

The devastation of that industry I think is truly a matter of concern to all Americans and it would be foolish not to take the necessary legislative steps to repair the problems for which we have clearly identified that we have proper solutions.

TRAVELGATE

(Mr. MICA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I serve as a member of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight that has been looking into the Travelgate matter, the White House firings of the White House Travel Office. Each twist and turn of the White House Travel Office firings becomes more and more bizarre.

I have a report today in the Washington Times by a gentleman, Mark Levin, who reveals an incredible misuse of power by the White House in use of the FBI, our Nation's chief law enforcement agency, that I feel should be investigated.

I am calling today on our chairman to expand our investigation of this matter, of the misuse of the FBI, our chief law enforcement agency, and I also think that it is time that we look at Mr. Levin's call for the appointment of a special counsel, an independent counsel, to investigate this matter where the White House, in fact, has used this law enforcement agency in an inappropriate manner and now we find out that there is even more information to lead us to believe that, in fact, there was misconduct in these firings and the cover that the White House prepared for the public.

FRENCH NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE IN THE SOUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I offer my apologies to my colleagues and to the American people, for these somewhat rough sketches of limited artistic value in terms of what they represent.

On my immediate right is a picture of what an atomic nuclear explosion looks like as it was exploded by the French Government on Moruroa Atoll in the South Pacific in 1973. On my extreme right is a little chart, and this is not the Polynesian version of a Christmas tree, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to demonstrate to the American people that Moruroa Atoll looks like in the South Pacific. One of these little dots inside this volcanic formation on which the atoll sits constitutes one of 181 nuclear bomb explosions that have already taken place in this atoll in the South Pacific. Already the French Gov-

ernment has conducted five nuclear explosions since French President Chirac announced a change of testing policy in June of last year.

Mr. Speaker, the islands of French Polynesia were what Westerners would call colonized by France, after some 500 French soldiers with guns and cannons subdued the Tahitian chiefs and their warriors in the 1840's. I was in Tahiti recently. I joined with some 40 other Parliamentarians from the Pacific, Asia, South America, and Europe. Led by the mayor of the town of Fa'aa, Mr. Manutahi Temaru, we joined together for a demonstration in the streets of Papeete, Tahiti, to oppose the resumption of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Despite international pleadings, protests, and appeals, the Government of France resumed nuclear testing at Moruroa Atoll on September 5, 1995, exploding a nuclear bomb more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Sixty miles away on the island of Tureia, brown-skinned Polynesian children splashed and played in the ocean waves.

On August 30, 1995, Mayor Temaru, Vito Haamatua, and myself traveled to the island of Tureia. We were joined with the arrival of the *Rainbow Warrior II* and together we headed for Moruroa where France had already placed the nuclear bomb in a shaft about 3,000 feet under the atoll. We sailed in anticipation of the French Government's announcement that the first nuclear explosion would take place on September 1, 1995.

Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, the only reason why the French Government did not explode the bomb on September 1, was because our President was in Hawaii. The Clinton administration told the French Government, "If you explode that bomb while the President is in Hawaii, he's going to condemn the nuclear explosion." So they extended it for a couple of days and the bomb was exploded on September 5.

As we neared Moruroa, the *Rainbow Warrior* launched six inflatable zodiacs under the nose of French naval warships. The zodiacs were manned by young men and women from New Zealand, Italy, Australia, the United States, France, and Portugal. These young men and women were not commandos or soldiers. They were just ordinary citizens committed to a nuclear-free world. As our vessels penetrated waters France claimed exclusive rights to, we were arrested by French commandos, held for 16 hours, then transferred to another vessel, fully enclosed, unaware of where we were being taken, and completely prevented from taping an account of the seizure. Our cameras and videos were confiscated. Our communications system was destroyed.

France's story is, of course, well-scripted. Its Eurocentric rationales for resuming nuclear testing in waters half a world away from where its own children play are presented through international wire services. France's freely

elected spokesperson, President Jacques Chirac, insists that the resumption of nuclear testing in South Pacific waters is absolutely necessary to improve France's nuclear weapons capabilities and that the matter of exploding more nuclear bombs at Moruroa Atoll is in the "highest interest" of France. The tests, he assures the public, are of "no environmental consequence."

Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post a couple of days ago revealed that the French Government has now acknowledged that radioactive leakage has come out of this atoll. Radioactive iodine 131 can only be created as a result of nuclear explosions and causes cancer in humans.

So goes the story of colonialism supported by American commentators like William Buckley who writes:

What is it the protesters fear? Are the French experiments, conducted 750 miles from Tahiti, endangering anybody in Tahiti? For that matter, are they endangering anybody or anything in Moruroa? Has anybody detected a rise in pollutants in the area where the first tests were undertaken? Has a whale been killed? Two whales? Has \$11 million in damage been done to the sea surrounding Moruroa? The answer has to be no, for the simple reason that if it were yes, we absolutely would have heard about it.

That a nationally syndicated columnist and president and editor-at-large of the National Review could be so unaware of the effects of nuclear testing in relation to the food chain, ocean currents, and a people only 750 miles away, is appalling enough. But that a Eurocentric commentator could be so naive about the workings of the world and the media, suggesting that all issues get equal airplay and if we haven't heard about it it must not be so, is almost unforgivable.

The people of the Pacific, who feel the brunt of colonial reign, have their own story to tell. From the island of Tureia, my Polynesian cousins tell of early French practices.

Mr. Speaker, as I was held hostage for 16 hours on the *Rainbow Warrior*, I reflected on a lot of things. Polynesians are not just famous navigators. We have a tremendous number of great poets who worshiped nature and loved to describe the meanings of life and death and love and hatred; all that can be felt and expressed by the human mind. During this time, I wrote this little poem dedicated to the children of the little atoll of Tureia, and I entitled it "Tureia Atoll."

TUREIA ATOLL

Our families own the island you never asked permission to take.
We fished, picked coconuts, swam freely along the reefs and shores
Until you, the colonial power in Paris, come to us and say,
"We take you to Papeete and give you free ride in the carnival."
While we play at your amusement you blow the wind of death from our island of Moruroa.

The people of Tureia were never consulted about the use of their island, Moruroa. They were never asked by the

French Government if their island could be used as a French nuclear testing site. In 1960, they were simply invited to a carnival in Tahiti, placed on ferry boats that carried them across the waters for a day of amusement. In innocence they played while French colonialists decided that the two Pacific atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa would be the new sites for the French nuclear testing program. The sites, after all, were conveniently located thousands of miles away from the home of enlightenment, where certainly to the people of France the testings posed little harm and would be of no environmental consequence.

Since 1960, France exploded 176 nuclear bombs on Moruroa Atoll. By my latest count now it is 181 nuclear bombs. On September 1, 1995, the count rose to 177. France has since exploded four more nuclear bombs at Moruroa and Fangataufa Atolls. Supposedly the last one is to be exploded next month. I doubt that. In the truest form of colonial aggression, not 1 of the over 200 nuclear bombs France has exploded in the past 30 years has been exploded on, above, or beneath French soil. Today, France is the only nuclear superpower to test outside of its borders.

France's exploitation of Pacific peoples is a chilling commentary on man's inhumanity to man. Like a wild boar on the ocean waves, or a mad aberration of 21st century thought, President Chirac's irrevocable decision and insistent denial of consequence is what novelist Bernard Clavel called the shame of France. We all know nuclear bombs have only one purpose. They were created to destroy people. The result is they annihilate everything. The people of France know this. President Chirac knows this. We all know why France explodes its bombs in French Polynesia and not in France. No one wants to subject their homeland to this danger, if they have a choice.

Historically, the people of the Pacific have had little choice. Nuclear nations, including France and even our own Nation, have consistently deemed Pacific islanders and their way of life expendable. In 1954, on Bikini atoll, the United States exploded the "Bravo Shot"—a 15 megaton hydrogen thermonuclear bomb a thousand times more powerful than the bomb that we dropped on Hiroshima 50 years ago. Before the bomb was exploded, the American officials who conducted this experiment discovered that the winds had shifted and that the 300 men, women, and children—including our own servicemen that were on this island—living on the nearby island of Rongelap, would be put at risk by the nuclear detonation and radioactive fallout. Despite the shift in the direction of the winds, they exploded the bomb anyway, subjecting hundreds of innocent men, women, and children to nuclear contamination. I submit that Marshall Islanders residing on nearby Rongelap and Utiarik atolls justifiably believe they were used as guinea pigs and test subjects

for United States nuclear radiation experiments conducted during this period. Their accounts are well documented.

