

RENEWAL OF IMPORT SANCTIONS
ON BURMA**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, fifteen years ago tomorrow, the political party of Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi won a historic victory in elections called by the Burmese ruling junta to legitimize their brutal rule. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won 82% of the vote, but the Burmese government refused to convene the new parliament and has since engaged in a campaign of terror and intimidation of the political opposition.

Last year, the House of Representatives voted 372-2 to renew the import sanctions against Burma contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003. H.J. Res. 97 was signed into law on July 7, 2004.

Import sanctions on Burma must be renewed by July 2005, or Burmese products will flow once again to the United States. For that reason, I join today with Ways and Means Committee Chairman BILL THOMAS, Representative PETER KING, and 40 other Members of Congress in introducing legislation to again renew import sanctions on Burma.

Unfortunately, the case for a tough approach toward Burma, including a comprehensive import ban, is even stronger today than last July. Just a few short weeks ago, the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva overwhelmingly approved a resolution on Burma, attacking what it called "the systematic ongoing violation of human rights" by the ruling junta. In its annual Human Rights Report, the State Department charged that the Burmese Government has subjected its citizens to torture, arbitrary arrest, forced and child labor, and the use of rape as a weapon of war.

Meanwhile, unless the brutal ruling junta in Rangoon changes its stripes over the next several weeks, Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi will celebrate her 60th birthday under continued house arrest, prevented from speaking directly to the Burmese people who support her battle for democracy and human rights.

The tough approach maintained by the United States towards Burma, including import sanctions, may also be encouraging other nations to reconsider their lenient views to the Rangoon regime. Key member nations of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), for the first time, have strongly criticized Burma as it prepares to assume the rotating chairmanship of the 10-member group in 2006. Last November, the European Union itself strengthened its Burma policy in response to ongoing human rights violations. In both instances, the strong stand of the United States has stiffened backbones and increased the prospects that a multilateral sanctions regime against Burma is possible.

The import sanctions renewal legislation is also completely consistent with the tough line towards Burma taken by both Democratic and Republican Administrations. On May 17th, President George W. Bush extended the Executive Order first imposed in 1997 which prohibits new U.S. investment in Burma. Just three days ago, the State Department told Congress that U.S. sanctions against Burma "represent a clear and powerful expression of

American opposition to the developments in Burma" and are "a key component of our policy in bringing democracy to Burma."

Congress must act decisively by the end of July to renew import sanctions against Burma and send a strong signal of support for the restoration of democracy and human rights in that impoverished nation. I would encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this important piece of legislation.

RECOGNIZING AMERICAN STROKE
MONTH**HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I request that you join me today in recognizing May as American Stroke Month.

In doing so, we are presented with an opportunity to educate one another about the shattering effects of stroke that leave no American community unscathed.

Stroke, the third leading cause of death in our nation, is caused by an interruption of blood flow to the brain from a blood clot or ruptured blood vessel. Every 45 seconds someone in America suffers a stroke, and every 3 minutes someone dies from one. Over 700,000 Americans of all ages, ethnicities, and gender suffer new or recurring strokes each year, taking the lives of more than 160,000 people.

For those who survive an attack, the consequences of a stroke can be emotionally and physically devastating, often leaving victims with speech problems, impaired thinking, and paralysis. Over half of all stroke survivors must live with a disability. With 4.8 million stroke survivors, stroke is the leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the United States.

Many of us possess an image of stroke as a catastrophic, uncontrollable event that can be neither prevented nor treated. However, given adequate resources and education, nearly 80 percent of all strokes can be prevented, and many others can be effectively treated.

High blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels, smoking, a lack of physical activity and obesity have all been linked to increased susceptibility to stroke. Diabetes increases the risk of stroke by a factor of three. By controlling our medical risks with a healthy lifestyle and regular medical care, particularly among African Americans who are hardest hit by cardiovascular disease and diabetes, we can significantly decrease our chances of suffering a stroke.

