being wantonly abused as they are in Vietnam.

We must continue to shine a light on Vietnam. I urge the passage of this resolution. I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 427, which recognizes the courageous leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church in Vietnam and stresses the urgent need for the government of the Republic of Vietnam to respect religious freedom and basic human rights. I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for offering it today.

Mr. Speaker, Vietnam's oppression of religious liberty, which is well documented in the State Department Reports on Human Rights and Religious Freedom, as well as by credible human rights organizations, continues to deteriorate. This is a regime with clear non-ambiguous policies designed to control and to repress religion. At its Seventh plenum in January 2003, the Communist Party's Central Committee stepped up its persecution of religious groups issuing a resolution which calls for the establishment of cells of Communist party members within each of Vietnam's six approved religions in order to foil ''hostile forces.''

Persecution of Buddhists highlighted in this resolution has been particularly harsh. Many leading clergy of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam have been imprisoned including the church's Patriarch, the Most Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, who is now 85 years old and has been detained for the past 21 years.

The government has continually attempted to control the selection of new clergy for the Unified Buddhist Church, restricting the travel of and intimidating monks attending selection meetings. We know that other groups suffer severe religious persecution as well, including the Christian Montagnards in the Central Highlands, Catholics and members of indigenous Vietnamese religions.

One particular case, Mr. Speaker, that has been disturbing, one of many, is that of Father Ly, an outspoken critic of the regime who is currently serving a 10-year sentence for calling on the government for the return of confiscated church properties and respect for religious freedom. Amazingly, his nephews, Nguyen Vu Viet and Nguyen Truc Cuong, and his niece, Nguyen Thi Hoa, recently received prison sentences after a sham trial, after being found guilty of dubious charges of ''abusing democracy.''

Next week, Mr. Speaker, the Vietnamese government has the chance to set the record straight when their appeal will be heard. They should be released. They have to be released along with Father Ly. And I think this Congress, the House and the Senate, needs to be watching very carefully if our relationship is to progress. We have to see significant and sustained progress on these cases and, of course, those with regards to the Unified Buddhist Church.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has not been lax in trying to raise these issues, as I know my good friend and colleague Mr. LEACH knows because he has worked so strongly in this area. ''I offered The Vietnam Human Rights Act'' as an amendment to the State Department bill, which is now pending before the House and Senate. Similar legislation has already passed the House before and hopefully the session, the Vietnam Human Rights Act will become law. This legislation sets up a number of criteria that would seek to move the ball forward with regard to human rights, and in particular, the area of religious freedom.

Again, it is a good resolution that has been offered today and it deserves the honest support of this body.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his profound statement and for his leadership on so many human rights issues as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS).

Mr. Speaker, I would only conclude with the observation that there are very important abstract principles at issue here but they are made concrete by references to individuals which the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) has just done. Individuals matter because it is with the individual that the picture at large can be revealed. So we care about the individuals in this particular instance as well as the principle of the freedom of religion.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to this ill-conceived and ill-timed bill. I would like to remind my colleagues that according to our own Constitution, Congress is prohibited from making any law ''respecting the establishment of religion or the free exercise thereof.'' Yet are we not doing that today—albeit in a country some 10,000 miles away? Why on earth are we commending one particular church in Vietnam in the name of ''religious freedom''? At the risk of being blunt, what business is the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam of the United States Congress? The answer, of course, is that this legislation is of a much more political than a religious nature: this bill tells the Vietnamese government how it should enforce its own constitution, commits the United States government to promoting religious freedom in Vietnam, and tells the U.S. embassy staff in Vietnam to ''closely monitor'' religious issues in Vietnam. It is an attempt to meddle in the affairs of Vietnam and force them to adopt the kinds of laws we think they should have. Mr. Speaker, as much as we value our own religious liberty, we must realize that setting the example of the benefits of a society that values such liberty is much more effective than demanding that other countries pass the kinds of laws we want them to pass. The unintended consequences of this otherwise well-meaning legislation is that relations with the Vietnamese government will likely suffer, making it less likely that Vietnam's leaders look favorably upon our own history of religious liberty.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 427, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING VICTIMS OF CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE THAT TOOK PLACE FROM APRIL 1975 TO JANUARY 1979

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 83) honoring the victims of the Cambodian genocide that took place from April 1975 to January 1979.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 83

