

peace that will allow for considerable humanitarian needs of the Congolese people to be met and for the holding of elections at the earliest agreeable time.

□ 1545

Moreover, we call for the disarming and disbandment of the private militias, which are a continuing threat to peace and stability. And, finally, we call upon the parties involved in the elections to address and resolve questions concerning the election process so that there can be fair and free elections in the Congo.

Over the past several years nations caught in seemingly intractable conflict have managed to successfully complete a democratic transition: South Africa, Malawi, and Mozambique are but three examples of this process, and Liberia, we will see if that will be a new example.

There is no reason to expect any less from the Congo. Although these developments are halfway around the world, they matter. America has a great deal to gain from a healthy democratic Africa, and a stable Congo is a part of that. We have discussed this measure with the administration, which supports the approach taken on the resolution to the current crisis in the Congo. I urge the House to approve this resolution and to address the worsening crisis in the Republic of Congo.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution because I believe this draws attention to an explosive situation in Central Africa. I commend the gentleman from California, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, for introducing it and for working with the chairman of the committee to move it forward.

By reflecting the views of the U.S. Congress on this important issue, I hope this resolution will encourage the parties to maintain the question and reach a political solution in their ongoing talks. I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW].

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege, along with Chairman ARCHER of the Committee on Ways and Means, to travel to Brazzaville and then to the Ndoke Forest in the Republic of Congo. While there we spent considerable time with President Lissouba and got to know him quite well, as well as his daughter, who is a medical doctor.

President Lissouba by background is a college professor. He is a very gentle man who believes in the democratic process, and believes deeply in the future of his country, and believes deeply in the welfare of the people that he serves.

The Republic of Congo is an emerging country in Africa that does have a number of important natural resources. The American investors are finding a friendly reception in Brazzaville as they are investing not only in the oil but also in many of the other assets and resources in the Republic of Congo.

I am very concerned, as I am sure other Members are, of the virus of revolution which seems to be spreading across Africa. It is important that we show our resolve to put forth and help enforce and hold in place democratic principles. The election that was scheduled for just next week has been postponed, not because of any fault of the present administration under President Lissouba but because of the revolt that is going on in that country today. Never did I think when we were there just a few months ago that the democratic process would be interfered with as it is today.

I would like to speak briefly of another interest that the United States has in the Republic of Congo. The Republic of Congo has been very cooperative with us in looking at and supporting a United States AID project in the Ndoke Forest which goes toward the preservation not only of the rain forest but also of the rain forest elephants that are present there, as well as the rain forest gorillas. These are species that are very much endangered. We have found great cooperation from the Republic of Congo in cooperating with the United States' interest in the preservation of these wonderful creatures.

We have also found the need and concern that we have to do more for the preservation of the rain forest, and the great concern that we have as to some of the logging operations which are not only devastating these rain forests, but also because of the use of the gorillas and other wildlife in the area, using them as camp meat.

The rain forest does have a very definite effect on our weather. Being from Florida, this is right in the area where hurricanes are created. We do have a very, very large stake in seeing that there is a friendly government that we can work with for the preservation of these great natural resources.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW] for his supporting comments.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNOWBARGER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. ROYCE] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 175, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's

prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of order of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER RECENT EVENTS IN SIERRA LEONE IN WAKE OF RECENT MILITARY COUP D'ETAT

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 99) expressing concern over recent events in the Republic of Sierra Leone in the wake of the recent military coup d'etat of that country's first democratically elected president.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 99

Whereas for the first time in almost 30 years, the Republic of Sierra Leone held their first truly democratic multiparty elections to elect a president and parliament and put an end to military rule;

Whereas the elections held on February 26, 1996, and the subsequent runoff election held on March 15, 1996, were deemed by international and domestic observers to be free and fair and legitimate expressions of the will of the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

Whereas on May 25, 1997, a military coup d'etat against the democratically elected Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, including President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, took place;

Whereas the coup d'etat, led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma and the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) on May 25, 1997, signifies a giant step backward for freedom and democracy in the Republic of Sierra Leone;

Whereas there has been fighting, killing, looting and a disruption of relief supplies in the Republic of Sierra Leone since the coup d'etat; and

Whereas the best solution to this crisis would be a peaceful solution: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) condemns the leaders and members of the rebellious Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) for ousting the democratically elected Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, including President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah;

(2) urges an immediate end to all violence in the Republic of Sierra Leone;

(3) encourages the members of the AFRC to negotiate a hand-over of power back to the democratically elected Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone in order to restore order and democracy in the country;

(4) encourages all citizens of the Republic of Sierra Leone to work together to bring about a peaceful solution to the current conflict;

(5) reaffirms the United States support of the democratically elected Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone led by President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah;

(6) urges the members of the AFRC and all armed elements involved in the conflict to ensure the protection and safety of international aid agencies and personnel serving in the country, and allow them unobstructed access to affected areas to deliver emergency humanitarian relief to people in need; and

(7) commends the Organization of African Unity for calling on all African countries, and the international community at large, to refrain from recognizing the new regime or lending support in any form whatsoever to the perpetrators of the coup d'etat, the AFRC.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. LUTHER] will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN].

