

children living without health insurance in this country than they are with the issue of whether or not we hang the Ten Commandments on the wall.

We all know actions speak louder than words, and the Ten Commandments are important words; important words to me. But what about our actions? What is this body doing to help the children in this Nation, over 70,000 in my home State of Connecticut alone, that will go to sleep tonight without health insurance?

We are only spending time on this issue of the Ten Commandments because the GOP operative, William Kristol, suggested that this be done in the March 10 edition of the conservative publication, the *Weekly Standard*. The American people should be driving the agenda of this House and not Republican conservative operatives. We must make children's health care our top priority in this session of the Congress.

INFLATION DOES EXIST

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the fix is in. The American people are not yet aware of it. If we look on the front page of the *Washington Post* we see it: "Greenspan Backs Panel to Rule on Inflation Levels."

The dirty little back room deal that is about to be cut here between the White House and the Republican leadership is to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy, capital gains, business as usual at the Pentagon, and still balance the budget.

How do we do that? We do that through the magic of the CPI. We define away inflation and tell those seniors whose cost of health care is doubling at twice the rate of inflation every year, oh, it is better. It might cost more, you might not be able to afford it, but we are going to reduce your cost of living because it is better health care; that does not count as inflation.

We are going to say to the middle class whose taxes are going to go up if they lose indexation, oh well, yes, your taxes went up, but you know, that is because inflation does not really exist.

If inflation does not really exist, why are Alan Greenspan and the other members of the Federal Reserve Board paying themselves and their staff healthy 5 and 6 percent salary increases every year? That must not have anything to do with inflation.

It is time to play straight with the American people. Let us not politicize the CPI and stick it to seniors, the middle class, and children once again.

TIME TO GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

(Mr. WEYGAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, as a freshman, as a Democrat in the minority, and as a member of the Committee on the Budget, we have seen so many different things come before our committee, but we have seen no action. We have talked for many days and many months about campaign finance scandals, yet the main business of the people of America is being ignored.

This procrastination cannot go on. The President has submitted a budget, a budget that perhaps Members on both sides of the aisle may disagree on certain elements, but it is time to get on with that business; debate it, argue it, amend it, do whatever we must do, but let us forget about the political rhetoric. Let us move together in a bipartisan fashion. Let us work on the issues of Medicare, Medicaid, education, all of the real important issues to the people of my district in Rhode Island and in America.

Let us stop this bickering. Let us move forward with a budget and let the Republicans, if they truly believe in making sure that this is an effective Congress, come forward with effective changes. Let us debate it and vote on it.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 1 p.m. today.

CONGRATULATING PEOPLE OF GUATEMALA ON SUCCESS OF RECENT NEGOTIATIONS TO ESTABLISH PEACE PROCESS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 17) congratulating the people of Guatemala on the success of the recent negotiations to establish a peace process for Guatemala.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 17

Whereas on December 29, 1996, the Government of Guatemala and the representatives of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalana signed an historic peace accord ending 36 years of armed confrontation;

Whereas the peace accord includes the creation of a commission to implement a wide range of reforms to the political, economic, social, and judicial systems of Guatemala, including an enhanced respect for human rights and the rule of law, improved health and education services, attention to the needs of refugees and displaced persons, and the role of the military in a democratic society;

Whereas the peace accord represents the completion of a long and important negotiation process with the goal of achieving lasting peace, national reconciliation, political stability, and renewed economic growth in Guatemala; and

Whereas lasting peace, political stability, and economic development in Guatemala is in the best interest of all nations of the Western Hemisphere, including the United States: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) congratulates the Guatemalan Government of President Alvaro Arzu for its extraordinary accomplishments in negotiating an end to hostilities and beginning the process of national reconciliation and reconstruction;

(2) recognizes the commitment of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalana in Guatemala to agree to end the devastating warfare and to resolve their differences in a peaceful manner within a democratic political arena;

(3) commends all of the people of Guatemala for their determination to achieve a lasting peace and encourages their strong commitment to democratic principles and social justice for all; and

(4) affirms the commitment of the United States to help support a sustainable peace and development of strong democratic institutions in Guatemala.