Whereas beginning in April 1975 and ending in January 1979 at least 1,700,000 to 3,000,000 people were deliberately and systematically killed in Cambodia in one of the worst human tragedies of the modern era;

Whereas in 1975, Pol Pot led the Communist guerilla group, the Khmer Rouge, in a large-scale insurgency in Cambodia that resulted in the removal of Cambodians from their homes and into labor camps in an attempt to restructure Khmer society;

Whereas traditional Khmer culture and society were systematically destroyed, including the destruction of temples, schools, hospitals, and other buildings;

Whereas families were separated in an attempt by the Khmer Rouge to prevent family formation, many individuals were punished or killed for education, wealth, or sophistication, and doctors, nurses, clergy, teachers, business owners, artisans, city dwellers, and even those individuals who wore glasses were singled out for execution since they were seen as bourgeois or contaminated with Western influence;

Whereas the Khmer Rouge maintained control by mass public torture, executions, and dismantling of the social order;

Whereas men, women, and children were sent to labor camps and forced to do strenuous farm work and famine and disease became epidemic while medicine and medical care were non-existent;

Whereas after the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown in 1979 thousands of Cambodians fled on foot to refugee camps in

Thailand and many refugees were processed again in other camps in the Philippines and Indonesia;

Whereas from these refugee camps approximately 145,149 Cambodians made their way to the United States between 1975 and 1999, with the majority of Cambodians arriving in the early 1980s;

Whereas these Cambodians were subsequently resettled in communities across the United States;

Whereas according to United States Bureau of the Census figures for 2000, there are approximately 206,053 Cambodians currently living in the United States;

Whereas despite their tremendous loss, Cambodians and Cambodian-Americans have shown courage and resiliency;

Whereas the memory of those Cambodians who were killed during the Cambodian genocide must never be forgotten and the survivors of the Cambodian genocide should be honored;

Whereas the resettlement of Cambodians reflected the hard work of voluntary agencies through funding by the Federal government, individual citizens, and Federal, State, and local governmental agencies, all working together to assist the new arrivals in adjusting to American society;

Whereas Cambodian refugees have done much to further successful resettlement in the United States, including through mutual assistance associations organized by previously resettled Southeast Asian refugees to help new refugees through the provision of essential social, psychological, cultural, educational, and economic services; and

Whereas while remembering and honoring both their traditional culture and their traumatic past, the new generation of Cambodian Americans is contributing to American society in meaningful ways: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) honors the victims of the genocide in Cambodia that took place beginning in April 1975 and ending in January 1979; and

(2) is committed to pursue justice for the victims of the Cambodian genocide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 83.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 83, honoring the victims of the Cambodian genocide. It is difficult to gain a full perspective on historic events, particularly those that are most inhumane, such as genocide. Tragically, the 20th century, which was marked by advances in medicine and nutrition that raise the prospect of nearly doubling the life span of countless people around the globe, also was marked by explosions of hatred that mercilessly ended life for millions of others. The killing of so many Cambodians under the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s stands among the worst of those atrocities.

In the field of law, there exists the precept of a statute of limitations. But for genocide, mankind's greatest crime, such a precept cannot be bound merely by time. There also must be accountability. While justice and time are interwoven, the preeminent principle is justice. To the extent that accountability today is inadequate, accountability tomorrow must follow.

For some, justice for the Cambodian genocide seems a frail prospect, given that almost a generation has passed in that country. Indeed, it does not lie within our power to construct perfect justice for that, or any other, genocide. But as time goes on and mortality places more of the perpetrators beyond our reckoning, the most important accountability is not necessarily monetary, penal or retributive. The march of time underscores the importance of memory. Victims must be remembered and civilized peoples of the world must commit themselves to ensuring that such horrific circumstances are not repeated within human history.

It is in this context that this resolution assumes its proper importance. I would like to commend the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for her efforts in introducing H. Con. Res. 83, which honors the victims of the Cambodian genocide, gives voice to our desire for justice, and notes the contributions of Cambodian Americans to our own society.

To some, this resolution may seem unimportant because it principally marks an instance of symbolism. I disagree and believe that its power derives precisely from its symbolism. This resolution deserves our unanimous support.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to commend my dear friend and wonderful neighbor, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for introducing this important resolution. The gentlewoman has shown enormous leadership on behalf of Cambodian Americans and her work is greatly appreciated by all of us.

