

As to this specific trade agreement, as I have already said, it comes to the floor with the support from the administration and both parties in Congress. While I seriously doubt that free trade with the tiny island nation of Bahrain is going to be the rising tide that lifts our flagging economy, after all, trade with Bahrain accounts for only .03 percent of our total trade activity, I also will not try to stand in the way.

It should be noted, however, that despite its small size, Bahrain runs a trade surplus with the United States, joining most other countries in the world. So, what this agreement does is give us one more country the opportunity to sell more of its goods and services here, even more cheaply than it already does. Maybe one day soon, Mr. Speaker, we will find a country that the United States will run a surplus with, instead of the other way around. One can only hope.

I do have one other very serious concern with Bahrain, Mr. Speaker. Until recently, Bahrain continued to enforce the primary aspect of the Arab League boycott against Israel, which bars imports of Israeli-origin goods.

Simply put, the United States should not trade, and certainly not enter into free trade agreements with, nations that discriminate against America's closest and most trusted Middle East ally.

The kingdom of Bahrain now says they will relent. The kingdom now says that it 'recognizes the need to dismantle the primary boycott of Israel and is beginning to achieve that goal.'

Let us be crystal clear, Mr. Speaker. This change of heart is purely economic, and it happened just in the last month. I suspect that it has nothing to do with the fact that an economic embargo based on religion is wrong and an affront to basic human rights.

The fact that the country's parliament has rejected, in the last 6 weeks, the lifting of the embargo, and the kingdom has made it clear that it is not normalizing relations with Israel only further proves my point.

Whatever the reason, I am thrilled that Bahrain will work to end the long-standing ostracism of Israel by its neighbors. It is past time.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I would just advise my friend, I appreciate his opening remarks and respect the work that he does in international affairs, but I have no requests for time and I am prepared to yield back if the gentleman is.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Washington, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1045

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions 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 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

HONORING PILOTS OF COMMERCIAL AIR CARRIERS WHO VOLUNTEER TO PARTICIPATE IN FEDERAL FLIGHT DECK OFFICER PROGRAM

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 196) honoring the pilots of United States commercial air carriers who volunteer to participate in the Federal flight deck officer program.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 196

Whereas after the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, Congress enacted legislation authorizing volunteer pilots of United States commercial air carriers who participate in the Federal flight deck officer program to use lethal force to defend the flight deck of an aircraft against acts of terrorism;

Whereas a volunteer pilot in the Federal flight deck officer program must undergo rigorous psychological screening and a background investigation, as well as complete an intense training curriculum;

Whereas volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program provide a significant deterrent against potential acts of violence or terrorism in United States airspace, are an essential layer of security for the Nation's flying public, and are a key factor in restoring confidence in the Nation's air transportation system;

Whereas volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program devote personal time and finances to maintain a high standard of proficiency in the use of firearms and techniques for addressing emergencies in flight; and

Whereas volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program, at great personal risk and with no compensation or recognition, are dedicated to the protection of the flight deck, thereby providing an additional layer of protection to the aircraft, passengers, and cargo from acts of terrorism, such as the possible use of the aircraft as a weapon of mass destruction against people on the ground: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes that volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program are the consummate quiet professionals and embody what is best in our national character;

(2) applauds volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program for taking a stand against those who would seek to harm the United States through acts of terrorism in the air; and

(3) expresses appreciation to volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program on behalf of all citizens of the United States for the ongoing contribution of these pilots to the security of the Nation and its air transportation system.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 196.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 196 recognizes and applauds the volunteer pilots in the Federal Flight Deck Officer program. It is an opportunity to show our appreciation for those brave pilots who are committed to protecting Americans against another act of terrorism not only at huge personal risk but with no compensation or recognition.

I appreciate Chairman MICA's leadership in establishing and supporting this program. I am proud to represent the district where the Federal flight deck officer training occurs. Chairman MICA visited this program with me last year. These are superb assets at Artesia, New Mexico, which include two 727s all lined up and allow real simulated training for the Federal flight deck officers. I also toured the facility with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff just in the last month.