Although our Government is making every effort to resettle this island and offer monetary compensation to these people, I submit the reality is—no amount of money can compensate for the normal health of the inhabitants of these islands. According to reports, the women of Rongelap gave birth to what many termed "jelly babies"—babies that were born dead and did not appear to look human. Still today, many people of Rongelap suffer from cancer, leukemia, and all manner of diseases associated with nuclear contamination. For President Chirac to so arrogantly contend that these tests are of no environmental consequence is to deny the effects of history and marginalize the suffering of those who know first-hand the horrors associated with nuclear holocaust.

Mr. Speaker, again on the *Rainbow Warrior* as I sat there sketching a few thoughts in my mind, I wrote another little poem that I entitled "Annihilation."

ANNIHILATION

You appear in a cloud, like a flash from the west that blinds our vision.

In Tahiti Nui, from the Tuamotos, Mangareva, Tubuai, Bora Bora, Raiatea, Taha'a, Nuahive, Tureia, Moruroa and Fangataufa.

Like poisoned fish that float aimlessly from fissured reefs,

Death moves slowly toward the people from the sun until it is too late.

Farani, Farani, what have you done?

The Faranis are clear and substantiated. After 30 years of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, French Polynesia's Moruroa atoll has been described by scientists as a "Swiss cheese of fractured rock." British scientists have confirmed that the volcano underneath Moruroa atoll is "becoming a web of vitrified cavities, from which an unknown number of cracks are spreading like spider webs." Areas of Moruroa atoll have already sunk by 1 meter or more. In fact, Dr. Roger Clark, a seismologist at Leeds University, has said that one more test could trigger the atoll's collapse, leading to huge cracks opening to the sea, threatening fish and other marine life, and ultimately jeopardizing the entire marine environment of the Pacific region.

Epidemic-like outbreaks in surrounding communities have already resulted, with symptoms including damage to the nervous system, paralysis, impaired vision, and increased cancer rates among Tahitians, in particular. There is also a strong link between ciguatera poisoning and the destruction of coral reefs from nuclear testing and military operations in French Polynesia. Ciguatera poisoning occurs when the coral ecology is disturbed, producing toxic plankton that spread through the food chain to be eaten by fish, that are then consumed by humans. Though it causes no apparent

harm to the fish, ciguatera poisoning can be fatal to humans. Even if nuclear testing stopped today the several Chernobyls' worth of radioactive contaminants encased in Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls will require comprehensive scientific monitoring for decades to come. Unfortunately, such independent and scientific studies have never been authorized by the French Government, and it is very unlikely such studies will ever take place due either to potential embarrassment to the Government or lack of sufficient resources and appropriate technology to remedy the hazards associated with nuclear contamination.

While Chirac espouses his theme of "no environmental consequence," he paradoxically denies the people of the South Pacific the most fundamental of rights regarding information about the environmental and health effects of the French nuclear testing program in Tahiti.

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Mr. Speaker, as a member of the U.S. House Committee on International Relations, I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 80 which strongly expresses the sense of the Congress for recognition of the concerns of some 22 nations and territories of the Pacific concerning this very issue.

I am very hopeful that my Republican colleagues will allow me to debate this issue and this resolution on the consent calendar next Tuesday, and I have made that request and sincerely hope that this will be the case.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, "the five declared nuclear powers have acknowledged conducting a total of 2,036 nuclear tests since 1945." Approximately 942 of these tests have been conducted within the continental United States, 214 in Russia, and 306 conducted by the United States, Great Britain, and France in Pacific islands and atolls. It was only in June last year that the United States, France, and the major nuclear powers promised over 170 non-nuclear nations that they would exercise restraint with nuclear testing and would work toward a comprehensive test ban treaty. Despite reservations, these commitments were accepted at face value by the non-nuclear nations, which make up the vast majority of the countries of the world, and it was only with the support of the non-nuclear nations that permanent extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was gained. One month later, French President Jacques Chirac's actions indicated France was more than willing to undermine the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—all in the name of national interest to ensure the reliability of its nuclear arsenal. However, nuclear physicists contend that the safety and reliability of nuclear weapons could be ensured by non-nuclear tests utilizing computer technology.

