

in India is sad and real. With at least 20,000 people killed, thousands missing or homeless, and the region's infrastructure totally devastated, the state of Gujarat and the Indian nation has an overwhelming task of rebuilding.

The earthquake had enormous affect in India's western Gujarat state, and governmental officials said thousands are injured or missing. The tremble caused high-rise buildings to shake from New Delhi to Mumbai and Kolkata. I have learned that the death toll could go as high as 100,000. Whatever the actual loss, such tragedies are difficult to ever justify morally or in any other logical fashion. It is a humanitarian disaster.

The United States can and should play a leading role in the international relief effort on behalf of India, given the growing ties with India and the burgeoning American-Indian Community in America. In fact, India and the United States have much in common as the world's two largest democracies. Last year, I had an opportunity to accompany President Clinton on his historic visit to India to further strengthen our ties with the people of India. The warmth and genuineness of the people of India was unforgettable.

This past weekend I attended a moving event with Indian-Americans from the 18th Congressional District of Texas. The Honorable Rinzing Wangdi, Consul General of India was in attendance. I had the opportunity to speak with a number of Indian-Americans who spoke about their shock and sadness regarding the earthquake.

Accordingly, I wrote and spoke with the Bush Administration officials, over the weekend, to ask for support of the Indian people. When meeting with American-Indians in my community, they urged me to seek assistance for the people of India. While I surely applaud the innovative efforts being taken within India to assist the victims during this traumatic time, urgent assistance is needed for the people of India. We have all learned by now that searchers in India used everything from sniffer dogs and sophisticated rock-cutting tools to screwdrivers and their bare hands to search for survivors. We must hope, of course, that any life that can be saved will be saved.

In bringing hope and expeditious relief to the people of India, we must listen to the growing Indian-American population for their guidance and expertise in emerging from this crisis. Indian-Americans, who have organized themselves into large numbers of associations and organizations, are playing an important role in strengthening cooperation in India and the United States. This is a promising sign for relations between our nations because we can pull together in times of need.

As a preliminary response, I am thankful that coordinated efforts by agencies such as the American Red Cross and international organizations are beginning to determine the needs of the survivors and those left without basic necessities. Contributions by individuals to such relief agencies will make such a discernable difference in the life of the people of India that have suffered so severely.

Additionally, India will be seeking loans from the international community to rebuild the devastated areas. The Government of India is expected to seek loans from international institutions, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The World Bank has thus far offered \$300 million, and has pledged to put together a longer-term assistance plan in

consultation with the Gujarat state government. We understand that India may seek \$1.5 billion in multilateral loans.

Mr. Speaker, we must confront unilateral U.S. sanctions that are in place against India to bring some peace and stability to the affected areas. Under the unilateral sanctions regime on India that went into effect in 1998, the U.S. government was directed to oppose multilateral loans and credits to India. However, under legislation adopted by Congress, the President of the United States has the authority to waive certain sanctions, including the mandated U.S. opposition to World Bank loans, particularly those loans that would have a direct humanitarian benefit. Clearly, the present tragedy in India is an enormous humanitarian emergency.

Accordingly, I wish to join my colleagues and urge the Administration to fully support India's request for assistance through international financial institutions, and should work within the World Bank and other international organizations to expedite India's requests. It is the right thing to do and we all know it.

Mr. Speaker, at this time of enormous tragedy in India, it would send a positive signal of American concern and support if the remaining U.S. unilateral sanctions against India were waived to allow for friendlier and more normalized relations between our nations, and to remove any impediments for full and prompt delivery of assistance to India in this time of need. Let us be helpful and expeditious in this enormous time of need for the people of India.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time. I too want to express my deep sympathy and sorrow for those people in India who are suffering. It was truly a devastating natural disaster and certainly the concern of all Americans goes out to all these people.