We should speak for a grateful Nation for the selfless contribution these pilots make to providing a critical layer of protection to the aircraft, passengers, and cargo from acts of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) control the remainder of my time and that he be allowed to yield time to other Members in consideration of this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MICA for introducing this resolution honoring the pilots who participate in this Federal Flight Deck Officer program. As the ranking member of the Aviation Subcommittee and a co-sponsor of this resolution, I believe these volunteer pilots deserve to be honored and recognized for their continued and dedicated service.

Ten months after the tragic September 11 attacks, I and over 300 Members of this body voted to authorize volunteer commercial pilots to carry handguns. At the time, arming pilots was a controversial idea, yet the House

resolved to take any measure necessary to prevent terrorism and terrorists from ever taking over an airline again.

After almost 3½ years, we now have thousands of armed and trained pilots serving our country as Federal flight deck officers. Federal flight deck officers are a powerful deterrent to hijackers and are a vital last line of defense in the skies.

Federal flight deck officer candidates must submit to rigorous psychological screening and a background investigation, as well as completing an intense training program before they are deputized. These pilots volunteer their services and do not get paid for their initial training, which includes travel, lodging, and daily expenses.

Further, they must devote personal time and finances to maintaining their firearm proficiency and anti-terrorism skills. They do it because they are patriots. These men and women represent what is best in our national character since the founding of this country. They are citizens willing to stand up and help provide for a common defense. We should honor them.

I applaud the gentleman from Florida, the chairman of the subcommittee, for introducing this legislation; and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KUHL) and also the vice chair of the Aviation Subcommittee.

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the gentleman from Florida's legislation, H. Con. Res. 196. This bill recognizes airline pilots who have courageously volunteered to participate in the Federal Flight Deck Officer program.

Following the tragic events of 9/11 in my home State of New York, the Federal Flight Deck Officer program was created by Congress as a part of the Homeland Security Act to select, train, equip, and supervise volunteer pilots to defend the flight decks of passenger aircraft against acts of criminal violence and air piracy.

These volunteers have dedicated their time and money to the extensive flight deck officer program. They are selected for training only after meeting very strict qualification standards. The training is specific to protecting the flight deck. Upon completion, the pilots are deputized as Federal officers. They have jurisdiction specific to the flight deck and contribute to aviation security throughout the U.S. on a daily basis.

Federal flight deck officers provide a critical, and I repeat, critical layer of defense for the safe operation of aircraft traffic. In recent polls conducted by the Airline Pilots Association, the public overwhelmingly supports the arming of pilots on commercial and cargo flights. These men and women deserve much praise for their willing-

ness to provide the flying public with secure skies.

I thank each of these heroes for their tremendous courage and dedication, as they are protecting our country and preventing terrorists from threatening Americans' ability to carry out and carry on their daily lives.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I strongly support this bill, and I urge its immediate passage to honor those who are willing to protect our citizens with their own lives.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 196, which I introduced to honor our commercial airline pilots, those individuals who volunteer for what is termed the Federal Flight Deck Officer program.

Before I speak to the resolution, I just want to take a few minutes to thank the chairman of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, Mr. KING, and also the ranking member of that committee, Mr. THOMPSON, also Mr. LUNGMREN and others, for their support in facilitating the consideration of this resolution before the House today.

I also want to thank Mr. PEARCE. He said in his opening remarks in support of the resolution that he also represents the area in New Mexico where they have put the facility to train our pilots, and I did have an opportunity to visit that facility with Mr. PEARCE, and I will talk about that in just a minute.

I introduced this legislation, as I said, in a resolution to honor thousands of passenger and cargo airline pilots who on flights every day have volunteered their own time, expenses, and their welfare to complete what turned out to be a very rigorous Federal Flight Deck Officer program. In Congress, when we first thought about this, we thought about something more simple, just strapping an arm on, like they did during the 1960s when we had problems with hijacking of aircraft, and the guns were issued by the airlines. But this is a much more rigorous program. In fact, it is a week long and involves very intensive use of equipment, as Mr. PEARCE described, and comprehensive training.