The resolution calls attention to one of the most horrendous chapters in contemporary world history. The Cambodian genocide which unfolded from April 1975 to January 1979. Mr. Speaker, 3 million Cambodians living in cities were forced into the countryside in a brutal and bloody effort to reshape Cambodian society. The Khmer Rouge targeted these city dwellers for execution, along with anyone else deemed by them to be educated, sophisticated or just different.

By the time the Khmer Rouge was forced from power in 1979, over 1.7 million Cambodian citizens amounting to over 20 percent of Cambodia's population had perished. When a number of us visited Cambodia not long ago, the vestiges of this brutal onslaught of innocent men, women and children was still profoundly visible. Hundreds of thousands of Cambodians had been forced to flee their native lands. Many were living in squalid refugee camps in Thailand and other Southeast Asia nations.

During the 1980s, some 150,000 Cambodians were received by our own country as refugees, and they began the long process of rebuilding their shattered lives. Cambodians who had lost most of their families and been subject to forced labor and torture found new lives here in the United States, and they began the difficult process of rebuilding their shattered dreams.

Cambodian Americans now number over 200,000, Mr. Speaker, and they are making an enormous contribution to our Nation's economy and to the development of our diverse culture. These new Americans continue to face many challenges rebuilding their lives in the United States even with financial, psychological and educational assistance provided to them. With passage of this resolution, we remember the victims of the Cambodian genocide, not only those who perished in Cambodia's Killing Fields, but those who were left to live with the physical and psychological scars inflicted by the hands of the brutal Khmer Rouge.

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The courage and resiliency of these survivors is an inspiration to all of us. We cannot undo the massive devastation of the horrendous 4 years of Cambodia's history. By remembering the victims of the Cambodian genocide, however, we do our best to prevent such atrocities from ever happening again.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this important resolution.

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

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and again thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for proposing it. We share Long Beach, which is the home of a large Cambodian exiled community. Let me note the people who are exiled in Long Beach and elsewhere in the United States from Cambodia are there because they fled terror almost beyond imagination.

Cambodia was pushed into a regional conflict in the 1960s. They did not really choose to do so. Sihanouk, their king, tried to keep that country out of that conflict; and eventually, as I say, they were pushed into it. And who pushed them? Well, the Vietnamese certainly pushed the Cambodians into

it, but so did the United States of America. While we were looking towards protecting our interests in Southeast Asia, we made the Cambodians vulnerable to the type of atrocities that cost the lives of millions of Cambodians and left so many people exiled in the United States and elsewhere throughout the world.

That conflict was something that we should not forget, and we should not forget that during this massacre that followed America's withdrawal from Vietnam in Cambodia, where millions of people were imprisoned and perhaps up to a million and a half murdered, that those people were suffering and going through this situation and America ignored all of the pleas. During that time period, we turned our back on something that we had pushed them into; and we held our fingers to our ears and refused to hear the cries of agony that was coming from the slaughter that was taking place there in Cambodia.

Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge, who, I might add, were the perfect communists, they were not working people who just rose up, they were well-educated people and well educated in Marxism, Leninism and their plans from their Marxist professors in Paris who gave them the ideas of what a perfect society would be like. And, of course, to create a perfect society they had to slaughter everyone in their society that was imperfect by their plan.

Well, we did not do what was right back in those days. The Cambodians suffered. Today we recognize that with this resolution. But we must do more than pass a resolution. We must make sure that we are committed to democracy in Cambodia. Let us not turn our backs again or put our hands over our ears when we hear that things are going wrong in Cambodia.

Hun Sen, who currently controls the government in Cambodia, was himself a member of the Khmer Rouge, was a brigade commander; and if there were people slaughtered, there is no doubt he was engaged in it. Today, when they attempt to have free elections and organize an opposition party to Hun Sen's rule, people get killed. People disappear.

Let us not turn our backs and with this resolution declare that we are committed to democracy and to helping the people of Cambodia.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), my good friend and distinguished colleague who is the author of this resolution.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for their great leadership and their sensitivity in marshaling this piece of legislation to the floor.

I would like to also thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) for managing this piece of legislation; and I would like to thank my colleague and friend from the area that we both represent, Long Beach, for joining in this morning in presenting this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on my resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 83, a bill honoring the victims of the Cambodian genocide. Between April, 1975, and January, 1979, up to 3 million Cambodians were deliberately and systematically killed in what later became known as the Killing Fields. Many more were tortured, starved, and brainwashed but survived this horrific period in history.

