

FRANK R. WOLF
10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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TRANSPORTATION-HUD

STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS

CO-CHAIR—TOM LANTOS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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241 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4610
(202) 225-5136

13873 PARK CENTER ROAD
SUITE 130
HERNDON, VA 20171
(703) 709-5800
(800) 945-9653 (IN STATE)

110 NORTH CAMERON STREET
WINCHESTER, VA 22601
(540) 667-0990
(800) 850-3463 (IN STATE)

wolf.house.gov

The Center for Security Policy
1901 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Suite 201
Washington DC 20006

Dear Friends:

I would like to thank the Center for Security Policy for hosting this important conference to shine a spotlight on the growing global threats to international religious freedom. I believe that this country has a moral obligation to be a voice for the voiceless around the world.

Since the founding of our republic, America has been envisioned as a “shining city on a hill”- a source of hope for all the oppressed of the world. But in order for our soaring words about freedom, liberty and democracy to ring true to the ears of countless dissidents languishing in prisons the world over, we must speak for these values wherever there is oppression – including places like Egypt, where these virtues are daily under assault.

Late last year, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, which I co-chair, held a hearing with the Center for Security Policy to address the worsening plight of Egypt’s Coptic Christians. Hearing the testimony from several Coptic Christians, including Ms. Cynthia Farahat, made clear to me that the Arab Spring had devolved into a cold and brutal Arab Winter.

Sadly, this is part of a larger trend. The targeting of Christians in the Middle East, notably in Iraq, has driven many to flee the lands they have inhabited for centuries and emigrate to the West. The dwindling Christian population throughout the region has serious implications for the prospects of pluralism and tolerance in that part of the world. We have a moral obligation to defend and protect Egypt’s Coptic Christian minority.

Once again, I extend my best wishes and sincerest thanks to Fred Grandy and the Center for Security Policy for hosting this important conference. I also want to thank everyone attending today.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

Bob Lister