

I was honored to be invited to speak to an event back in Columbia, Missouri, over 530 participants, back in April of this year. And I would ask that this body, that the House of Representatives today recognize the 100th anniversary of FarmHouse Fraternity and commend the fraternity and its members for a century of service.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Washington (Miss McMORRIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 207.

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.

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EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE IN REMEMBRANCE OF BRAVE SERVICEMEN WHO PERISHED IN APRIL 24, 1980, RESCUE ATTEMPT OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN IRAN

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 256) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in remembrance of the brave servicemen who perished in the disastrous April 24, 1980, rescue attempt of the American hostages in Iran, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 256

Whereas on November 4, 1979, Islamic extremists occupied the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran, and took 66 American hostages, of whom 13 were released in a matter of days, on November 19 and 20, 1979;

Whereas after months of unsuccessful diplomatic negotiations for the release of the remaining 53 hostages and after extensive planning and intergovernmental debate, a complex rescue mission designated as "Operation Eagle Claw" was approved by President Carter on April 16, 1980;

Whereas on April 24, 1980, a task force comprised of Army Special Operations Forces, Army Rangers, Air Force Special Operations Wing personnel, and United States Navy, Marine, and Air Force pilots succeeded in moving thousands of miles undetected until reaching a remote location in the Iranian desert 200 miles from Tehran designated by the code name "Desert One";

Whereas at Desert One, a combination of helicopters and MC-130/EC-130 gunships rendezvoused with the intention of rescuing the hostages 200 miles away in Tehran the following evening;

Whereas the bravery, dedication, and level of operational expertise of the men who participated in the mission were evident from the onset and tested by the mechanical and weather problems suffered en route to the rendezvous point;

Whereas due to mechanical failures and weather problems only six out of eight helicopters successfully arrived at the Desert One rendezvous;

Whereas six helicopters was the minimum number of helicopters that could successfully complete Operation Eagle Claw;

Whereas once the six helicopters arrived, the rescue attempt was dealt a final blow when it was learned that one of the helicopters had lost its primary hydraulic system and would be unsafe to use fully loaded for the final assault on Tehran;

Whereas as the various aircraft began moving into position to return to their respective launching points, one of the helicopters collided with a C-130 aircraft on the ground;

Whereas flames engulfed the helicopter and the C-130 and resulted in the death of 5 airmen and 3 Marines;

Whereas other members of the task force were burned but survived, while their comrades acted bravely in restoring order and managed to evacuate the wounded personnel and salvageable equipment back to friendly territory;

Whereas Members of Congress were dismayed with the poor equipment, lack of funding, and inattention that had been given to special operations forces up to that time that came to light because of the aborted rescue mission;

Whereas in response, legislation was enacted in 1986 to establish a new unified command for special operations forces that is designated as the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM);

Whereas the United States Special Operations Command continues to prove its immense value to the national defense as witnessed by the performance of special operations forces in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in many other countries of the world; and

Whereas the Nation owes a great debt of gratitude to special operations forces personnel and their families: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who participated in Operation Eagle Claw in April 1980 in the attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran and particularly remembers the sacrifice of those who died in that attempt; and

(2) commends all special operations forces personnel currently in service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, to begin, let me extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) for his assistance in bringing this resolution to the floor.

□ 1030

The men and women of our Armed Forces are fortunate to have such a dedicated person serving as chairman

of the Committee on Armed Services and I am deeply honored to serve with him.

Madam Speaker, on November 4, 1979, Americans were shocked by the news that terrorists had stormed our embassy in Tehran and took 66 of our fellow citizens hostage. This deplorable act of barbarism caught our Nation off guard and, frankly, ill-prepared to fully realize the growing threat in the region.

As days became weeks and weeks became months, back-channel diplomacy was failing. The American people were becoming impatient and a wide array of individuals were demanding action. As a Nation, the United States was being held hostage by a regime that had no intention of negotiating.

Finally, President Carter made the decision that enough was enough; it was time to bring our people home. On April 16, 1980 a plan called "Operation Eagle Claw" was approved, and our Nation's Special Operations Forces were prepared to answer the call.

Madam Speaker, 8 days later on April 24, a task force of highly trained personnel from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force was formed. The task force was comprised of highly trained individuals and intensely dedicated people, probably the most dedicated ever assembled to set forth on a mission that would end abruptly in disaster.

The plan called for 8 helicopters, 12 airplanes and a lethal combination of United States Army Special Operations Forces, Army Rangers, Air Force Special Operations Wing personnel, and United States Navy, Marine, and Air Force pilots to work without a unified command structure deep inside hostile territory, a daunting task.