In 1975, Pol Pot led the communist guerilla group, the Khmer Rouge, in a large-scale insurgency that resulted in the removal of millions of Cambodians from their homes and forced them into brutal labor camps. Traditional Khmer culture and society were systematically destroyed. Temples, schools, hospitals, and other buildings were shattered. Families were separated in an attempt by the Khmer Rouge to prevent family formation. Many were punished or killed for education, wealth or sophistication. Doctors, nurses, clergy, teachers, business owners, artisans, city dwellers and even those who wore glasses were singled out for execution since they were seen as bourgeois or contaminated with western influence.

The Khmer Rouge maintained control by mass public torture, executions, and dismantling the social order. Men, women and children were sent to labor camps and forced to do strenuous farm work. They were starved, with little food and contaminated drinking water. Famine and disease became epidemic, while medicine and medical care were nonexistent.

When the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown in 1979, thousands of Cambodians fled on foot to refugee camps on the Thai border. While war continued to rage in their homeland, they waited for up to 12 years to be resettled in a third country such as the United States. From the refugee camps in Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia, approximately 145,000 Cambodians made their way to the United States between 1975 and 1999.

The majority of Cambodians arrived in the early 1980s. With the assistance of the Federal Government, State, local and voluntary agencies, Cambodians were resettled in communities across the country. Mutual assistance associations organized by previously resettled southeast Asian refugees helped these newcomers by providing essential social, physiological, cultural, educational and economic services.

I am grateful for the work that these organizations have done to help assimilate the many Cambodians that reside in my district and around this country. The United Cambodian Community, the Khmer Parent Association, the Family and Good Health Association, and the Cambodian Chamber of Congress all have played an important role in trying to help these refugees find their way and to help them overcome the horrendous experiences that they had in their homeland.

The Cambodian culture and contributions have enriched the American landscape. According to U.S. census figures, there are 176,148 Cambodians currently living in the United States, including almost 100,000 in the City of Long Beach. I am proud that the largest Cambodian population in the United States resides in my district.

Despite the tremendous loss of family members, homes, and even parts of their heritage, Cambodians have shown enormous resiliency. They continue in their struggle to fully assimilate themselves into the fabric of our society.

Unfortunately, some Cambodian refugees still suffer severe emotional trauma from the cruelties experienced under the Khmer Rouge. An article in The New York Times this past Sunday noted the difficulty and the adjustment that Cambodian refugees have had to make from forced labor to a free society. We must continue to help Cambodian refugees share in the American Dream. Passage of this measure is a start in the pursuit of justice for the victims of the Cambodian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift passage of this resolution paying tribute to the victims of the Cambodian genocide; and I thank the chairman, the ranking member, and all who will partake in this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN).

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding me this time, and I thank the chairman of the committee as well as the gentlewoman from California, the author of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for House Concurrent Resolution 83, a resolution honoring those who were deliberately and systematically killed by the Khmer Rouge regime. I want to pay my solemn respects to those who lost their lives and to the survivors and their loved ones, so many of whom reside in my district and in Massachusetts and who carry the scars to this day.

The Cambodian genocide was one of the darkest chapters in human history. In April of 1975, Pol Pot led the Khmer Rouge in a brutal insurgency against the Cambodian government in an effort to wipe out traditional Khmer culture and society. Over the next 4 years, the Khmer Rouge orchestrated the calculated destruction of the Cambodian people through forced labor, public torture, and death marches.

Following the overthrow of Khmer Rouge in 1979, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians fled the country on foot to refugee camps. I met and hired one of those who worked in my Lowell district office. Sarah Kuon would tell me of her earliest memories as a child walking along a railroad track with

rocks and bare feet for miles and miles, trying to get to a refugee camp.

Many of these refugees eventually resettled in the United States; and I am proud to represent a large and active Cambodian community in and around the city of Lowell, Massachusetts, my hometown.

Cambodian Americans have made invaluable contributions to our communities through their spirit, leadership, and strength. I am proud that the City of Lowell elected the first Cambodian-American anywhere in the United States to public elective office. Rity Uong was elected to the Lowell City Council in 1979 in an at-large election. Just 2 weeks ago, he was reelected to his third term on the city council.

This resolution represents a small but important step in honoring the victims, their survivors, and their descendants by making public and vivid the hidden details of the Cambodian genocide. This resolution should remind the world not only of the horrors perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge but of the horrors of genocide in Europe, Africa, and around the world.

