

companies are granted concessions to large sections of Burmese virgin forest in exchange for political loyalty and material support. In light of this sort of activity, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and similar initiatives are all that much more important. I urge my colleagues to support this initiative.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, H.R. 2264, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership Act of 2003. This bill authorizes U.S. participation in the Congo Basin Partnership (CBFP) that aims to protect 11 key landscapes of more than 30 national parks and thousands of square miles across six countries in central Africa.

The wilderness of the Congo Basin is in a desperate state after years of civil strife, extensive refugee crises, and exploitive logging. These activities have devastated sections of this critical rainforest and have left local people in abject poverty and dependent on unsustainable resource management practices. This bill will authorize the President to appropriate FY 2004 and 2005 funds to the CBFP program. The funding that it promises will allow important goals to be fulfilled: to promote economic development, alleviate poverty, improve the local system of governance, and conserve natural resources through support for a network of national parks and protected areas, well-managed forestry concessions, and assistance to communities that depend on the conservation of the outstanding forest and wildlife resources of eleven key landscapes in six Central African countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo).

Increased funds of up to \$36 million and a funding scheme of up to \$53 million up to 2005 for the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) program will allow for the conservation of very precious forest land and the preservation of wildlife that form an important symbiotic relationship.

I particularly applaud CBFP's ability to bring together nations such as Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, and the United Kingdom—especially in light of our task of standardizing emergency responsiveness on an international level. Also participating in this program are organizations such as the World Bank and the World Conservation Union, NGOs and private sector groups such as the World Wildlife Fund, the World Resources Institute and the Centre for International Forestry Research.

The forestland provides sustenance for a myriad of plant and animal species. They sustain our environment by absorbing carbon dioxide, by cleansing the water, or by holding the soil. Our sources of lumber crops, forests, and tourism play a vital role in our economies. In the last decade, tropical forests have disappeared every year at an average rate of 35 million acres, an area the size of Barbados. The Congo Basin contains a quarter of the world's tropical forest. However, the Forest is being destroyed at a rate of two million acres per year.

H.R. 2264 is a legislative remedy to the crisis that is occurring in the Congo Basin. Therefore, I support its passage, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2264, the Congo Basin Forest

Partnership Act, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of it. I want to thank Secretary of State Colin Powell, Congressman CLAY SHAW and all cosponsoring members of Congress for making the preservation of the Congo River Basin a priority.

While it is unfortunate that the other body cut the authorization of funds for fiscal year 2005 for this initiative, the \$18.6 million for 2004 will send a strong signal for the need for U.S. investment to preserve the Congo River Basin. The Congo River and its tributaries make up the most extensive network of navigable waterways in Africa and carry a volume of water second only to the Amazon River.

Some of us think first of the Congo River Basin as one of the largest and more important ecological regions of the world, which it is. But, what is more important, it is the home to some of the world's poorest people who have suffered some of Africa's bloodiest conflicts. More than two and a half million people have perished in Eastern Congo as a result of the most recent Congo civil war, with millions left displaced and in unimaginable destitution. Throughout the central African region, poverty rates are among the lowest in the world. Life expectancy ranges from 42 years in the Central Africa Republic to 52 in the Congo Republic.

The overall forest area of the Congo River Basin is declining rapidly as a result of the unchecked growth of timber exports, destructive agricultural expansion, and fuel wood demand for a growing population. These practices are unsustainable if the assets of the Congo River Basin are to be used to improve and sustain the lives of the people who live there.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation represents a unique opportunity to help the people of Central Africa turn their biggest asset—the natural resources of the Congo River Basin—into a viable economic base. The Congo River Basin Partnership is an economic development and conservation program for the six countries of Central Africa. The partnership will combine the preservation of some of the world's richest and most pristine ecosystems with economic development in order to alleviate poverty throughout the region.

Conservation programs will help develop a network of national parks and protected areas, and help local communities better manage the forest and wildlife. People of Central Africa, some of whom live on less than 25-cents per day, will be able to develop sustainable means of livelihood through conservation agriculture and integrated ecotourism programs.