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

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

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California [Mr. GALLEGLY], the original sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 17, a resolution I sponsored which congratulates President Arzu, the URNG, and the people of Guatemala for their recent success in concluding a peace agreement which brings to an end a civil war which has raged more than 30 years and has cost the lives of over 100,000 Guatemalans.

This resolution is one of those good news stories involving the Western Hemisphere which, as chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I am very happy to report to my colleagues. The signing of the peace accords on December 29 concluded 6 years of negotiations between the two sides and established a framework within which the country will now embark on a process of peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction.

The Guatemalan people now join nations such as El Salvador and Nicaragua in choosing peace over war, democracy over anarchy, economic development over poverty and chaos, and social justice over exploitation and abuse.

The accords pose numerous challenges, and their success will surely test the wills and commitment of all sides. But the goals established in the

accords were mutually arrived at, and the end results, when fully realized, will be very significant.

In fact, the effort put forth by both the government and the URNG through the long years of negotiations is already beginning to pay dividends.

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Yesterday in what was clearly a signal of confidence in the peace process, some 30 guerrillas handed over their weapons to United Nations' observers. This act was the first of many similar events to take place throughout Guatemala in the coming months and serves notice that the commitment to peace is strong.

Mr. Speaker, with the problems we currently face in the hemisphere, especially with the issue of the war on drugs, this recent news from Guatemala and Nicaragua as reflected in our other resolutions under consideration is very welcome.

In conclusion, I want to thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], my chairman, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], the ranking member, the gentleman from New York [Mr. ACKERMAN], the subcommittee ranking member, and my colleagues, the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. BALLENGER], and the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA], for their sponsorship of this resolution and their support in bringing this bill to the floor today.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to support the peace process in Guatemala.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California [Mr. GALLEGLY] for introducing this resolution and for his supporting remarks.

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

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. ACKERMAN].

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that, despite the hectic and trend-setting legislative pace, we have found the time today to take up House Concurrent Resolution 17 to congratulate the people of Guatemala on the establishment of the peace process for that nation.

After 36 years of civil war, Guatemala has finally had a chance for a lasting peace. The URNG has agreed to demobilize and in fact the first URNG combatants are entering demobilization camps this week. The Guatemalan military has agreed to reduce its size by one-third, and the United States has pledged \$265 million over 4 years for reconstruction.

Even before the signing of the peace accords, the human rights situation in Guatemala had improved dramatically as a result of the cessation of hostilities last March. The government of President Arzu has moved aggressively to restructure the military command by reducing the number of general offi-

cers from 23 to 8 and removing those officers alleged to be involved in corruption or other abuses. But there is still a long way to go.

Guatemala continues to suffer from a marked disparity in income distribution, and poverty is pervasive. According to AID, 75 percent of Guatemala's population live in poverty. Only 48 percent of its adults are literate, and its infant mortality rate is among the highest in Latin America.

Yet despite of all this, or perhaps because of it, Guatemalans have chosen peace and democracy. They are to be congratulated for that choice.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague and chairman [Mr. GALLEGLY] for his great leadership in this area and for introducing this resolution, to our chairman [Mr. GILMAN] for his stewardship, and for our ranking member [Mr. HAMILTON] for his hard work on this resolution. I urge all of our colleagues to vote in support of House Concurrent Resolution 17.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of the resolution.

Let me join in expressing appreciation to the chairman of the committee [Mr. GILMAN], the chairman of the subcommittee [Mr. GALLEGLY], and the ranking member of the subcommittee [Mr. ACKERMAN], for bringing forward this resolution. My understanding is this is the first resolution coming from that subcommittee, and I commend them for it.

I am very pleased to cosponsor this resolution. It congratulates the people of Guatemala on the tremendous gains they have made in establishing lasting peace in their country. We are all aware that the path toward peace, as the gentleman from New York has indicated, has been a long one for Guatemala. It has required great patience by the people of that country. They have suffered horribly for 36 years under a very brutal civil war. It has required significant risks for peace, taken both by the Arzu government and the URNG leadership.

Signing the peace accords on December 29, 1996, does not by any means complete the peace process in Guatemala. Guatemala faces very considerable obstacles in consolidating peace and a democracy that respects human rights. I am especially encouraged by the language in this resolution that pledges continued United States assistance to the peace process there.

