Steve Chabot

(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

# H. RES. _____

Recognizing the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CHABOT submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

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# RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971.

Whereas, in August 1947, British rule in India ended, creating the 2 independent sovereign countries of India and Pakistan, the latter of which included the noncontiguous regions of West Pakistan (Pakistan) and East Pakistan (Bangladesh), also known as East Bengal;

Whereas the Pakistani ruling elite was comprised overwhelmingly of West Pakistanis who concentrated the country's resources and development efforts in West Pakistan to the detriment of East Pakistan's development;

Whereas West Pakistani officials harbored well-documented anti-Bengali sentiment, considering Bengalis to be a less-

er people group that had been corrupted by un-Islamic practices;

Whereas, during elections held in 1970, the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a majority in Parliament on a platform of autonomy for East Pakistan;

Whereas negotiations to form a government between Pakistani President, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto leader of the Pakistan People's Party, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman failed;

Whereas, at a meeting on February 22, 1971, General Yahya Khan is recorded as saying to his top military brass "[k]ill 3 million of them and the rest will eat out of our hands";

Whereas, on the night of March 25, 1971, the Government of Pakistan imprisoned Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Pakistani military units, in conjunction with radical Islamist groups, began a general crackdown throughout East Pakistan code-named "Operation Searchlight" that involved widespread massacres of civilians;

Whereas atrocities continued during the ensuing 9-month Bangladesh War of Independence as the Pakistani military scapegoated ethnic Bengalis and Hindus and targeted supporters of the Awami League, Bengali military or police personnel, intellectuals, students, and professionals, while victims included members of both majority (Bengali Muslim) and minority (non-Muslim) communities;

Whereas the genocide against ethnic Bengalis and Hindus is one of the forgotten genocides of the 20th century and its lack of recognition remains an open wound for mil-

lions of people who were directly effected by the atrocities;

Whereas estimates of the number of those killed in these atrocities vary, with the Government of Bangladesh estimating that 3,000,000 persons were killed;

Whereas over 200,000 women were raped and, due to stigma, the full number will likely never be known nor the victims remembered;

Whereas, as a result of the atrocities and the war, nearly 10,000,000 refugees fled to India, and countless others, up to 50 percent of Bangladesh's population, were internally displaced;

Whereas the Government and people of India magnanimously cared for the refugees until the culmination of hostilities;

Whereas in a seminal column on June 13, 1971, for The Sunday Times, titled "Genocide", journalist Anthony Mascarenhas wrote "It seems clear that the 'sorting out' began to be planned about the time that Lt.-Gen. Tikka Khan took over the governorship of East Bengal." and continues "When the army units fanned out in Dacca on the evening of March 25, in pre-emptive strikes against the mutiny planned for the small hours of the next morning many of them carried lists of people to be liquidated. These included the Hindus and large numbers of Muslims; students, Awami Leaguers, professors, journalists and those who had been prominent in Sheik Mujib's movement.";

Whereas, on March 28, 1971, United States Consul General in Dacca, Archer Blood, sent a telegram to Washington titled "Selective Genocide" in which he wrote "Moreover, with support of Pak military, non-Bengali Muslims are

systematically attacking poor people's quarters and murdering Bengalis and Hindus. Streets of Dacca are aflood with Hindus and others seeking to get out of Dacca. Many Bengalis have sought refuge in homes of Americans, most of whom are extending shelter.";

Whereas, on April 6, 1971, in what became known as the "Blood Telegram", Consul General Blood sent by way of the State Department's dissent channel an objection to official United States Government silence on the conflict signed by 20 members of the United States diplomatic staff of Consulate General Dacca which reads in part "But we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely internal matter of a sovereign state. Private Americans have expressed disgust." and in which objection Blood concurs stating "I believe the views of these officers, who are among the finest U.S. officials in East Pakistan, are echoed by the vast majority of the American community, both official and unofficial. I also subscribe to these views but I do not think it appropriate for me to sign their statement as long as I am principal officer at this post.";