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us expresses the grave concerns of the Congress over the recent coup in Sierra Leone. This resolution was introduced by the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS], who have followed the crisis in Sierra Leone very closely over the years.

Like the Republic of Congo which we considered earlier, Sierra Leone has had a period of hope dashed by renewed violence and chaos. Last year democratic elections were held, bringing to a close years of instability and fighting between the government and rebel forces. Regrettably, the peace did not hold, and a combination of government forces and rebel soldiers overthrew the elected government of President Kabbah.

Mr. Speaker, the situation in Sierra Leone is so desperate that the best hope for the restoration of democratic rule lies with the hundreds of Nigerian troops who have blockaded the capital and are supporting the reinstatement of Kabbah's administration. Mr. Speaker, this resolution will put the Congress firmly on the side of democracy in Sierra Leone, and accordingly, I urge the House to adopt this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ], the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Africa.

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 99, which condemns the recent military coup d'etat in Sierra Leone staged by Johnny Paul Koromah and the Armed Forces Ruling Council. I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], for introducing the resolution, which passed both our Subcommittee on Africa and the Committee on International Relations unanimously.

In 1996 Sierra Leone held free, fair, and democratic elections. Those elections and the people's choice of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to lead Sierra Leone were not dissolved by the

coup d'etat. They cannot be erased or suspended by undemocratic or violate means.

While the coup is certainly disturbing, as we continue to see some of these actions in other places, I think what is encouraging is that many African nations and the Organization of African Unity were swift in their condemnation and asking that governments refrain from recognizing or supporting the new regime.

With this resolution, the United States Congress joins the chorus of voices which have spoken out against the coup, and calls upon Mr. Koromah and the AFRC to return power to the true and democratically-elected government, the government that was chosen by the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], the sponsor of this resolution, who is a member of our Committee on International Relations.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to speak on behalf of House Concurrent Resolution 99.

I also would like to, before I begin my brief remarks, thank very much the original cosponsors, the gentleman from Florida, [Mr. ALCEE HASTINGS], and the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. TONY HALL], and also I want to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, the gentleman from California, [Mr. ED ROYCE] and the entire membership of that committee; also the former head of that committee, the gentleman from Florida, [Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN], and our chairman, the gentleman from New York, [Mr. BEN GILMAN].

Mr. Speaker, this is a sad resolution in a way because it was barely a year ago that we stood here and talked about the great strides toward a free and democratic government which the people of Sierra Leone had made. This really was the first time in over 30 years that they had had any elections. But now the whole world has changed, and they have been taken over by a band of thugs. It is sad. It happened this year on May 25.

What we are trying to do is to sponsor a resolution which really signifies not only to the people of Sierra Leone but the other nations around the world who believe in the great strides they have made prior to May, that it is important to end violence, to restore the democratically-elected government led by President Kabbah, and also make sure the protection and safety of international aid workers are ensured.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I thank the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], and members on the other side. I want to also put in a special word of appreciation to Ambassador John Hirsch and Ambassador George Moose.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida, [Mr. ALCEE HAST-

INGS], who is an original cosponsor of this resolution.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], which I find very poignant. In addition thereto, I appreciate him so very much for originally being a cosponsor of this effort. Assuredly, I thank the chair of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from New York, [Mr. BEN GILMAN], the subcommittee chair, the gentleman from California, [Mr. ED ROYCE], and the ranking member, the gentleman from New Jersey, [Mr. ROBERT MENENDEZ], who have produced not only in this instance but in several a plethora of activity dealing with the continent of Africa in a very positive way.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my continued support for this resolution that was offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] and myself to condemn the coup d'etat in Sierra Leone. We certainly must stop the violence in Sierra Leone now.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this necessary and timely legislation which, first, condemns the Armed Forces Ruling Council members for ousting the democratically-elected government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and second, orders an immediate cessation to the violence in this nation, and encourages the AFRC to negotiate a return to power of the elected leadership.

The military coup led by Johnny Paul Koromah in Sierra Leone on May 25, 1997, was a savage assault on an emerging democracy in this African nation. Just 15 months prior to the coup democratic elections were held and President Kabbah was chosen to lead his country into a new era, one which promised liberty and constitutional order for Sierra Leonians.

International election observers were there and the citizenry declared this election to be free and fair. The people of Sierra Leone signified their determination to vote, even if it cost them their lives, and they were successful. But this country's march towards democratic government was suddenly stopped by those who wanted to end its forward strides by undertaking violence. With their coup came chaos marked by fighting, and killing, and looting.

We must speak out forcefully with one voice against the travesty and tragedy being played out in Sierra Leone. If we do not, we are sanctioning the blatant robbery of the freedoms of the people of Sierra Leone.

This legislation is especially timely. In response to events in Sierra Leone, ECOMOG has imposed an air, land, and sea blockade in response to an ECOWAS decision to impose economic sanctions on this military junta.