We are clearly dedicated to this process. We have already provided \$15 million in support for the Guatemalan economy, and five United States personnel will be in Guatemala with the U.N. peace observation force. I strongly support this resolution. I urge its adoption.

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

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

I want to commend the gentleman from Indiana, the ranking member of

our committee, for his remarks. I also want to commend the gentleman from California [Mr. GALLEGLY] and the ranking minority member [Mr. ACKERMAN] for their work on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this measure. I think it is befitting for this House to recognize the extraordinary determination and sacrifice that has brought about the end of a war that has been raging for more than 35 years in Guatemala.

House Concurrent Resolution 17 acknowledges that Guatemala is building a new and a more democratic society under comprehensive peace accords signed on December 29, 1996.

From the earliest days of his term, President Alvaro Arzu has shown exceptional courage and strong leadership in purging corrupt officers and suspected human rights violators from Guatemala's security forces.

His willingness to confront these problems has won him the confidence of the people of Guatemala that was necessary to pursue a firm and lasting peace accord with the leftist insurgency. President Arzu built on the foundation laid by his predecessor, President Ramiro de Leon, with two central objectives: to end the war and make Guatemala a more just country for all of its people.

Today, President Arzu's government has moved swiftly to form commissions responsible for implementing specific agreements on economic, political, and cultural reforms.

Demobilization of the URNG guerrillas is one of the most important short-term tasks. Just this week, guerrillas have begun to voluntarily surrender their weapons to U.N. observers. International donors, including the United States, are coordinating efforts to retrain and to resettle roughly some 3,000 guerrillas and their supporters.

The international community has pledged \$1.9 billion to help implement the broad peace accords by extending education, health care, and economic opportunity to all Guatemalans. Our own Nation has pledged \$260 million over a 4-year period for these efforts.

Yes, much remains to be done to rebuild Guatemala's infrastructure and society. But we recognize today that the Guatemalan people have taken and are taking bold steps in the interest of peace, prosperity, and social justice.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by recognizing the contributions of our State Department and our Agency for International Development to the cause of peace in Guatemala over the years. Along with the United Nations, our diplomats and development specialists have made indispensable contributions to the peace process.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I once again commend Mr. GALLEGLY for his leadership on this subject. We look forward to working with him on these issues throughout the 105th Congress.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice to those of my

colleagues who have expressed congratulations to the people of Guatemala for ending decades of civil war and embarking on a courageous effort to rebuild their country together. The peace and national reunification that has resulted from this process represents the beginning of a bright new day for this country which has seen so much horror and loss in the past.

The civil war in Guatemala was one of the longest and bloodiest of this century. In the 36 years of fighting, the fabric of Guatemalan society was torn apart. As the peace process takes hold, the people of Guatemala will have to begin the arduous work of recreating their society and repairing the institutions that must serve them in the years to come. It is my hope that resolutions such as this, and the positive role that the United States played in the peace process, will become the symbols of a new era of United States involvement in Guatemala. I believe that we have much to offer the people of Guatemala in their efforts to build democratic institution and refashion a civil society, and I hope that they will turn to us for help.

I continue to be concerned that, although the war has ended, the culture of impunity that has long plagued Guatemala remains. The Law of National Reconciliation established a general amnesty for war crimes, as well as a truth commission to help heal the wounds of war. We must do all that we can to see that those actions which fall outside the scope of the amnesty and the truth commission are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Helen Mack, sister of Myrna Mack, who was brutally murdered by a Guatemalan death squad in 1990, is in town this week to discuss the application for amnesty made by her sister's killers. Such crimes do not fall within the parameters of the amnesty law, and we must press the Guatemalan Government to set firm limits on the amnesty provision in such cases.

We must also ensure that the truth commission is given the information that it requires to complete its healing process for the Guatemalan people. This means that the United States Government must fully declassify documents dealing with human rights abuses in Guatemala during the civil war. Given our own shameful role in this conflict, this is the least we can do to support Guatemala's peace process.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in urging the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 17 congratulating the people of Guatemala on the success of the recent negotiations to establish a peace process for Guatemala. This is an important statement of congressional support and the people of Guatemala should know of our interest and concern and support for their efforts in the peace process there.