What was interesting, when we started this, I was not a big fan of this approach; but I had thousands of pilots and their families and others, pilots in particular, who saw the gaps in our aviation security system after September 11 who came to us and said we need to do something to be able to defend our aircraft. So they stepped forward. They initiated this legislation.

After the tragic attacks of September 11, Congress did authorize legislation. We started out, I remember, with Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. YOUNG with a small demo project that was just going to include a few pilots. We brought it to the floor and the

overwhelming sentiment was to open this to all pilots, which we did; and we later included even cargo pilots to be able to defend their aircraft and their passengers against acts of terrorism.

So I am pleased that we have a history of not only the pilots being heroes and participating in the program but also initiating the program. And these courageous pilots are providing a significant deterrent against potential acts of violence against our skies.

We saw the damage to our economy. The debate on the floor the week before the September 11 attacks was what we were going to do with the \$120 billion Federal surplus, and we saw how terrorists can in fact affect our economy. But pilots stepped forward to help restore confidence in the security of our Nation's aviation system, and pilots are the people we are here to recognize with this resolution.

These volunteer pilots devote personal time and finances to maintain a high standard of proficiency. If you think it is easy for them to participate, well, government never makes anything easy. We envisioned a small program, but we ended up with them moving out to Artesia, New Mexico; and it was probably a wise decision because we had some infrastructure and facilities.

Now, a pilot goes at his or her own expense to Artesia. I went out there, and I took three flights. I remember flying, I think from Washington to Denver, from Denver to Albuquerque, and from Albuquerque to Roswell. Then Mr. PEARCE got me in his car and drove me an hour to the south. I do not think you can put a Federal program any further or more remotely away. And God bless Mr. PEARCE, who has one of these huge districts that transcends a great deal of New Mexico. But at the far end of that district is where we train these pilots.

I was absolutely stunned at the thousands of pilots, both men and women, who have taken time and expense to go through this comprehensive training. Do you know that this year we will have more pilots trained and armed to defend their cockpit and also the passengers than we have Federal air marshals. Now, all that is a classified number, but I am telling you it is in the thousands. So terrorists and others who want to do harm, we have a line of defense that is unparalleled.

This week, I saw the grades from the 9/11 Commission about aviation security. I want to tell you that the pilots who participate in this program deserve an A-plus, the pilots, men and women across this Nation, who have stepped up to this challenge.

So this is a very sophisticated and successful program, and we are here to recognize those volunteers, again, who at their own time and expense have made this one of the best lines of defense for aviation security and security for our Nation and the traveling public.

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

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I simply want to say thank you to each and every one of the pilots, men and women, who have stepped forward to take a stand to defend the United States and to ensure that our traveling public is safe and that further harm does not come to aviation.

One of the reasons we have changed the rules with TSA in screening passengers is because we have a system like this in place, and they have just announced that this week.

□ 1100

Mr. Speaker, I would say it is almost impossible to take over an aircraft the way the 9/11 terrorists did. We have armed pilots through this program. We have air marshals and secure cockpit doors. And then we have the traveling public who would never allow that to happen knowing what we know. So now we are changing the focus and these pilots through their efforts and this program have allowed us to look at additional risk such as explosive devices and other threats that we face. We know we are secure again through the efforts of the countless pilots we are honoring who have participated in our Federal Flight Deck Officer program.

So again, on behalf of Chairman YOUNG, who chairs our full committee and Mr. LUNGREN, Mr. KING and Mr. COSTELLO, and my other colleagues, I am pleased to present this resolution to adequately recognize those who have come forward and have helped make this a more secure Nation through the aviation industry.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I have not been a supporter of the Federal Flight Deck Officer program because I believe it creates safety problems which outweigh any security benefits. Without any disrespect for the individuals participating in the program, I rise to remind my colleagues that there is still a lot of work left to do to improve aviation security.