Mr. Speaker, with substantial international efforts, the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo that engulfed the region has come to an end. The Congolese and other nations in the region are disarming and demobilizing armed groups, planning for national elections, and embracing the rule of law. This is the beginning of a new beginning for post-colonial Central Africa. The politics of the Cold War failed the region, the post-Cold War neglect turned Central Africa into a human disaster. We don't know how long it will take to establish a stable region in the heart of Africa, but we do know we must start.

Mr. Chairman, the Congo River Basin Initiative has created a window of opportunity to help the people of Central Africa rebuild their communities, establish local economies, and bring health care and other resources to their countries. This initiative will help demonstrate

that the stewardship of the Congo River Basin is the joint responsibility of Central African countries and the international community. It is important to note that the first international meeting of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership met in Paris in January of this year to launch a strong effort for international cooperation to preserve the Congo River Basin.

Together, we must end the deforestation and wildlife depletion and support the appropriate use of forest resources. I support this bill and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of its passage.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCHREST). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2264.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE 93D BIRTHDAY OF RONALD REAGAN

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 84) recognizing the 93d birthday of Ronald Reagan.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 84

Whereas February 6, 2004, is the 93d birthday of Ronald Wilson Reagan;

Whereas Ronald Reagan is the first former President ever to attain the age of 93;

Whereas both Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy Reagan have distinguished records of public service to the United States, the American people, and the international community;

Whereas Ronald Reagan was twice elected by overwhelming margins as President of the United States;

Whereas Ronald Reagan fulfilled his pledge to help restore "the great, confident roar of American progress, growth, and optimism" and ensure renewed economic prosperity;

Whereas Ronald Reagan's leadership was instrumental in extending freedom and democracy around the globe and uniting a world divided by the Cold War;

Whereas Ronald Reagan is loved and admired by millions of Americans, and by countless others around the world;

Whereas the recent tragic loss of the space shuttle Columbia and her crew remind us of how, 18 years ago, Ronald Reagan's eloquence helped heal the Nation after the Challenger disaster;

Whereas Nancy Reagan not only served as a gracious First Lady but also led a national crusade against illegal drug use;

Whereas, together Ronald and Nancy Reagan dedicated their lives to promoting national pride and to bettering the quality of life in the United States and throughout the world; and

Whereas the thoughts and prayers of the Congress and the country are with Ronald Reagan in his courageous battle with Alzheimer's disease: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress, on behalf of the American people, extends its

birthday greetings and best wishes to Ronald Reagan on his 93d birthday.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the joint resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

House Joint Resolution 84, introduced by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), recognizes the 93rd birthday of President Ronald Reagan.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's 40th President, Ronald Wilson Reagan, turns 93 years of age this Friday, February 6. He will become the first former President to reach the age of 93. While longevity is one aspect of President Reagan's life, he deserves our praise and recognition for so many more momentous accomplishments. This resolution aims to honor the man who led America during the prosperous 1980s, and I am pleased that this House has taken the time to consider it today. During his presidency, President Reagan revived the American spirit and helped all Americans become less reliant on government. From gracefully bouncing back from a would-be assassin's attack, to helping a grief-stricken Nation cope with the *Challenger* tragedy, and from leading the U.S. to a decisive victory in the war on communism, to creating 20 million new jobs, President Reagan's legacy in the White House is one of the most legendary in American history.

Mr. Speaker, we have several Members here today who may want to speak on behalf of President Reagan but I want to briefly offer one perspective of President Reagan's record. Everyone knows that one of President Reagan's top domestic objectives during his presidency was returning much of Americans' hard-earned dollars by reducing income tax rates. But what many do not realize was that these tax cuts did not occur at the expense of vital government social priorities during the 1980s. The percentage of the gross national product spent on social welfare programs steadily rose during the 1960s and 1970s to 11.5 percent in 1980, the final year of President Jimmy Carter's administration. But over the next 8 years while President Reagan resided in the White House, Federal social spending remained between 10.9 and 12 percent. So I think we can safely say that President Reagan truly was, to borrow a phrase from our current President, a compassionate conservative. During the week of his 93rd birthday, I think it is important that we remember this reality.

President Reagan reinforced this point during his first inaugural address on January 20, 1981, when he said, "It is not my intention to do away with government. It is rather to make it work, work with us, not over us; stand by our side, not ride on our back. Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it." I think all Members can agree with these sentiments, and I also believe that President Reagan accomplished these worthy goals during his two terms in the White House.