Mr. Speaker, I join in congratulating the people of Guatemala on reaching a peaceful solution to the brutal civil war in which more than 100,000 people were killed over the past 36 years. In the violence, thousands of individ-

uals were tortured, raped, and "disappeared." The frustrating and difficult U.N.-sponsored peace negotiations between the Guatemalan Government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union [URNG] were not quick, but they have brought an end to the violence.

At the same time, however, I wish to express my serious concerns regarding the sweeping amnesty provisions which were, ironically, dubbed the Law of National Reconciliation. This legislation, which passed the Guatemalan Congress after only 2 days of consideration on December 18, 1996, raises some questions that I wish to call to the attention of my colleagues. If misapplied, the Law of National Reconciliation, which followed the signing of the Peace Accords in Madrid on December 12, 1996, will not reconcile the people of Guatemala with government forces, but will plant the seeds of future suspicion and mistrust between the Guatemalan people and members of government agencies. I am concerned that the amnesty provisions could be used to open up a legal back door for human rights perpetrators to escape just prosecution.

The broad amnesty provisions are also in direct conflict with the March 1994 Human Rights Accord, one of the proclaimed milestones in the Guatemalan peace process. This accord required both sides to agree that the government would not sponsor measures designed to prevent prosecution of human rights violations. I urge the Guatemalan authorities at least to apply the minimum safeguards in the Law of National Reconciliation when prosecuting human rights violations. While providing amnesty for political crimes related to the armed civil war, article 8 of this law excludes cases of genocide, torture, and forced disappearances from the amnesty, as well as crimes for which amnesty is prohibited by Guatemalan law or Guatemala's international treaty obligations.

I am also concerned, Mr. Speaker, with regard to civil cases in which U.S. citizens are involved, which are not connected with the armed conflict. The Law of National Reconciliation could potentially be used to terminate the landmark cases brought against Guatemalan Government forces by U.S. citizens Helen Mack, sister of the slain Myrna Mack; Jennifer Harbury, the wife of Mr. Bamaca; Carole Denn, wife of Michael DeVine; and Sister Diana Ortiz. In addition, those few members of the military who have already been convicted in the DeVine and Mack cases could be released from prison. I hope the Guatemalan legal authorities will insure that all human rights perpetrators in Guatemala are brought to justice, and none of these cases will be terminated or suspended under the amnesty provisions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution today, but I also urge the Guatemalan Government to be certain that human rights violators are sought out and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). 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 (H. Con. Res. 17).

The question was taken.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

CONGRATULATING PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA ON DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS SUCCESS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 18) congratulating the people of the Republic of Nicaragua on the success of their Democratic elections held on October 20, 1996.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 18

Whereas on October 20, 1996, the people of the Republic of Nicaragua held truly democratic, multiparty elections to choose their government;

Whereas these elections were deemed by international and domestic observers to be free and fair and a legitimate expression of the will of the people of the Republic of Nicaragua;

Whereas on January 10, 1997, Arnaldo Aleman was peacefully sworn in to the office of President of the Republic of Nicaragua and immediately promised to continue down the path to democracy, national reconciliation and reconstruction that are started by the previous administration of President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro; and

Whereas this historic event of democratic elections in the Republic of Nicaragua and the inauguration of President Arnaldo Aleman should be honored: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) congratulates the people of the Republic of Nicaragua for the successful completion of the historic democratic, multiparty elections held on October 20, 1996;

(2) congratulates former President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro for her personal courage and her commitment to democracy, which have helped her achieve a profound political and economic transition in the Republic of Nicaragua;

(3) encourages all Nicaraguans to work together after taking this critical step on the long road to lasting peace and democracy;

(4) recognizes that all Nicaraguans should continue to work together in order to ensure a stable democracy, respect for human rights, a free and market-oriented economy, and social justice for all people;

(5) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to help the Republic of Nicaragua move toward freedom and democracy; and

(6) further reaffirms that the United States is strongly committed to encouraging democracy and peaceful development throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule the gentleman from