Whereas, on April 8, 1971, Consul General Blood sent another telegram which states in part " 'Genocide' applies fully to [this] naked, calculated and widespread selection of Hindus for special treatment. . .From outset various members of American community have witnessed either burning down of Hindu villages, Hindu enclaves in Dacca and shooting of Hindus attempting [to] escape carnage, or have witnessed after-effects which [are] visible throughout Dacca today.";

Whereas Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee To Investigate the Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees published a report to the Committee on November 1, 1971, which states "Nothing is more clear, or more easily documented, than the systematic campaign of terror—and its genocidal consequences—launched by the Pakistan army on the night of March 25th. Field reports to the U.S. government, countless eye-witness journalistic accounts, reports of international agencies such as the World Bank, and additional information available to the Subcommittee document the continuing reign of terror which grips East Bengal. Hardest hit have been members of the Hindu community who have been robbed of their lands and shops, systematically slaughtered, and, in some places, painted with yellow patches marked 'H'. All of this has been officially sanctioned, ordered and implemented under martial law from Islamabad.";

Whereas the war ended on December 16, 1971, and Bangladesh became an independent country;

Whereas, in a legal study published in 1972 titled "The Events in East Pakistan", the Secretariat of the International Commission of Jurists states "There is overwhelming evidence that Hindus were slaughtered, and their houses and villages destroyed simply because they were Hindus.";

Whereas, in 1994, reflecting on his time covering the war, New York Times correspondent Sydney Schamberg wrote "Later I toured the country by road to see the Pakistani legacy firsthand. In town after town there was an execution area where people had been killed by bayonet, bullet and bludgeon. In some towns, executions were held on a

daily basis. . . This was a month after the war's end (i.e. January 1972), . . . human bones were still scattered along many roadsides. Blood stained clothing and tufts of human hair clung to the brush at these killing grounds. Children too young to understand were playing grotesque games with skulls. Other reminders were the yellow 'H's the Pakistanis had painted on the homes of Hindus, particular targets of the Muslim army.";

Whereas in its "Declaration in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Bangladesh Genocide" United States nongovernmental organization Genocide Watch states "Throughout the nine months of their anti-independence occupation of East Pakistan, the Pakistani Military Forces persecuted, tortured, and murdered representatives of Bengali culture and identity, including poets, musicians, professors, journalists, physicians, scientists, writers, and film makers.";

Whereas the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed at Paris on December 9, 1948, declares that genocide "means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." and "The following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct

and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.";

Whereas United States nongovernmental organizations Genocide Watch and the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention have sought international recognition of the atrocities committed by the Armed Forces of Pakistan as genocide; and

Whereas it is of the utmost importance to recall and document crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide for the sake of posterity, to preserve the memory of the victims, and to deter future atrocities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,* That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns the atrocities committed by the
3 Armed Forces of Pakistan against the people of
4 Bangladesh from March 1971 to December 1971;

5 (2) recognizes that such atrocities against eth-
6 nic Bengalis and Hindus constitute crimes against
7 humanity, war crimes, and genocide;

8 (3) recalls the death and suffering of the count-
9 less victims of such atrocities and expresses its deep
10 sympathy for the suffering;

11 (4) recognizes that entire ethnic groups or reli-
12 gious communities are not responsible for the crimes
13 committed by their members;

14 (5) calls on the President of the United States
15 to recognize the atrocities committed against ethnic
16 Bengalis and Hindus by the Armed Forces of Paki-

stan during 1971 as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide;

(6) calls on the Government of Pakistan, in the face of overwhelming evidence, to offer acknowledgement of its role in such genocide, offer formal apologies to the Government and people of Bangladesh, and prosecute, in accordance with international law, any perpetrators who are still living; and

(7) reaffirms the United States commitment to promoting peace, stability, and intercommunal harmony in the Indo-Pacific region, and the right of all people living in the region, regardless of national, racial, ethnic, or religious background, to enjoy the benefits of democratic institutions, the rule of law, the freedom of religion, and economic opportunity.