I do have some concerns about how we respond so often to disasters like this because we believe that we can solve all our problems by just going to the taxpayers. I know that this does not seem like the appropriate time to raise the question, but there was a time in our history when we did not assume that it was a constitutional approach to tax poor people in America to help people in other parts of the world. We have always resorted to charities and volunteer approaches, and I still believe that is proper. I do not think there is evidence to show that aid to governments is necessarily the most efficient manner of helping other people.

There is also the moral question. We talk about what we are giving today, and it is substantial amounts, and we are substantially increasing it. It could be \$10 million. It could be \$100 million. But nobody talks about could it cost something. Well, there is a cost to it and it might hurt some innocent people in this country; the people who we do

not know about. Somebody might not be able to build a house or get medical care. There may be somebody who will lose a job. There may be an increase in inflation. But we will never see those victims, so they are not represented. I think that if we were more determined to follow the rule of law and do this only in a voluntary manner we would not always place a burden on some innocent people in this country.

It was ironic that today, although there was talk earlier about sending some goods and surpluses, that actually the ambassador today sadly said he was not interested in any surpluses; he just wanted the dollars to come over there. And there may be a good reason for this, for efficiency sake or whatever. But in a way, I think if we have some surplus in food or something, we should be able to provide that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to express my sympathy for victims of the recent earthquake in the State of Gujarat, India and, at the same time, my concern for American taxpayers who, once again, will see their constitution ignored and their pockets raided by their representatives in Washington—it is, of course, easy to express sympathy with other people's money.

Without so much as a hearing in the International Relations committee, this bill comes to the floor and, while laudably expressing deep sympathy for victims of this terrible natural disaster in India, regrettably expresses support for (a) the World Bank; (b) "substantially" increasing the amount of U.S. taxpayer-funded, disaster assistance; and (c) future economic assistance to rebuild the state of Gujarat, India.

Setting aside for the moment that nowhere in Article I, Sec. 8 (the enumerated powers clause) of the Federal Constitution can authority be found to take money from U.S. taxpayers for this purpose, additional problems result from passage of this resolution as well as those actions certain to follow as a consequence of the bill's passage.

First, the notion of taxing the fruits of financially struggling Americans with no constitutional authority only to send it to foreign governments is reprehensible. One of the problems with such aid is that it ultimately ends up in the hands of foreign bureaucrats who merely use it to advance their own foreign government agendas thus making it less likely to get to those most deserving. One need only compare the success of private charities in this country with those government relief efforts to clearly see government's profound and inherently inept record.

Secondly, forced "contributions" erode any satisfaction that comes from being a charitable individual. Without the personal choice of giving or not giving to charitable relief efforts, the decision to be charitable and the moral reward of so doing is completely eroded by the forced government.

Lastly, as a result of such actions as these, participation dwindles worldwide for the most efficient means of dealing with such catastrophes, that is, private disaster insurance. When disaster costs are socialized, greater catastrophic results are encouraged as more people ignore the costs of living in riskier areas. At the same time, these same actors ignore the cost savings and other benefits of

living in safer areas. Governments acting to socialize these costs actually stimulates the eventual death and destruction of more people and their property. (This, of course, is a lesson that the United States should learn to apply domestically, as well.)

While I truly do extend my heartfelt sympathy to those victims of the recent natural disaster in India, my duty remains to protect the U.S. taxpayer and uphold the constitutional limits of our Federal Government. For this reason and each of those detailed above, I must oppose this resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 15.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, we heard of a devastating earthquake also in El Salvador. Here we go again, another earthquake that has profoundly affected the citizens of India.

As a former representative of the State of California, I had the privilege of working with the Indo-American community in the State of California to help establish a trade office there. I know that these individuals, both there and abroad, their families right now deserve our utmost support and sympathy, and particularly any humanitarian aids that we might provide.

I stand here before my colleagues, as a California representative, asking for full support and effort on behalf of our country for those mostly affected in the great country of India.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for bringing this quickly to the floor. Having just returned from India, I wish to express my deepest sympathy to the many victims of the recent earthquake. India is a beautiful country, with so many wonderful people. The scope of this disaster is just hard to imagine. Traveling across the country, I was amazed by the diversity in the culture and the hospitality of the hosts.

