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EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA AND THE FREE ACEH MOVEMENT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 456) expressing support for the memorandum of understanding signed by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement on August 15, 2005, to end the conflict in Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 456

Whereas for three decades there has been a continuous armed conflict in Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia;

Whereas violence between the Indonesian military and the Free Aceh Movement has resulted in an estimated 15,000 deaths in the region;

Whereas the tsunami that occurred on December 26, 2004, killed at least 165,000 people in Aceh and devastated the landscape;

Whereas after the tsunami both the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement recognized that a peaceful settlement of the conflict would have to be reached to enable the rebuilding of Aceh;

Whereas after months of negotiating through the Crisis Management Initiative chaired by former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, the parties agreed to a draft memorandum of understanding to end the conflict in July 2005;

Whereas Hamid Awaludin, Minister of Law and Human Rights of Indonesia, and Malik Mahmud, of the Free Aceh Movement, signed the final memorandum of understanding on August 15, 2005, in Helsinki;

Whereas the memorandum of understanding provides a timetable for disarmament of the Free Aceh Movement and troop withdrawals by the Indonesian military;

Whereas the memorandum of understanding provides the people of Aceh with new political powers and the right to retain 70 percent of the revenues from certain natural resource extractions from the province;

Whereas a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Human Rights Court will be established for Aceh;

Whereas the Free Aceh Movement has agreed to forego its demand for independence; and

Whereas Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has provided amnesty and released hundreds of Free Aceh Movement members being held in prison since the signing of the peace agreement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses support for the memorandum of understanding signed by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement on August 15, 2005, to end the conflict in Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia, and congratulates both parties for their willingness to compromise;

(2) expresses the hope that both parties live up to their commitments under the memorandum of understanding and that peace and security can finally be achieved in Aceh after three decades; and

(3) encourages the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to commit resources in guaranteeing the peace and building a strong civil society in Aceh.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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 resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 456, which expresses our support for the memorandum of understanding signed by the government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement on August 15, 2005.

For three decades, the province of Aceh in southern Sumatra, Indonesia, was the site of armed conflict between the Indonesian military and the separatist Free Aceh Movement. That seemingly intractable conflict claimed approximately 15,000 lives, including those of many innocent civilians.

The dynamics there changed in an even more tragic way on December 26 of last year when a massive tsunami devastated the region, killing more than 160,000 people in Aceh alone. Overshadowed by the horror of that natural disaster, the parties recognized that reconstruction would require an end to the civil conflict. For months they worked toward the drafting of a memorandum of understanding to end this conflict which was completed and signed in late August after the leadership of the Free Aceh Movement relinquished their demands for independence.

The memorandum grants the people of Aceh long-awaited political powers and a greater share of the revenues generated by the natural resources in the province. It provides for the disarmament of the Free Aceh Movement and troop withdrawals by the Indonesian military. I commend the Indonesian President for the foresight and the initiative that he has shown in this instance, and I hope that it might serve as a template for resolving other long-standing conflicts in his great nation.

We share the hopes of the people of Aceh for peace, reconstruction and the development of a civil society in their province. This resolution is a timely show of our support for the peace process. The resolution deserves our unanimous support.

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

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

and I rise in strong support of this resolution.

I first would like to commend my distinguished colleague and good friend from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), a key member of the International Relations Committee, for introducing this important measure related to Indonesia.

Mr. Speaker, the Indonesian province of Aceh has known great sadness and tragedy for decades. A long-simmering civil war between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian military took the lives of over 15,000 innocent civilians over the past 30 years.

Tragically, the December 2004 tsunami struck Aceh very hard. At least 165,000 men, women and children of this region of Sumatra were killed as a result of that horrendous natural disaster. The province was utterly devastated.

A year after the tsunami, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of thousands of Acehnese are still struggling to rebuild their lives and their homes, a process that will take many more years to complete and in thousands of instances will never be completed.

It is perhaps due to this great human devastation that the leaders of the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian government intensified their efforts to work out a solution to the civil war in that part of Sumatra. The devastation wrought by the tsunami allowed all parties to put their differences in perspective and to concentrate on negotiating a peace deal that was so desperately desired by most Acehnese.

If I might digress for a moment, long before I joined Congress I visited Sumatra, and I was impressed by the quality of the extraordinary people of this very important island. It has been a tragedy that the central government and the people of Aceh have not been able to agree until now on a satisfactory *modus vivendi*.

Now we have an agreement between the rebels and the government signed in August of this year, and this is a very positive development. It is also a testament to the staying power of the Finnish negotiators, led by our good friend, the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, who brought the parties together.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he might consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the distinguished author of this legislation.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from California (Mr. LANTOS), the ranking member of our committee and the International Relations Committee, for yielding me this time.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 456, which expresses support for the memorandum of understanding signed by the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, a document that was signed on August 15 of this year that will end the conflict in

Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia.