I thank the gentleman from Nevada for introducing this measure that allows this Chamber to recall President Reagan's extraordinary contributions to the United States of America. We wish President Reagan a very happy 93rd birthday and, to his family, our love and prayers.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, a bigger-than-life screen actor and television personality, Ronald Reagan moved from being governor of California in the 1960s to President of the United States and dominating American politics in the 1980s. Media-made and media-presented, President Reagan got millions of Americans to feel proud of their Nation. America's 40-year Cold War with the Soviet Union cooled considerably and perhaps actually ended during Reagan's presidency. Many Americans credit him with having achieved that significant outcome.

Born the son of a shoe salesman in small-town Illinois, Reagan's impoverished but loving parents instilled in the lad a sense of optimism that carried him through college as an average student. After graduation, he worked for a few years as a sports broadcaster in midwestern radio before landing a film contract with Warner Brothers which took him to Hollywood in 1936. Over the next 30 years, he made scores of films, including Army films produced during World War II. He hosted two popular television series, and he actively engaged in politics as president of the Screen Actors Guild.

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In the 1950s, Reagan changed from being a Roosevelt New Deal Democrat to a conservative Republican. In 1966, he became Governor of California. He was reelected in 1970.

Using his popularity in California, Reagan unsuccessfully challenged President Gerald Ford for the Republican nomination in 1976. He tried again and won the nomination in 1980, and thereafter defeated the incumbent Democrat, Jimmy Carter. With his 1984 reelection victory, President Reagan became the most politically successful Republican President since Eisenhower.

Today, we celebrate former President of the United States Ronald Reagan's

93rd birthday. We wish him the best, and recognize the contribution that he made to the development of these United States of America.

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), and thank him for introducing this resolution.

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague from Connecticut for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H. J. Res. 84, which I introduced to commemorate former President Ronald Reagan's 93rd birthday. It is a pleasure to join my colleagues here today, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) in honoring the birthday and life of an extraordinary man, historic leader and an American icon.

As we look back on the life and Presidency of Ronald Reagan, it is always a challenge to pinpoint a single greatest achievement from his many great achievements. His life has been filled with extraordinary adventures and monumental accomplishments.

Ronald Wilson Reagan was born on February 6, 1911, in Tampico, Illinois, the "Land of Lincoln." President Reagan's lifelong career of service to fellow Americans began at a young age when he served as a lifeguard in Dixon, Illinois. Later, as a fledgling radio sports announcer, Reagan traveled from his home in the Midwest to Southern California, where he embarked upon an acting career in Hollywood. He would soon rise to serve his fellow actors as president of the Screen Actors Guild. Reagan's leadership style and keen knack for engaging the public through his dynamic speaking skills and endearing nature provided him the additional opportunity to enter public service.

He would serve as Governor of California for two terms before being elected President of the United States twice. During his 8 years in the White House, President Reagan worked to fulfill his pledge to restore "the great confident roar of American progress, growth and optimism."

President Reagan's commitment to inspiring the American people and strengthening our Nation's leadership role in the world are part of our Nation's proud heritage and history.

Of course, when it comes to recognizing a distinguished leader such as Ronald Reagan, it is difficult to find words to adequately express how deeply his legacy still affects each and every one of us still today. During his 8 years as President, Ronald Reagan successfully stimulated economic

growth, curbed inflation, increased employment, and strengthened national defense.

President Reagan was instrumental in uniting a divided Berlin, as well as a divided world, by bringing about an end to the Cold War. Reagan's speech calling on Mr. Gorbachev to "Tear Down This Wall" is a piece of American, indeed, world history, that will forever elicit a special sense of pride among the American people and all freedom-loving people across this world.

Throughout his tenure in the office of President, Mr. Reagan maintained a unique grace and uncanny wit. These endearing qualities enabled him to easily communicate with American citizens, foreign dignitaries and public figures, meriting him the historic title as the "Great Communicator."

Railroad Ronald Reagan's renowned wit, firm dedication to American principles and tireless belief in our "shining city on the hill" secured Reagan's enduring legacy. President Reagan will forever be remembered for his eternal optimism and faith in the ability of the American people.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express what an honor it has been for me to take the lead in sponsoring this resolution. I would like to extend my appreciation to my colleagues, over 100 of them, who have cosponsored this measure to recognize one of the greatest leaders this Nation has ever known.