The devastation caused by this natural disaster has taken the lives of over 10,000 people but has impacted countless others, both in India and here in the United States. In my own district, the American-Indian community is very strong, and I am honored to consider many of them my friends.

It is difficult to imagine the magnitude of the devastation in India as we speak hear on the floor today, but I am deeply moved by the mobilization of the Indian community in response to this tragedy.

Let me borrow a quote from the inaugural address of President Bush. "Never tiring, never yielding, never finishing, we renew that purpose today; to make our country more just and generous; to affirm the dignity of our lives and every life. This work continues. This story goes on." That is America, there to help in time of need.

So I would encourage all Americans to consider contributing to one of the

many aid organizations that participate in the recovery and aid the mission in India. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I thank all who participated in bringing it to the floor today.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in support of House Concurrent Resolution 15 expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck India on January 26, 2001 and support for aid efforts.

Relative to our population size, the Virgin Islands proportionately has one of the largest Indian communities in the United States. In many communities of the Caribbean, people who trace their ancestry to India make up an important part of the fabric of those societies. So on behalf of the Virgin Islands' community I wanted to join my colleagues in expressing our sympathy and concern, but more importantly in encouraging our country's support.

One finds it difficult to imagine how a Nation will cope with a tragedy which estimates total deaths possibly as many as 100,000 people. They can only do so with our and the world's help.

I want to commend President Bush for his quick response in offering assistance to the people of India. Likewise, I want to commend the Speaker; our minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT); and my other colleagues for doing the same with this resolution today, and I urge its support.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

As chairman of the subcommittee on science that oversees what we do on earthquakes in the United States, I would like to sort of make two comments. Number one, we are going to do whatever we can in this country to relieve some of the suffering and some of the damage that has been caused by earthquakes in India, so certainly I support this resolution. But I would like to call to all my colleagues' attention, to the attention of the American people, that this is not isolated to some other country; something that might happen someplace else.

We have had serious earthquakes in the United States and will continue to have very serious earthquakes. The Loma Prieta earthquake was an estimated \$6 billion worth of property loss in addition to human life. And of course the Northridge in 1994 was an estimated \$40 billion loss of property as well as a great deal of damage to our physical health and well-being in California. It is a challenge.

We have passed a bill this past year which is probably the most aggressive effort in giving us a better time frame to determine what we can do in that short time period to reduce the damage to human and physical property.

□ 1115

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the vibrant Indo-American community in my district, many of whom who have relatives in Gujarat, I rise in strong support of the resolution and thank the distinguished co-chairman of our Caucus on India, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), who I was honored to travel with them and the President to India last year.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this resolution, which expresses sympathy for the loss of lives and Congress' commitment to help our ally, India, the world's largest democracy.

I know that USAID and other U.S. agencies are working hard to respond to this crisis. It is also important that we all work to get accurate information to our constituents so that they can know, in the earliest time possible, what has happened to their loved ones.

I certainly pledge to do my part and am happy once again to congratulate the authors of this resolution.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of the Third Congressional District to express our deepest sympathies to the people of India for the losses suffered in the recent earthquake in Gujarat.

As we see the victim toll continue to rise, I pledge my support to those efforts in aiding India and its people to recover and rebuild their cities and their lives.

I hope that the Committee on Financial Services will take an extensive look at helping India through the Asian Development Bank. The U.S. contribution to the Asian Development Bank can provide an effective way to help India rebuilt its cities and keep its society going.

I applaud the Bush administration's active role and those of all international organizations in supporting the people of India at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) a member of the committee.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, it is with such sadness that I rise today to speak of the enormous tragedy which has befallen the Indian people. The earthquake that struck Gujarat on January 26 has taken such a toll and the suffering continues.