Surviving a stroke with little or no disability is possible. Understanding the symptoms of a stroke, and taking immediate emergency action by calling 9-1-1, is crucial to a chance for full recovery. Rapid administration of clot-dissolving drugs, if delivered within the first 3 hours of the onset of stroke symptoms, can greatly improve a patient's chances for recovery.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, a majority of Americans are not aware of their risk for a stroke, nor are they aware of the signs and symptoms of an impending stroke. Hospitals and emergency medical services are not orga-

nized to maximize the benefits of available treatments. The average time between the onset of symptoms and medical treatment is far too long, averaging an astounding 13 hours. Fewer than 5 percent of stroke patients receive potentially lifesaving clot-dissolving medication. Many stroke patients do not receive preventive care, such as cholesterol screening and smoking cessation counseling, before leaving the hospital.

What can we do to help? We can start by encouraging our family, friends and fellow citizens to simply ask their doctors, "Am I at risk for a stroke?" and "What do I do if I have a stroke?" Education is power, and it can preserve crucial moments that mean the difference between death or a life of disability, and a healthy future.

We can also support legislation like the STOP Stroke Act, H.R. 898, a bill sponsored by my good friends Representatives LOIS CAPPAS and CHARLES PICKERING of which I am proud to be a cosponsor. This bill would authorize initiatives to help patients with symptoms of stroke receive timely and thorough care, and would establish campaigns to raise public awareness of stroke prevention and treatment. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this critical legislation.

Mr. Speaker, improving systems of stroke care and increasing awareness and education of stroke treatment and prevention will help ensure that all stroke patients have access to the best available, timely treatment. On behalf of the millions of Americans currently at risk or living with the consequences of stroke, I urge us to do everything in our power to help save lives and educate the public about this devastating disease.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1815) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this legislation. I am especially pleased that the amendment I will offer later today has been accepted. I will support this bill because it contains several important provisions that are good for our troops, good for our national security, and good for Connecticut's economy.

Every Member of this body understands our troops represent the very best of America. The bill authorizes additional funding for equipment so desperately needed by troops serving in Iraq and those fighting the war on terror in Afghanistan and elsewhere—up-armed Humvees, tactical wheeled vehicle recapitalization and modernization programs, night vision devices and improvised explosive device (IED) jammers. The bill also provides our troops with a 3.1 percent pay raise for members of the armed forces and increases bonuses for active duty enlistments, reserve enlistments and active duty re-enlistments. Each

of these measures is necessary to stem the decline in recruiting and retention among our Armed Forces.

This legislation also makes good on our obligations to provide for the families of those who make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. It increases the death gratuity to \$100,000, allows dependents of deceased servicemembers to continue receiving housing benefits for one year, and expands travel authorizations for families of hospitalized servicemembers. This is the right thing to do, and I strongly support these provisions.

The bill also contains an important provision requested by myself and several of my colleagues regarding the Marine One helicopter program. It ensures that the Navy will not procure the helicopter until it can certify that its design is essentially complete. In doing so, this provision ensures this program does not waste taxpayer dollars in the rush to field the President's helicopter.

Unfortunately, there are other provisions in this bill that I believe are not in the best interests of the American people or our national security.

First, over the objections of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it restricts the role of women in combat. Congress ought to charge the military with the responsibility to move people into jobs and positions based on merit. But excluding women from combat effectively creates two classes of servicemember, which is both bad for morale and may ultimately limit the ability of women to receive promotions in the future. Regrettably, the military already suffers from a case of not having enough women in senior positions, and this bill threatens to make that problem worse, not better.

And this bill misses two real opportunities to make a tangible difference in the lives of the men and women of our Armed Services and their families. Firstly, it does nothing to expand the availability of health care to members of the Reserves and their families, even though there are more than 100,000 Reservists and National Guardsmen currently on the front lines of Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world.

And incredibly, this bill does nothing about the military families tax and the disabled veterans tax. At a time when Congress has repealed the tax on inherited wealth—the estate tax—it is unconscionable that we would continue to tax those who have become disabled in service to their country and the survivors benefits of those killed in combat. To my mind, that is the real “death tax,” Mr. Speaker—taxing the families of those whose loved ones gave their lives and their livelihoods to this great country of ours. They deserve better.