Before I discuss the merits of this resolution, I would like to thank my colleagues who have joined me in support of this resolution, in particular the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER).

Aceh was brought to my attention in the year 2000 by one of my constituents, Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, a human rights lawyer from Aceh. Mr. Jafar told me about the abysmal human rights record of the Indonesian military and others throughout the province of Aceh. Upon his return to Aceh in August of 2000, not long after we met, Mr. Jafar was abducted in Medan, tortured for several weeks, and found mutilated in a mass grave in the fall of 2000. Cases like Mr. Jafar's happened too often and motivated me to push for an end to his 3-decade-long conflict that he so much wanted to see ended, that took over 15,000 Aceh lives.

This resolution expresses support for the peace agreement signed on August 15 of this year by the Free Aceh Movement and the government of Indonesia. This agreement saw both sides making several concessions in order to broker this peace.

The Free Aceh Movement has abandoned its demands for independence and has agreed to disarm. On the other side, the government of Indonesia has granted amnesty for the Free Aceh prisoners and has agreed to a timeline of troop withdrawal.

The memorandum has also given the people of Aceh new political powers that will allow them to retain 70 percent of the revenue from the natural resources of their province.

A truth and reconciliation commission and a human rights court will also be established, giving the people the machinery for justice, as well as for peace.

The considerable compromises that both sides made in this memorandum of understanding shows their willingness to secure peace for the citizens of Indonesia and Aceh.

This resolution acknowledges and expresses support for the memorandum signed by the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement. This resolution further expresses hope that both parties will fulfill their commitments so that peace will be instilled in the region.

Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, this resolution encourages the Secretary of State and the Administrator for the United States Agency for International Development to commit resources so that peace can be supported and so that peace will endure.

I support this resolution to show the people of Aceh and the government of Indonesia that the U.S. Congress supports this progress as well.

Lastly, as my good colleague from California mentioned, the devastation of the tsunami, the tsunami that took

so many, many lives, perhaps that tsunami did take many lives and we know it did. This peace accord will ensure, if carried through, that many, many more people within Aceh will not lose their lives, and for that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to support this worthy resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 456.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SAUDI ARABIA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 275) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 275

Whereas the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, were carried out by 19 hijackers, including 15 Saudi Arabian nationals;

Whereas since September 11, 2001, multiple terrorist attacks have occurred inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that were carried out by Saudi nationals;

Whereas Saudi nationals have joined the insurgency in Iraq, carrying out terrorist activities and providing financial support;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia controls and regulates all forms of education in public and private schools at all levels;

Whereas Islamic religious education is compulsory in public and private schools at all levels in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the religious curriculum is written, monitored, and taught by followers of the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, the only religion the Government of Saudi Arabia allows to be taught;

Whereas rote memorization of religious texts continues to be a central feature of much of the educational system of Saudi Arabia, leaving thousands of students unprepared to function in the global economy of the 21st century;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has tolerated elements within its education system that promote and encourage extremism;

Whereas some textbooks in Saudi Arabian schools foster intolerance, ignorance, and anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views;

Whereas these intolerant views instilled in students make them prime recruiting targets of terrorists and other extremist groups;

Whereas extremism endangers the stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region, and threatens global security;

Whereas the events of September 11, 2001, and the global rash of terrorist attacks since then, have created an urgent need to promote moderate voices in the Islamic world as an effective way to combat extremism and terrorism;

Whereas the report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States stated that "Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism"; and

Whereas the ascension of King Abdullah to the throne in August 2005 presents a new opportunity for education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) urges the Government of Saudi Arabia to reform its textbooks and education curriculum in a manner that promotes tolerance and peaceful coexistence with others, develops civil society, and encourages functionality in the global economy;

(2) urges the President to direct the Secretary of State to use existing public diplomacy channels, international visitor exchanges, professional development, and educational reform programs, including those under the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Broader Middle East Initiative, to focus on the issue of educational reform in Saudi Arabia in accordance with the objectives enumerated in paragraph (1);

(3) expresses extreme disappointment with the slow pace of education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

(4) urges the President to take into account progress in meeting the goals outlined in paragraph (1) when determining the level and frequency of United States bilateral relations with the Government of Saudi Arabia; and

(5) requests that the Secretary of State examine the educational system in Saudi Arabia, monitor the progress of the efforts to reform the education curriculum, and report on such progress, in classified form if necessary, to the appropriate congressional committees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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 resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 275, which expresses the sense of Congress regarding modifications in the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It is unfortunate that some of the textbooks which are used in Saudi Arabian schools foster intolerance, ignorance and anti-Semitic, anti-American and anti-Western views. Extremism in