On Monday, the 9/11 Commission released its Final Report on Commission Recommendations. The Commission gave aviation security low to failing grades ranging from "C" to "F".

Three priority issues we must work expeditiously to address in the coming months include: suicide bombers at the checkpoint, checked baggage screening and screener staffing.

SUICIDE BOMBERS

Probably the greatest threat facing aviation is the threat of a suicide bomber getting past airport checkpoint security. We know that we have vulnerabilities at passenger checkpoints, and we need to give our screeners the tools to get the job done.

Earlier this year Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (DHS IG) released a report indicating that our airport screening system still needs improvement. Regarding the causes of poor screener performance, the DHS IG stated "that significant improvement in performance may not be possible without greater use of technology."

While we have made some progress in recent months deploying checkpoint explosive

detection machines like trace portals, the 9/11 Commission report gives checkpoint explosive detection a grade of "C". We can and must do better.

CHECKED BAGGAGE SECURITY

As to checked baggage screening, it is important to install in-line screening systems at large airports given both the increased security such systems provide as well as the cost benefits. In-line EDS systems promote greater security because they are not exposed to the public; screeners are able to focus on screening bags rather than moving them; and fewer people are congregated around machines in the public area.

In addition to these benefits, in-line baggage screening systems have a much higher throughput than stand-alone systems. If we install in-line systems, more bags will be screened by explosive detection systems instead of less reliable, alternative methods.

TSA and airport operators rely on commitments in letters of intent (LOIs) for Federal assistance as their principal method for funding the modification of airport facilities to incorporate in-line baggage screening systems. To date, TSA has issued only 8 LOIs to cover the costs of installing systems at 9 airports.

Earlier this year GAO reported that TSA has estimated that in-line baggage screening systems at the 9 airports that received LOI funding could save the Federal government \$1.3 billion over 7 years. TSA further estimated that it could recover its initial investment of in-line systems at these airports in just over 1 year.

Moreover, TSA officials stated without in-line EDS technology, 27 airports will not comply with the congressional mandate to screen all checked baggage using EDS or ETD.

Yet despite the security benefits and savings that we would clearly gain from installing in-line EDS systems, this Congress has failed to provide sufficient funding to install in-line EDS at more than a few airports. We must fund the installation of in-line EDS systems.

SCREENER STAFFING

TSA's main mission is security. But the agency also has the responsibility to move passengers efficiently, so long as security is not compromised. In both of these missions, TSA has been handicapped by the ill-advised cap of 45,000 full time screeners imposed by the House Appropriations Committee over three years ago, and which is continued in the FY06 DHS Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-90). This cap was imposed without any basis for determining that 45,000 was the right number, and is both arbitrary and counterintuitive. Moreover, this cap does not provide TSA with flexibility that it needs to schedule screeners for training and other skill improvement activities, while continuing to adequately staff security checkpoints.

To add insult to injury, the FY06 Appropriations provides only \$2.4 billion for Federal passenger and baggage screeners, which I am told is tantamount to 43,000 full time equivalent screeners—a decrease of 2,000 screeners below the cap! Passenger enplanements in 2006 are expected to reach upwards of 750 million. Surely this anticipated increase in passenger traffic justifies fully funding TSA up to the 45,000 cap!

I urge my colleagues to support these needed improvements in aviation security.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The question is on the

motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 196.

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. MICA. 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 question will be postponed.

FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1721) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize programs to improve the quality of coastal recreation waters, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1721

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. COASTAL RECREATION WATER QUALITY MONITORING AND NOTIFICATION.

Section 406(i) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1346(i)) is amended by striking "2005" and inserting "2011".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 8 of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 877) is amended by striking "2005" and inserting "2011".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1721 to extend the authorization of appropriations for Clean Water Act programs aimed at improving the quality and safety of our Nation's recreational coastal waters. Beaches are a very important part of American life. Each year, over 180 million people visit coastal waters for recreational purposes.

This activity supports over 28 million jobs and leads to investments of over \$50 billion each year in goods and services nationally. Public confidence in