The mission's first objective called for the task force to rendezvous at a location named Desert One. Once there, U.S. Special Forces combat controllers and translators were to be offloaded from Air Force airplanes, C-130s, and reloaded onto Navy helicopters which would take them to the outskirts of Tehran, in preparation for the final rescue.

Before the rendezvous could even take place, weather problems and mechanical failures plagued the mission. Eight helicopters took off from the USS Nimitz, but only 6, the bare minimum required to complete the mission successfully, successfully arrived at Desert One.

Once the birds were on the ground, Operation Eagle Claw received its final blow when one of the remaining helicopters' hydraulic system malfunctioned and therefore rendered the bird useless for the final assault on Tehran. At that point, despite the desired and sheer ability of the Special Operations Forces on the ground, the order to abort the mission was given.

As the helicopters and airplanes maneuvered to return to their respective launching points, another disaster struck. One of the helicopters collided

with a parked C-130 and both aircraft erupted in flames. In the chaos that followed, the soldiers on the ground acted courageously, with absolutely no regard for their personal safety, and managed to save many of their colleagues.

But despite this uncanny display of bravery, 8 of America's finest young men lost their lives: Captain Harold L. Lewis, Jr., Captain Lyn D. McIntosh, Captain Richard L. Baake, Captain Charles McMillan, Master Sergeant Joel C. Mayo, Staff Sergeant Dewey Johnson, Sergeant John D. Harvey, and Corporal George N. Holmes. They deserve our admiration and appreciation for the supreme sacrifice made on behalf of our country.

This morning, Madam Speaker, when I looked at my e-mail, I had received an e-mail from someone who read an op-ed which was published, which I wrote for the Washington Times, which was published yesterday. I would like to read it in part.

He says: I will never forget the day, as a young second lieutenant serving in the 82nd Air Force Division, across Fort Bragg from Special Forces Headquarters, we knew very little about the Special Forces people at that time, but I did know the leader's daughter. So in addition to recognizing that these were America's finest warriors with all the physical strength, hooah, and military skills one can imagine, I also appreciated that they had families who loved them dearly and who suffered anguish, fear, and loss in Eagle Claw. So that is what I recall from my 25 years ago and what I recall every day when I open the newspaper and read of the tremendous sacrifice our forces make, each of them with families who love them.

Madam Speaker, although the results of the mission were tragic, Operation Eagle Claw's contribution to the American military was invaluable. One of the central recommendations made by the investigative commission called upon the military commanders and policy makers to look at ways to bring together various Special Operations Forces of each branch of the military. This crucial observation led to the creation of the United States Special Operations Command, SOCOM, a model of jointness that serves as an example of the transformed 21st century military which we are seeking to help create.

Today, SOCOM officers and soldiers and others who are serving our Nation serve under one command structure, and they are leading the war on terror. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, I have the distinct honor of working with the members of SOCOM. It is clear that our Nation's Special Operations Forces are the most unified, well equipped and fiercest fighting force in the world. In the post-911 world that we live in, their contribution to our national security is more important than ever.

Madam Speaker, we stand here today in remembrance of the lives that were

lost in Operation Eagle Claw. We are also thankful for the men who have followed in their footsteps. As the warriors of SOCOM continue to lead the fight in the war on terror, I join my colleagues in applauding their efforts and successes and thanking them for their dedication to our country.

The meaning of Operation Eagle Claw will be remembered in different ways by different people, but it will always be remembered.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the chairman's resolution which commemorates the bravery of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who took part in Operation Eagle Claw 25 years ago. I want to thank my friend, the chairman from New Jersey, for his extraordinary leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, the resolution also commends our Special Operations Forces who are risking their lives for our country today. On April 24, 1980, 8 patriots lost their lives in an effort to rescue hostages from the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. The classified mission was noble in its purpose, yet difficult and risky.

On November 4, 1979, terrorists stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took 66 American hostages. President Carter sought the hostages' release through diplomatic means but his efforts were to no avail. Ultimately, he approved a hostage rescue mission known as Operation Eagle Claw.

On April 24, 1980 a task force of Army Special Operations Forces, Army Rangers, Air Force Special Operations Wing personnel, and U.S. Navy, Marine and Air Force pilots launched Operation Eagle Claw. They landed in a remote desert in Iran, 200 miles away from Tehran, and planned to execute the hostage rescue mission the following day. However, Madam Speaker, a series of mishaps forced Operation Eagle Claw to be aborted and led to the deaths of 5 brave airmen and 3 Marines.