□ 1600

These interventions have given way to negotiations. According to the Embassy of Sierra Leone in Washington,

negotiations between four foreign ministers of ECOWAS and representatives of the AFRC are now taking place in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. A strong message by the U.S. Congress at this point then could be helpful in restoring power to the democratically elected government. I urge adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 99.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. ROYCE], the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

I want to commend the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] and also the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS], coauthors of this resolution, as well as members of the Subcommittee on Africa for their support. They unanimously endorsed this resolution.

When democratic government was restored through elections in Sierra Leone last year, as the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS] reminded us, it was counted as a great achievement for the people of west African nations. This country had suffered two coups and 4 years of military rule. It was the scene of a ferocious civil war as we have heard today. The military tried its best to extend its rule, but the people were so eager for democracy that they demanded that elections be delayed no longer, despite threats of reprisal. I remember the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS] telling me that some had their hands cut off in reprisal for casting ballots by rebels trying to frustrate a democratic transition in this country. Yet, they had the bravery to go to the polls and cast those votes.

Imagine now how the citizens of Sierra Leone must feel when on May 24 a group of military officers staged another coup. That coup, of course, sent the President into exile. Since then, this group of thugs in uniform have looted the country, virtually holding the nation hostage to their shifting demands.

The long-suffering citizens of Sierra Leone have responded by resisting the coup leaders. They have staged strikes. Labor unions, professional associations, and civic groups have opposed the coup. The Kabbah government is broadcasting to the nation on a secret transmitter to bolster the people's resolve to resist this illegal power grab.

There is a positive trend in Africa today toward political and economic reform. The transition in Sierra Leone often was cited as part of that positive trend. Their very worthy efforts are made meaningless if we accept the undoing of reform in a nation in which the people have supported the democratic process. In many cases they supported it with their lives.

Let us join the Organization of African Unity in supporting a west African diplomatic and military initiative to free Sierra Leone from its unelected leaders. I urge passage of this resolution.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. SNYDER], an outstanding new Member of Congress.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, Sierra Leone is a small country. My guess is that many Members of Congress and many folks in America would not be able to find it on a map. I can say that, being from Arkansas, I know that many people cannot find Arkansas on a map. And it was my pleasure to have lived and worked at a mission hospital in Sierra Leone for 6 months a number of years ago.

At that time it was a dictatorship. It was corrupt. We would actually have to bribe the postman to get the mail. Life expectancy was 42 years old. As one of those folks who had lived there, like many Members here would have been overseas, one follows a country closely after that.

I was very excited a year ago when these elections occurred. I have been in that town of Bo where those people had their hands cut off trying to vote. We went there in search of the elusive American cheeseburger when we were trying to find recreation. I know how much that democracy would have meant to those people. It is a terrible tragedy what happened during those elections, but it shows democracy does not come cheap in certain parts of the world. Some of us who have worked in Africa, and I have been there a couple of times to work, were concerned that perhaps with the end of the cold war that we would ignore Africa with our trade policy, with our failure to support an adequate foreign operations budget for Africa, with our failure to support an adequate military to military relationship with Africa, student exchanges. That is our responsibility, to do what we can to nourish democracy. But the responsibility for this coup is those folks in Sierra Leone that did this bloody and brutal act. It is wrong. This body knows who is responsible for it. I commend the folks that put this resolution together and ask every Member to support it.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I merely want to conclude by commending the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], also the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS] for their sponsorship of the resolution. I certainly want to commend the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. SNYDER] for bringing his personal experiences to bear on this particular issue. I think it is just outstanding for him to provide us with that kind of insight on this issue.

The Congress by this resolution should send a clear message that this coup against the democratically elected President must not stand and that the United States will work with the international community to restore the legitimate democratic government

in Sierra Leone to power. This resolution supports that policy and I am pleased that the President of the United States supports this resolution. I urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. SNOWBARGER]. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 99.

The question was taken.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

REGARDING INTERFERENCE OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN MERGER OF BOEING CO. AND McDONNELL DOUGLAS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 191) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the interference of the European Commission in the merger of the Boeing Co. and McDonnell Douglas.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 191

Whereas the Boeing Company and McDonnell Douglas have announced their merger;

Whereas the Department of Defense has approved the merger as consistent with the national security of the United States;

Whereas the Federal Trade Commission has found that the merger does not violate the antitrust laws of the United States;

Whereas the European Commission has been highly critical of the merger in its consideration of the facts;

Whereas the European Commission is apparently determined to disapprove the merger to gain an unfair competitive advantage for Airbus Industries, a government-owned aircraft manufacturer; and

Whereas this dispute could threaten to disrupt the overall relationship between the European Union and the United States which had a two-way trade in goods and services of approximately \$366,000,000,000 in 1996: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) any disapproval by the European Commission of the merger of the Boeing Company and McDonnell Douglas would constitute an unwarranted and unprecedented interference in a United States business transaction that would directly threaten thousands of American aerospace jobs and potentially put many more jobs at risk on both sides of the Atlantic; and

(2) the President should take such actions as he considers to be appropriate to protect United States interests in connection with this matter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and gentleman from