Happy birthday, President Reagan. As always, the thoughts and heartfelt sentiments of this Congress are with you.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor President Ronald Reagan on the occasion of his 93rd birthday and to pass along the thoughts and prayers of the people of the Second District of Kentucky to the President and Mrs. Reagan on this special day.

President Reagan has dedicated much of his life to public service. From the summer shores of his Illinois hometown, to the silver screens of Hollywood, to Sacramento, Washington, D.C., and now to his historic and heroic battle with Alzheimer's disease, Ronald Reagan's vision and competent leadership continues to inspire national spirit, improve quality of life in the United States and extend freedom and democracy across the globe.

During his inaugural address in 1981, President Reagan remarked, "We are too great a Nation to limit ourselves to a small dream." His dream of family, work, neighborhood, peace and freedom embodied the hopes of millions of Americans, shepherding the Nation into economic recovery and renewed national pride, while demonstrating an uncompromising moral leadership abroad that brought communism to its knees.

His is an exemplary life, uniquely American and worthy of the love and

admiration of so many men and women across the world.

Happy birthday, Mr. President.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring a man who will forever remain a symbol of the American dream.

I had the great good fortune and high honor to serve as military aide to President Reagan during my time in the United States Marine Corps. As the officer assigned to carry the "nuclear football," I had the opportunity to observe the President in a wide variety of situations.

Ronald Reagan was already well known before he entered the Presidential field. Through a variety of careers, his thoughtful, caring nature and engaging personality were well established. Friends and colleagues alike recognized him as gifted, some would say the "great communicator," who was as accomplished a listener as he was a speaker. Strong in character and always quick with a joke, the best joke teller I ever knew, candidate Reagan, Governor Reagan, earned the allegiance, trust, and respect of a Nation and was elected as our 40th President.

What struck me almost immediately when I began my service to President Reagan was the strong sense of leadership he exuded. Perhaps more than any other leader in contemporary history, President Reagan knew when to trust his staff and when not to allow his beliefs to be swayed. On routine matters, President Reagan displayed enormous confidence in his staff, I am proud to say, including me. When told, for example, "Mr. President, please stand here," he agreed affably. On matters of substance, however, he was guided by unwavering principle and would not be moved.

President Ronald Reagan applied this principle to the many challenges he faced. The economic policy of Reaganomics was met with initial skepticism and scorn, but its success validated his vision of how to address the faltering economy he inherited.

In international matters, his unflinching opposition to communism led to its demise and earned the enduring allegiance of former adversaries. This principled vision inspired men and women of all political persuasions to put the best interest of our Nation ahead of their respective political parties. By holding to his vision of America as a beacon for the rest of the world, he brought freedom, hope and opportunity to millions here and abroad.

Today we honor President Reagan for his achievement, his leadership and his enduring example. Happy birthday, Mr. President, and thank you.

Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to pay tribute to a true

American patriot on his 93rd Birthday, President Ronald Reagan. As we in Congress move forth with reviewing the president's FY 2005 budget, I recall the words of Ronald Reagan when he submitted his presidential budget. He said,

"Government has an important role in helping develop a country's economic foundation. But the critical test is whether government is genuinely working to liberate individuals by creating incentives to work, save, invest, and succeed. We don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too much."

Mr. Speaker, as we debate on the proper amount of funding for securing our nation, the greatest tribute we can pay to Ronald Reagan is to develop a budget that allows our children and grandchildren to live in a prosperous economy. For the American people, it was his leadership in economic policy that restored hope for the future.

Thank you Mr. President for your inspiration and leadership which continues to guide our nation and which will help us to protect our freedoms and liberties in the twenty-first century. May you have a wonderful birthday and God bless.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely do wish former President Reagan and his wife well on his birthday, and my thoughts and prayers are with them as he deals with the terrible disease of Alzheimer's; however, the resolution went well beyond a simple birthday wish. I could not in good faith cast a vote for a bill that stated that the Reagan Administration ensured renewed economic prosperity when millions of Americans were hurt by its economic policies and the Federal government incurred massive deficit spending.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) for introducing this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCHREST). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res 84.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING JOHN STOCKTON

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 274) honoring John Stockton for an outstanding career, congratulating him on his retirement,