On January 20, 1981, after 444 days, the U.S. hostages were freed. Nevertheless, it was clear from the tragic deaths of those brave servicemembers during Operation Eagle Claw that our Special Operations Forces needed and deserved more and better resources to do their job.

Congress created the U.S. Special Operations Command, or SOCOM, so that their needs would be met. Today SOCOM consists of more than 50,000 uniformed personnel, jointly integrated from the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force and the Marine Corps, all striving to support our Nation's national security interests.

Operation Eagle Claw represented the best equipment and personnel available at the time. However, SOCOM has elevated crew-on-crew familiarity, team proficiency, and equipment interconnectivity to a new level of excellence.

Madam Speaker, our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to the members of the Special Operations community, particularly those who have given their lives, such as those 8 service members who died during our Operation Eagle Claw. Our Special Operations Forces are truly, truly the quiet professionals committed to the concept of selfless service.

So as we face the challenges of terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, Special Operations Forces provide a vital tool to defend our great Nation abroad. The resolution brought before us today recognizes this contribution. And I again want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) for offering this resolution. I urge all of my colleagues to support its adoption.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from western Florida (Mr. MILLER) whose district is the home of the Air Force component of the Special Operations Command, AFSOC.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, "They tried and that was important," said Colonel Thomas Schaefer, the U.S. Embassy defense attache and one of hostages. "It is tragic 8 men died, but it is important America had the courage to attempt the rescue."

It was 90 young men who volunteered to go to the desert, and 9 of them never made it home. The oldest, 35; the youngest, 21. Between them, they left 13 children. Captain Harold Lewis has 2 children, Dr. Jim Lewis, now on the medical staff at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, and Kimberly Lewis, who joined the Coast Guard. Captain Lynn McIntosh has 3 children, Scott, Stewart and Mark, who is currently enrolled in Lincoln Memorial University, Tennessee. Sergeant John Harvey has 2 children, Lauren and John. Tech Sergeant Joel Mayo has 4 children, Douglas, Joel, Jr., Brett, and Kurt, who also served in the Air Force and was honorably discharged in 1998. Finally, Staff Sergeant Dewey Johnson has 2 children, Wesley and Lee Ann.

One of those who died was Air Force Tech Sergeant Joel C Mayo. He was 34. He was from Bonifay, Florida in my district near Hurlburt Field.

Sergeant Mayo, the flight engineer on EC-130, performed his fire control duties so others might escape, until it was too late for him to save his own life. He died while trying to rescue his pilot, Captain Lewis.

One of his comrades and good friends, retired Master Sergeant Taco Sanchez, had this to say about his friend Sergeant Mayo: "I talked to him that night. It is important people understand. Joel had no idea he was going to give his life that night. But if you told him that he was going to die, he still would've gone."

Not only did he die a true hero. But his death gave life to what we now know today as Special Operations Command and the Air Force Special Operations Command.

The Air Force personnel who died were members of the 8th Special Operations Squadron based at Hurlburt Field. At Desert One the 8th SOS was given its motto: "The Guts to Try." The patch of the 15th SOS has 5 burning fires, representing the 5 Air Force personnel who lost their lives. The men who died have not and never will be forgotten.

To all the families we say this: If your loved ones had not died that fateful day, the enormity of the task of integrating the military at the time might not have been realized. The urgency of the situation might not have been fully understood and the creation of the truly Joint Special Operations Command could have been delayed for a number of years, resulting in who knows how many further U.S. causalities.

□ 1045

Of course, this does not bring them back to us, and nothing can replace the emptiness where they once were. Hopefully, time has done all that it can in that regard, but you should know that every citizen of this country owes a special debt of gratitude to your husbands, brothers, sons, fathers, cousins, and comrades who died on that day.

Can you imagine if we had not had the capabilities of Special Operations Command after September 11? We would have still pursued and destroyed the enemy, but who knows how many more American lives would have been lost if we had only had conventional forces to rely on.

Cailin Mayo is one of Joel's grandchildren. She is old enough now to understand our grandfather's sacrifice. It is to her and all the other grandchildren of those eight men that I say this: do not ever forget the sacrifices of your grandfathers. Know that they are all with God and that they will forever look down upon and continue to protect each of you.

Retired Master Sergeant Sanchez's words about his friend Joel Mayo capture the essence of every man on this mission. They were a brave, courageous group of men attempting the impossible for a noble and a worthy cause. They were Marines and airmen, but they came together for one purpose, and that was to rescue Americans, and as Americans, they died together in the desert. They had the guts to try.

God bless them, their families and these United States.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), a great veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroic efforts of the servicemen who participated, and even more

so, those who perished in the unsuccessful rescue attempt of American hostages in Iran, now over 25 years ago.