Of course, the alternative to the bill is delay. And we cannot afford to put off the much-deserved pay raise for our troops in this bill or the purchase of new equipment that they so desperately need. Because we have an obligation to act now, I support the bill. But it is my hope that Congress will address these important issues—and soon.

RECOGNIZING 57TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 57th Anniversary of Israel's Independence Day.

Having long been the victims of discrimination and persecution, and fresh from the unimaginable horror of the Holocaust, the Jewish people of the world were successful in establishing an independent state in May of 1948. Thanks to their heroic efforts, Israel was born as a pluralistic democracy that promotes the values of liberty for all of its citizens. Fifty-seven years later, Israel continues to shine as a beacon of hope in a region too often blighted by oppressive and dictatorial regimes.

Despite Israel's desire for a peaceable existence, its citizens have been the target of violence since the state's inception. These attacks have come from neighboring states, resulting in multiple wars, and from the coordinated efforts of terrorists. Innocent Israeli's have been targeted while going about their daily lives, often during activities as routine as boarding a bus or sitting in an outdoor café.

Yet, despite the recurring waves of terror, the Israeli people have managed not just to maintain their independence, but also to thrive as a society. Israelis find themselves at the leading edge of innovation in the scientific and academic fields. The industrious Israeli people transformed an arid landscape into a model green space dotted with cities rich in diversity and culture. This resilience and vibrancy is a credit to Israel's open system of government, a system that respects and promotes civil rights, free expression, and genuine democratic elections.

I am hopeful that a lasting peace in this troubled region can be reached. However, this cannot come at the expense of Israel's security. I will continue to demand that the Palestinian Authority renounce, immediately and completely, all forms of terrorism.

On this day of independence, Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the United States stands proudly with Israel and remembers the sacrifices made by her founders. In addition, we honor the soldiers and ordinary citizens who have died in defense of freedom. The U.S. takes great pride in our alliance with Israel, and we find great strength in our moral and philosophical ties, as well as our economic and military partnerships. We will continue to act jointly with Israel to preserve her status as a secure Jewish state and a model of democracy for the whole of the Middle East.

I urge my colleagues to support this concurrent resolution.

PROVIDING FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PUBLIC LAND IN CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA, FOR USE AS A HELIPORT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 849 would transfer certain land, currently within the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, to Clark County, Nevada. The land is to be used as a heliport for commercial helicopter air tours.

The transfer would only take place if certain conditions on the use of the heliport are met by Clark County.

The first condition is that the County must impose and collect a per passenger “conservation fee” of \$3.00 for each passenger of a helicopter tour that passes over any portion of the Conservation Area.

The second condition requires the County to ensure that any helicopter tour originating or concluding at the heliport traveling over the Conservation Area fly on a certain flight path and at a specified altitude except for safety reasons.

For purposes of clarity, the conditions set forth in H.R. 849 are on the transfer of the land and should the County fail to fulfill the conditions; the land would either not be transferred or if already transferred would revert back to the United States.

Let us look at each of the conditions on the transfer of the land to Clark County.

The first condition, that the County impose and collect a per passenger fee, is problematic. Elsewhere in law, States or political subdivisions of States are prohibited from levying or collecting a “tax, fee, or charge . . . exclusively upon any business located a commercial service airport [which includes heliports] . . . other than a tax, fee, or charge wholly utilized for airport or aeronautical purposes.”

Therefore, it seems that the County would be unable to fulfill the first condition of the land transfer as the fee would be imposed upon and collected from helicopter tour passengers for the management of cultural, wildlife and wilderness resources on public land in Nevada.

The second condition is also problematic. Again, this condition would require the County to ensure that certain flight paths and minimum flight altitudes are utilized by the helicopter tours.

It should be emphasized that this bill does not direct Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) action with regard to airspace management and control.

In fact, should the FAA determine that the flight path and minimum altitude requirements set forth in the bill are unsafe or otherwise operationally unwise, the County would have failed to meet a condition of the land transfer and the land would revert back to the United States.

To make this perfectly clear, only the FAA has the authority to manage and control the National Airspace. State, regional, county and other local government entities, not to mention other Federal departments and agencies, have no authority in this regard.

Thus, the second condition on the transfer of land to Clark County is clearly outside of the County's authority and control.