Mr. Speaker, here is the point. The French Government did not need to explode these nuclear bombs. We even offered the French Government the technology they sought, so there was no justifiable reason for detonating additional nuclear bombs.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, 60 percent of the French people were against the idea of resuming nuclear testing in the South Pacific. I find it deplorable, Mr. Speaker, that one of the five leading nuclear superpowers is willing to reopen the global arms race and encourage nuclear proliferation at the expense of world peace.

I further find it abhorrent that the United States is acting somewhat in complicity with the actions of the French Government. Though the United States has gone on record in condemning France's resumption of nuclear testing, it continues to allow French military aircraft to overfly United States airspace while enroute to France's testing site in the South Pacific.

According to the State Department, France's DC-8 supply planes are permitted to stop over on the West Coast on their way to Moruroa atoll. Reports suggest that these planes likely are carrying nuclear materials and bomb components, yet the State Department declares that it does not know what is on board these planes.

For the State Department to abdicate its responsibility in determining the contents on board these supply planes is a travesty, Mr. Speaker. And, moreover, facilitating French aircraft to supply a nuclear testing program that we oppose smacks of hypocrisy, in my humble opinion.

Mr. Speaker, the question now on the table for non-nuclear nations is: Do we depend on nuclear nations to restore morality through treaties and bans, or do we call on good people to hold their governments accountable for violations of international disarmament agreements?

"If men were angels," James Madison wrote in *The Federalist Papers*, "no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself."

Mr. Speaker, nuclear bomb explosions constitute the ultimate rape of any nation. This planet has already been ravaged by more than 2,036 nuclear bomb explosions. Mr. Speaker, 179 of those bombs have been exploded by France in waters the legendary Polynesian God Taaroa gave the people of Polynesia. For France to continue to explode its nuclear bombs among a peaceful people living half a world away from the borders of France, I submit Mr. Speaker, is colonialism in its worst form.

No "higher interest" can excuse such callous and horrific action. The Government of France should be obliged to control itself. It is time to stop the madness and take up the fight of holding nuclear nations accountable for the violent rape of non-nuclear nations, peoples, and environments, until angels govern men.

I want to share with my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, another little poem that I wrote while being held in custody on the *Rainbow Warrior* for 16 hours. I termed it "The God Taaroa."

And the god Taaroa divided the waters from the waters and gathered the people from the sun unto one place called The Seas.

And the god Taaroa let the dry land appear and gathered the people of France together unto one place, and it was so.

And he saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

And god Taaroa said, let them have dominion.

And darkness mushroomed upon the face of the deep.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues an article that appeared in the *Honolulu Advertiser* of this month, in fact, just last week, and the fact that in a major speech by Pope John Paul II, from the Vatican City, he made a special pleading to diplomats from 161 countries of the world to stop nuclear testing. I hope President Chirac is listening to the Pope's plea on behalf of the people of the world to stop this madness.

Mr. Speaker, 2 days ago, there was an extensive article written by Mr. Thomas Kamm in the *Wall Street Journal* concerning France and its colonial empire, or whatever is left of it, particularly the French colony known as French Polynesia, as I discussed earlier, and the main Island of Tahiti which is approximately the same size as the Island of Oahu in the State of Hawaii. For the benefit of my colleagues, the Island of Oahu is where Honolulu is situated.

Immediately after World War II, in recognizing that France needed to catch up with the so-called nuclear power nations, the late President Charles DeGaulle decided to conduct nuclear testings, and he did this originally in the deserts of what was then a French colony called Algeria.

Mr. Speaker, something happened. The Algerians decided to kick the French out, and it cost 1 million lives of the Algerian people before French colonialism in that part of the world in Africa was terminated. So President DeGaulle looked around and said, "Geez, if I cannot test nuclear bombs in Algeria, where can I go?" So he directed his military officers and said, "Look out in the vast French Empire and find where else I can test."

Mr. Speaker, they looked around and they came to the Pacific region where France has several colonies; one in New Caledonia, another in Wallis and Futuna, and unfortunately one in French

Polynesia. It was there that they decided this is where the French nuclear testing program was going to be re-born.