Madam Speaker, during my 25 years in the Marine Corps, I had the good fortune to know personally many of the heroes of that fateful day, and counted some among my close friends. These brave men were asked, and cheerfully volunteered, to undertake the challenge of rescuing their fellow Americans in a mission of the utmost secrecy and gravest danger.

Members from all branches of our armed services came together, bringing with them the best of skills and experience, but it was not enough to do the job.

In the end, woefully inadequate equipment, tremendous sand storms, and extraordinary logistical challenges contributed to the death of five U.S. Air Force men and three Marines, serious injuries to five additional servicemen and the loss of eight aircraft. But these circumstances in no way diminished the skill and the bravery of the men who took on this hazardous mission against all odds.

The challenge of Operation Eagle Claw began with the isolated location of Tehran. I remember looking at a map after this unfolded and being astonished at the distances involved. Surrounded by more than 700 miles of desert and mountains, the city was essentially cut off, cut off from ready attack by U.S. air or naval forces. We simply did not have anything in the inventory. In addition, the embassy staff and the embassy itself were located in the heart of the city, congested by more than 4 million people.

Even more taxing was the primitive state of the technology and helicopters and equipment with which these men were asked to complete their mission and the secrecy demanded for the planning, training, and execution of the mission.

Madam Speaker, I knew many of the Marines that became the pilots of the Navy CH-53s that were used. In fact, one of my very close friends in the squadron that I was serving with at the time was pulled off for an assignment. He went out with the others and trained in the desert for weeks. We had no idea of the mission. I did not find out about the mission until the rest of America saw it on the news that April.

It was unbelievable secrecy under which these men worked. The equipment by today's standard is incredible. My son is a pilot in the 101st Airborne, and he has got the latest technology and night vision goggles, lightweight devices that clip to his helmet and flip down, allowing him a full view of the cockpit of the Blackhawk helicopter which he flies.

These men did not have that. They had equipment night vision goggles taken from ground crews. They had no visibility outside the narrow tunnel that they were viewing; and yet they took this equipment that, by today's standards, would not be allowed near

an aircraft, and trained in harsh conditions for a mission that they knew was going to be extremely, extremely difficult.

Madam Speaker, a fitting tribute to the men of Operation Eagle Claw is to learn from their experience and apply these lessons to the challenges facing our men and women in uniform today. Some of those have been discussed by my colleagues here on the floor: the creation of the United States Special Operations Command, the joint effort, new technology that is being developed and employed and tested sometimes in battle today.

We must bear in mind the importance of continuing to provide our troops with the resources they need to succeed in a mission and not launch them out with equipment simply unsuited for the job.

To those who perished in Operation Eagle Claw, I offer my gratitude, my deep appreciation, my great respect. To their families and friends, I offer my prayers and my condolences. It is hard to imagine greater heroes taking on a tougher challenge and making such a sacrifice.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 256, an important measure that recognizes the brave servicemen who perished during Operation Eagle Claw, the unfortunate April 24, 1980 attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran. The resolution also recognizes the sacrifice of those who survived and commends all of the Special Operations Forces currently in service. Operation Eagle Claw is truly a moment in our military's history that must be remembered, and I urge my colleagues to come together out of compassion, cooperation and commitment to recognize the valiant soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who participated in this difficult mission.

First, we must demonstrate compassion for the servicemen who participated in Operation Eagle Claw and those that made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives. These dedicated individuals left their families and friends behind to protect American citizens from those who were being held against their will. Although unsuccessful, their mission will be remembered. We must never forget their bravery, and we must do all we can to honor their lives, their sacrifice and their patriotism.

We must also demonstrate a sense of cooperation to ensure that the efforts of the servicemen of Operation Eagle Claw will not go unrecognized. On that tragic day, members of the U.S. Army Special Operations Forces, Army Rangers, Air Force Special Operations, the U.S. Navy, Marines and Air Force all joined together to conduct their mission. Because of their valiant efforts to conduct the mission while dealing with poor equipment and a lack of funding, the U.S. Congress subsequently formed the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Today, USSOCOM continues to prove its immense value to our national defense, and it is important that we come together today and properly honor their courage by cooperating here in Congress to support these fine men and women in every way possible!

