

## Rep. Gonzalez seeks to lift Iraq embargo

*On June 24, Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.) introduced House Resolution 180 (H.R. 180) into the House of Representatives, expressing the sense of the House that the United States should act on an emergency basis to lift the economic embargo of Iraq. In his comments on the floor in introducing the resolution, Gonzalez noted that "the war has contributed directly to this crisis. It is a consequence of the war. The destruction of Iraq's electrical infrastructure has made it almost impossible to treat sewage or purify water which means water-borne diseases flourish, and hospitals cannot treat crucial diseases." "Whether we like it or not," said Gonzalez, "We are perpetrating genocide. . . . The sanctions against Iraq must be lifted to save tens of thousands of lives. If we do not, the blood of these Iraqi children will be on our consciences and hands."*

### House Resolution 180

WHEREAS reports from the United Nations, the Physicians for Human Rights, the International Red Cross, a Harvard study team, other independent organizations, and private U.S. citizens have documented the fact that unless the economic sanctions imposed against Iraq are immediately lifted and Iraq is allowed to buy and import food, medicine and equipment, especially for power generation, tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians will die in the upcoming months;

WHEREAS a Harvard study team estimates that at least 170,000 Iraqi children under the age of five will die within the next year from the delayed effects of the war in the Persian Gulf if the imposition of the sanctions continues;

WHEREAS this is a conservative estimate and does not include tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians above the age of five who are expected to die from similar causes;

WHEREAS the Catholic Relief Service estimates that more than 100,000 Iraqi children will die from malnutrition and disease in the upcoming months due to the economic embargo and destruction of the war, and the United Nations Children's Fund estimates that 80,000 Iraqi children may die from these causes;

WHEREAS malnutrition has become severe and widespread in Iraq since imposition of the embargo and the war due to severe food shortages and the inflation of food prices of up to 1,000%, which has effectively priced many Iraqis, especially the poor and disadvantaged, out of the food market;

WHEREAS cholera, typhoid, and gastroenteritis have become epidemic throughout Iraq since the war due to the critical scarcity of medicine and the inability of Iraq to process sewage and purify the water supply;

WHEREAS the system of medical care has broken down in Iraq, resulting in the closure of up to 50% of Iraq's medical facilities due to acute shortages of medicines, equipment, and staff;

WHEREAS the incapacitation of 18 of Iraq's 20 power plants during the war is a principal cause of the deterioration in public health due to the resultant inability of Iraq to process sewage, purify its water supply, and supply electricity to health facilities;

WHEREAS the health care crisis cannot be addressed without the reconstruction of electrical facilities that enable the purification of water and treatment of sewage;

WHEREAS before the economic embargo of Iraq, three-quarters of the total caloric intake in Iraq was imported and, moreover, 96% of Iraqi revenue to pay for imports, namely food and medicine, was derived from the exportation of oil now prohibited under the embargo;

WHEREAS the onset of the summer heat in Iraq will both accelerate the spread of disease and impede its treatment due to the lack of refrigeration facilities even in hospitals;

WHEREAS the acute shortages in food in Iraq, the inflation of up to 1,000% in food prices caused by these shortages, the critical scarcity of medicine, and the essential need to reconstruct Iraq's capacity to generate electricity to enable sewage treatment and water purification, cannot be addressed or rectified without Iraq's re-entry into global commerce, at present effectively prohibited by the economic sanctions;

WHEREAS the immediate lifting of the sanctions would drastically reduce the number of Iraqi children who will die in the upcoming months from malnutrition and disease and would relieve the suffering of the innocent Iraqi population which is now bearing the burden of the embargo; Now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Representatives, that the United States should act on an emergency basis to lift the economic embargo of Iraq to save innocent Iraqi civilians, especially children, from death by disease and starvation.

### Penny resolution seeks humanitarian aid

On June 18, Rep. Tim Penny (D-Minn.) introduced a more limited resolution proposing that a portion of Iraqi assets be released to Unicef for the purpose of providing medical and humanitarian assistance to Iraqi citizens.

The resolution resolved: "That it is the sense of the Congress that the United States should ask the United Nations to release through Unicef a portion of Iraq's frozen assets for the sole purpose of providing medical and humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, particularly children, with release of the funds contingent on Iraqi government acceptance of United Nations' oversight and control."