President DeGaulle promised the Tahitians tremendous prosperity and that many goods would be brought in, initially saying, "We are just going to be there to build airports." To the dismay and disappointment of the Tahitian leaders and people, they later realized what was to become of their fate in years to come; that the nuclear testing program was to be done in their islands.

The article in the *Wall Street Journal* was very persuasive, in my humble opinion, Mr. Speaker, and explains the grandeur of the French Empire and the cost of some \$10 billion for this nuclear testing program that they have conducted in French Polynesia.

There is tremendous social turmoil right now among the 200,000 Tahitian Polynesian people living there, wanting to know whether they should still consider themselves French, should that seek independence, or should they seek some form of autonomy. There are good reasons and bad reasons, and for those who are earnestly seeking to provide more self-autonomy and perhaps even independence, I quote from the article an observation of what seems to be the sentiment among the young people in French Polynesia. I quote from a young man who said,

The French run everything here: the State, the airport, the port, economic life, everything, and we have nothing. To get a job here, you need a French diploma. But I am not French. I am Maohi. The French are colonialists. We are at home here, and we are treated like dogs.

There is no question there have been a lot of economic benefits brought with this so-called prosperity, Mr. Speaker. However, the \$10 billion investment by the French Government promotes not the needs of the Tahitians, I promise my colleagues, but the enhancement of its nuclear testing program. That is all it is.

Mr. Speaker, there is currently a conference going on right now in Geneva, the Conference on Disarmament, where the Honorable John Holum, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, is pleading with the conferees on negotiations for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote a statement from our President to the members of the conference.

A comprehensive test ban treaty is vital to constrain both the spread and further development of nuclear weapons, and it will be helpful to our mutual pledges to denounce the nuclear arms race and more towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear arms.

But we have got a little problem with this, Mr. Speaker. In the article in the *Washington Post* today, the state of India, through its ambassador and representative to this conference said, "Wait a minute. You want us to sign onto this test ban treaty, but you do not want to get rid of your nuclear bombs." Now, does not it seem silly?

Mr. Speaker, it seems that these non-nuclear nations are getting very leery about the double standard that the nuclear powers are pressing on them, to say that we are going to sign onto a nuclear test ban treaty, but the nuclear nations continue to have the nuclear weapons and we do not know who they are pointed at.

India said, "No, we are not going to agree to that unless there is an additional agreement, and that is to get rid of all nuclear weapons, all nuclear bombs." It seems that the nuclear powers are having problems with that idea. India has already exploded a nuclear bomb device in 1974. It was the only nuclear bomb explosion India conducted and proved to the world India had the technology to also produce nuclear warheads if it wanted to.

But from my readings and meetings with the leaders of this great democratic nation, the largest democracy in the world, by the way, Mr. Speaker, they are committed to getting rid of nuclear weapons altogether, but somehow there seems to be a difficulty among the nations that currently have in their possession nuclear warheads and bombs. So we sign onto a test ban treaty, but the nuclear superpowers still want to hold on to their nuclear bombs. To me, that seems to be a contradiction of the first order.

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated earlier to my colleagues, next week on Thursday, the President of France has been invited to address a Joint Session of the Congress. President Chirac is going to be here to share with our President, I suppose, and the leaders of the Congress, his wisdom on how to conduct foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, this is really funny. There was an article in the New York Times that came out yesterday where in several instances French officials anonymously dropped a leak here and a leak there saying, "This is what we are going to share with American leaders when our President comes to Washington."

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate, I do not see why we should be coming to listen to the speech when he has said: This is what I am going to talk about. Unbelievable. First President Chirac is going to tell the American leaders and our people that we are not doing enough in the Bosnian crisis. France is going to be the leader, or play a very preeminent role in representing, I suppose, the European countries, whatever that means, and to let the United States know that it is not to do this unilaterally, even though we have been successful in the Dayton agreements and the talks that transpired in recent weeks.

Second, Mr. Speaker, another suggestion that we are going to be hearing from President Chirac is that our Government is not giving enough foreign aid to Third World countries. Give me a break, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind President Chirac who has been providing security for Europe, includ-

ing France, for some 50 years during the cold war when President DeGaulle unilaterally decided to pull out of NATO.