And, finally, we must uphold our commitment to ensure that our Special Operations

Forces and our military have all the resources they need to continue to protect our country in the days to come. During my tenure in Congress, I have had the honor to represent or share representation of Fort Bragg, which is home to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and the Joint Special Operations Command—vital components of USSOCOM. I will continue to work with my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee to ensure that we do our part to meet the needs of our special operators and the officers who are charged with leading them into the battlefield. In fact, I have spearheaded the Special Operations Forces Caucus, along with four of my colleagues, Representatives ROBIN HAYES (NC), JEFF MILLER (FL) and JIM DAVIS (FL) to ensure that the needs of our special operators are met.

Each and every day, our Special Operations Forces, along with our other servicemen and women in all the branches of our military, put themselves in harm's way to fight for our nation's freedoms here at home and abroad. Now is the time that we come together with compassion, cooperation and commitment to remember those that served during Operation Eagle Claw and ensure that they are properly recognized and honored. They are our heroes, and I am pleased to support H. Res. 256, which takes the necessary step to honor not only those who perished on that tragic day, but also those courageous individuals who make up our Special Operations Forces. May God bless all of them and their families.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, we have no more speakers on our side, and we yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 256, as amended.

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

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in remembrance of the members of the Armed Forces who perished in the April 24, 1980, rescue attempt of the American hostages being held in Iran and commanding all special operations forces personnel currently in service."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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APPROVING THE RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003

Mr. SHAW. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 52) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 52

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress approves the renewal of the import restrictions con-*

tained in section 3(a)(1) of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW).

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), my friend. In 2003, Congress passed the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act, which among a number of things imposed an import ban on all products from Burma. Today, the House considers extending this import ban for an additional year.

Madam Speaker, the situation in Burma remains deeply troubling. The actions by the military in Burma continue to demonstrate its inability to promote an equitable way of life for millions of Burmese.

Despite the deplorable conditions in Burma today, the United States remains committed to political and social change in Burma. In fact, the United States is one of the few leaders willing to shine the light on the lack of human rights in Burma. Within the international community, the United States has cosponsored resolutions within the United Nations Commission on Human Rights condemning the human rights situation in Burma. It is tremendously important that we continue to pressure the Burmese Government to become a transparent society, free from human rights abuses that have plagued this Asian nation for so many years.

Pressure must remain in place. Extending trade sanctions puts pressure on the Burmese junta to change its ways. For the pressure to be truly effective, the sanctions must be multilateral and include Burma's main trading partners. Therefore, I encourage the administration to continue to pursue a multilateral response to the atrocities in Burma. This is a critical component for ending the military stranglehold on this society.

I urge all my colleagues to support the resolution that is before us today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the sponsor of the resolution, the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations; and I want to congratulate him for his strong leadership and consistent leadership on human rights issues in this body.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and distinguished colleague from Maryland for the time, who has been a champion of human rights globally throughout his tenure.

I also want to express my appreciation to the gentleman from California

(Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, my friend, and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) for their consistent support of human rights work.

Madam Speaker, in this day and age, nothing is in shorter supply than men and women of moral authority and courage. Burmese democracy leader and Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is among the giants of our age. She is right there with Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, both of whom were prepared to sacrifice years of their lives so that their people could live in a free and open and democratic society.

Madam Speaker, this past weekend, this great lady and champion of democracy celebrated her 60th birthday; but instead of being surrounded by family and friends on this happy day, Aung San Suu Kyi remained imprisoned in Burma, cut off from her supporters, both her family and the people of Burma.

Last Friday, I attempted to deliver 6,000 birthday cards from Americans from across this Nation to Aung San Suu Kyi to the Burmese embassy in Washington. The gate was locked. No Burmese diplomat was willing to accept the birthday greetings to Burma's greatest citizen; but Madam Speaker, I have been dealing with dictatorial regimes all my life, and I do not expect a warm reception from any of them.

I do want Aung San Suu Kyi to know that the entire Congress of the United States and the American people wish her a very happy birthday and the moral fortitude and physical stamina to continue her struggle for the Burmese people and, indeed, for democracy globally.

Madam Speaker, I can think of no better birthday present for Aung San Suu Kyi than the legislation we are discussing at this moment. The only hope for promoting far-reaching political change is by making Burma's ruling thugs pay an economic price for running the Burmese nation and their economy into the ground. By renewing import sanctions for an additional year, fewer dollars will flow into the Swiss bank accounts of the Burmese thugs who run that country.

The tough approach maintained by our country towards Burma, including import sanctions, is encouraging other nations to reconsider their more short-sighted and lenient views on the Rangoon regime.

□ 1100

Some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for the first time have begun to criticize Burma for its human rights abuses.

Last November, the European Union itself strengthened its Burma policy in response to ongoing human rights violations. In both cases, it was the strong stand of this Congress that has stiffened backbones and increased the prospects that a multilateral sanctions regime against Burma is possible.