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Providing for expedited emergency humanitarian assistance, disaster relief assistance, and medical assistance to the people of Taiwan.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 5, 1999

Mr. COX introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

JOINT RESOLUTION

Providing for expedited emergency humanitarian assistance, disaster relief assistance, and medical assistance to the people of Taiwan.

Whereas the September 21, 1999, earthquake in Taiwan resulted in the loss of more than 2,000 lives, the injury of more than 8,500 additional men, women, and children, and the creation of more than 100,000 homeless people;

Whereas the world community reacted as rapidly as possible to this medical, health, and humanitarian emergency;

Whereas each hour that passes after an earthquake or other natural disaster greatly reduces the chances for survival for those who are injured or dying;

Whereas, according to published reports, United States disaster relief assistance to the victims of the Taiwan earth-

quake was delayed during the critical hours after the earthquake because United States and international aid organizations believed they were obligated to ask for permission from the Government of the People's Republic of China before they could provide such assistance to the people of Taiwan;

Whereas, according to published reports, the Government of the People's Republic of China demanded that any aid for Taiwan provided by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross receive prior approval from government officials in Beijing or from the Red Cross chapter of the People's Republic of China;

Whereas, according to published reports, the delivery of aid for Taiwan by a Russian rescue team was delayed by 10 hours as the team waited for the United Nations to approve its application;

Whereas, according to published reports, the Russian rescue team was further delayed when the Government of the People's Republic of China denied an air corridor to the team, thereby forcing the aircraft to make a lengthy detour over Siberia and to make two extra unnecessary stops for refueling, and thereby further causing a 12-hour delay in the rescue team's arrival during the initial, critical 72-hour rescue period;

Whereas direct and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums and programs is crucial to help ensure good health and access to emergency assistance for every citizen of the world;

Whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) set forth in the first chapter of its charter the objective of attaining the highest possible level of health for all people;

Whereas Taiwan's population of 21,000,000 people is larger than that of three-fourths of the member states in the World Health Organization;

Whereas Taiwan's achievements in the field of health are substantial, including one of the highest life expectancy levels in Asia, maternal and infant mortality rates comparable to those of western countries, the eradication of such infectious diseases as cholera, smallpox, and the plague, and the first country to eradicate polio and provide children with free hepatitis B vaccinations;

Whereas in recent years Taiwan has expressed a willingness to provide financial or technical assistance for World Health Organization-supported international aid and health activities but it has ultimately been unable to render such assistance;

Whereas the United States, in the 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, declared its intention to support Taiwan's participation in appropriate international organizations; and

Whereas it is the policy of the United States Government to ensure that United States and international humanitarian and medical organizations are free to act as expeditiously as possible to provide emergency aid to people in need: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
 2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO**
2 **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR TAIWAN AND**
3 **TAIWAN'S MEMBERSHIP IN CERTAIN INTER-**
4 **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.**

5 (a) NOTIFICATION RELATING TO EXPEDITIOUS PRO-
6 VISION OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR TAIWAN.—The
7 President shall take all necessary steps to ensure that no-
8 tification is provided to United States Government agen-
9 cies and United States and international nongovernmental
10 organizations, including private voluntary organizations,
11 such as the American Red Cross, which provide emergency
12 humanitarian assistance, disaster relief assistance, and
13 medical assistance, that when a natural disaster, medical
14 emergency, or other emergency necessitates the provision
15 of such assistance for Taiwan, those agencies and organi-
16 zations may provide such assistance as expeditiously as
17 possible to Taiwan without seeking the prior approval of,
18 or otherwise coordinating with, the Government of the
19 People's Republic of China.

20 (b) MEMBERSHIP OF TAIWAN IN MEDICAL AND HU-
21 MANITARIAN AID ORGANIZATIONS.—The President shall
22 take all necessary steps on behalf of the United States
23 Government to support the membership of Taiwan in the
24 International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office for
25 the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the World
26 Health Organization.

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than November 1, 1999, the
2 President shall prepare and transmit to the Congress a
3 report on the status of efforts by the United States Gov-
4 ernment to accomplish the objectives set forth in sub-
5 sections (a) and (b).

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