Mr. Speaker, do my colleagues know the reason why DeGaulle wanted to pull out of NATO? Because he did not like the idea that the United States was playing too great of a role in the politics and the security of European countries. Can my colleagues believe that? DeGaulle even demanded that the United States troops that were then stationed in France leave in 60 days.

What was the response of our Government? "President DeGaulle, does that also include the 10,000 soldiers that lie buried in French soil to free you from Nazi Germany?" That is the arrogance that we get from the leaders of this Government.

Third, Mr. Speaker, I might also add to my colleagues that President Chirac is going to have another suggestion for us. He is going to suggest to our Republican colleagues that we cannot afford to force our Government into bankruptcy or default because it will have serious economic consequences to the economy of France, to Europe and other nations of the world.

Mr. Speaker, that is a real interesting lecture. He should be an expert on it, with about a 20 percent popularity rating in France, serious strikes where millions of French workers are outraged that his Government did not provide for their needs, and the problems affecting the economy of France as it now stands.

Last, Mr. Speaker, President Chirac is also going to suggest to my colleagues that we are not fulfilling our responsibilities as a world leader. Do you believe that, Mr. Speaker? He is going to give us some pointers. He is going to suggest how we can go about becoming a better world leader, as if the Government of France is a world leader itself. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I think he needs to have a couple more lessons.

Mr. Speaker, I can just imagine the logistic problems we are going to have before President Chirac gives his enshrined speech before us next week.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to address a little more extensively sometime next week a very special person that I certainly admire, who not only have his portrait in our Chamber, but certainly the spirit of that man lives on. I have learned to respect the contributions that he has made not only as a great French patriot, but as a firm believer in democracy and the principles of human rights at the time that we were a colony of the British Empire.

Mr. Speaker, I make reference, briefly, to the Marquis de Lafayette. As my colleagues will note, there are only two murals depicting not only our first President, but this great French patriot.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to share with my colleagues the commentary that I wish the Government and the leader of France could be a little more

positive and helpful with regard to the serious problems that we now face in the world. I wish that they would immediately cease exploding these nuclear bombs. If the test are so safe, why are they not done under the Eiffel Tower, in Marseille, or in Paris?

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad commentary that here is a leading democracy of the world playing colonial mostly in the ugliest way, and I wish and hope that my colleagues would share the concerns of the millions of people around the world, the leaders of some 166 nations protesting, pleading and asking President Chirac: Do not explode these nuclear bombs. But despite all of that, Mr. Speaker, he just went ahead and exploded them.

Do you think, Mr. Speaker, this man deserves our presence here? I respectfully submit, Mr. Speaker, he does not. I hope that my colleagues will join me by not being in this Chamber when President Chirac addresses the Congress next week.

BALANCED BUDGET DOWNPAYMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. ROGERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Speaker, this Balanced Budget Downpayment Act is an important step forward. Funding levels will now be based on the conference report funding levels for the fiscal year 1996 Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary appropriations bill. With a few exceptions, relating to issues that remain to be negotiated out, congressional priorities will be reflected from this point forward, both in terms of programs that merit continued funding and those where decreases are justified.

For law enforcement programs, small business loans, passports, visas, diplomatic security, and the Judiciary, full-year funding has already been provided in the previous two targeted appropriations bills.

In this bill, funding is being provided through March 15 for the remaining programs under the jurisdiction of the Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary Subcommittee at the fiscal year 1996 conference report levels, under fiscal year 1995 terms and conditions. This puts funding for these programs on the path that will lead to substantial savings—in the Commerce Department, for instance, the conference report provided levels that are a 16-percent reduction from fiscal year 1995, while providing substantial additional resources for the Nation's fight against crime.

So this is an important change, from a formula that keeps funding tied to fiscal year 1995 levels as a minimum, to one that implements that fiscal year 1996 priorities which have been voted on and passed, in the case of the Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary appropriations bill, three times in this House.

I support this Balanced Budget Downpayment Act, and urge all Members to vote for this legislation that will keep the Government fully functioning through March 15.

I am including a short summary of the provisions in this legislation as they relate to the Commerce-Justice Subcommittee, and also a statement clarifying a number of issues.