I am honored to add my voice to those of my colleagues today in remembering the victims of the Cambodian genocide, and I will continue to pursue justice for its victims. We will never forget what happened or turn our backs on the truth.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to conclude with great thanks to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for her gentility and her civil leadership of this very important international human rights issue.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 83.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1115

HONORING SEEDS OF PEACE FOR ITS PROMOTION OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOUTH FROM REGIONS OF CONFLICT

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 288) honoring Seeds of Peace for its promotion of understanding, reconciliation, acceptance, coexistence, and peace among youth from the Middle East and other regions of conflict.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 288

Whereas Seeds of Peace, founded by John Wallach in 1993, is a program that brings together young people from regions of conflict to study and learn about coexistence and conflict resolution;

Whereas although the original focus of Seeds of Peace was to bring Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, and Egyptian youth together, the program has expanded over the past decade to involve youths from other regions of conflict, including from Greece, Turkey and divided Cyprus, the Balkans, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan;

Whereas these young people study and learn primarily at a summer camp operated by Seeds of Peace in Otisfield, Maine, and also through its regional programs such as the Jerusalem Center for Coexistence;

Whereas Seeds of Peace works to dispel fear, mistrust, and prejudice, which are root causes of violence and conflict, and to build a new generation of leaders who are committed to achieving peace;

Whereas Seeds of Peace reveals the human face of those whom youth have been taught to hate, by engaging campers in both guided coexistence sessions and ordinary summer camp activities such as living together in cabins, sharing meals, canoeing, swimming, playing sports, and creative exploration through the arts and computers;

Whereas the Arab-Israeli conflict is currently at a critical juncture, and sustained progress towards peace depends on the emergence of a new generation of leaders who will choose dialogue, friendship, and openness over violence and hatred;

Whereas Seeds of Peace provides year-round opportunities for former participants to build on the relationships they have forged at camp, so that the learning processes begun at camp can continue back in the participants' home countries, where they are most needed;

Whereas Seeds of Peace is strongly supported by participating governments and many world leaders;

Whereas previous Federal funding for Seeds of Peace demonstrates its recognized importance in promoting United States foreign policy goals; and

Whereas it is especially important to reaffirm that youth must be involved in long-term, visionary solutions to conflicts perpetuated by cycles of violence: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) honors the accomplishments of Seeds of Peace for promoting understanding, reconciliation, acceptance, coexistence, and peace among youth from the Middle East and other regions of conflict around the world; and

(2) offers Seeds of Peace as a model of hope that living together in peace and security is possible.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 288, honoring Seeds of Peace for its promotion of understanding, reconciliation, acceptance, coexistence, and peace among youth from the Middle East and other regions of conflict.

I commend the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) and the other cosponsors of this resolution. Seeds of Peace is a courageous organization that prepares youth from conflict-ridden areas and trains them to be leaders of tomorrow. Seeds of Peace was founded in late 1993 by the late John Wallach, an award-winning author and journalist in order to bring together Arab and Israeli youth as a way for them to learn conflict resolution skills necessary for making peace. While the primary focus is on the Middle East, participants also come from the Balkans, South Asia, and Cyprus.

Since 1993, over 2,000 teens from 22 nations have graduated from Seeds of Peace. Every year hundreds of Arab and Israeli teenagers are brought together and learn to recognize the humanity within each other. Seeds of Peace makes it possible for people who are blinded by hatred and prejudice to see the value in coexistence and mutual understanding. Seeds of Peace programs expose young people to critical thinking, respect for the rule of law, human rights, participatory decision-making, nonviolent dispute resolution, and a free press.

The invaluable lessons learned and lasting friendships made through Seeds of Peace programs provide hope that respect and tolerance can prevail in communities where hate and ignorance have tragically hallmarked social interactions.

For participants, Seeds of Peace takes the war out of the streets and puts some of the most difficult issues on the table in an environment free from violence. In a period of self-reflection, teens are challenged to deal with complicated and emotional issues. They are given a candle of hope to take back to their home societies, and are prayerfully provided the determination and will to participate in civil society discussions and initiatives that can lead to a more civil region and world.

Negotiations and treaties are the responsibilities of governments. Peace, on the other hand, is made by people. In this context, Seeds of Peace are seeds of hope. I strongly urge the passage of this resolution.

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

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