

My legislation, H.R. 2234, would keep electronic medical records safe, ensure that patients have access to their own records, and notify them when information is accessed by an unauthorized user, thus reducing risk. Ensuring health data security is important for all Americans to have confidence in their hospital.

I would urge my colleagues to learn more about protecting patient privacy for the 21st century by visiting my Web site at murphy.house.gov.

BROWN STILL EMPLOYED BY DHS

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it might shock everyone to know that former FEMA Director Michael Brown is still on the government's payroll. Michael Brown is still earning a \$148,000 annual salary.

“Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job.”

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff agreed to extend Mr. Brown’s contract for yet another 30 days.

Michael Brown’s recent e-mails that have now been made public show he was more interested during the crisis in his dinner reservations and his attire than getting food, water, and medical supplies to those New Orleans residents, and yet he is still getting paid by the taxpayers.

We should not be shocked. This is accountability Bush style, and the only people that get fired by the President are those who tell the truth. Look at what happened with Michael Brown and look at what happened to General Shinseki who told the truth and who was fired.

Mr. Speaker, this administration gives a whole new meaning to job security. We can do better. It is time for new priorities. It is time for a change.

A VICTORY FOR ALL AMERICANS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, our country has been built by innovative men and women who have devoted their lives to owning their homes and businesses. As a former real estate attorney, I know firsthand that ownership is an important component of the American dream.

In June, the rights of property owners recently came under attack when the Supreme Court issued a decision giving local governments the power to seize private property from one private party and give it to another. By valuing potential tax revenues and economic development over the private rights of American citizens, the court delivered a dangerous decision that misinterprets our Constitution and threatens our core values.

Led by sponsor HENRY BONILLA and Chairman BOB GOODLATTE, the House of Representatives acted last night to restore power to American citizens. By passing the Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2005, Congress voted to ensure property owners truly have control over their homes, businesses, and organizations. This legislation is an important victory for all Americans.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

JUSTIFYING WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. One of the attempted false justifications for the war in Iraq was that Iraq was trying to get uranium from Niger to make nuclear weapons. This lie and the attempts to justify it are key to understanding not only the Libby indictments but to understanding why we are in Iraq.

Who forged the Niger documents? What role did Italian intelligence have in the forgeries? What role did the White House Iraq group have in falsely promoting the phony nuclear threat? Who forged the Niger documents? Who took us to war on false pretenses, sending thousands of our beloved soldiers to their deaths?

Sign House Resolution 505. Support that, because that requests the President and directs the Secretary of State to provide to the House of Representatives certain documents in their possession relating to the White House Iraq group.

TIME TO FORGIVE AND MOVE ON

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there are some people that just cannot seem to get beyond these allegations about the President of the United States lying to us. Over and over we are told the President of the United States lied to us. But I am not sure that that is actually the case. There is evidence. Even Joe Wilson’s initial oral report to his superiors indicated some support for that idea that Saddam was trying to get weapons of mass destruction. Perhaps, maybe the President lied to us. Maybe his wife, who reportedly said the same thing, maybe they did lie to us.

Maybe it is because of my Christian background that teaches forgiveness, but I say: In order for this country to move on, it is time to forgive President Bill Clinton if it was a lie and move on.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET PRIORITIES

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, we have the newfound foe, fiscal conservatives on that side of the aisle. They control everything, the House, the White House, the Senate. They have increased the debt of the United States 62 percent in the last 5 years to \$8 trillion, and now they want to cut spending.

Now, what spending are they targeting? Is it the big wasteful spending? No. It is duplicative programs like school lunch and breakfast. I guess those kids are taking two meals. Or student loans. I guess those kids are taking a double load of classes and paying too much. So they will cut \$50 billion, and the next week they are going to cut taxes for those who earn over \$300,000 a year by \$70 billion.

Now, in their world, even though that is a \$20 billion increase in the real deficit, they say, no, that is not an increase in the deficit, because those rich people, why, they are just going to trickle down on the rest of America. They are going to put the rest of us to work, and they are going to increase productivity, and some day that will increase Federal revenues because working people pay taxes, not rich people, in their world. This is a bizarre turn of events here in Washington, D.C., and their cuts and their tax cuts should be rejected.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3057, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 532 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 532

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3057) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution

532 is a traditional standard rule for consideration of the conference report for the fiscal year 2006 Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us today appropriates almost \$21 billion. It is an increase of about actually over \$1 billion for operations across the globe. The bill is fiscally sound. It has grown at a small, very small rate, while at the same time I think it is responsive to the needs, not only the national security interests or the foreign policy interests of the United States, but also it is responsive to the needs of millions plagued by disease and famine and disaster throughout the world.

H.R. 3057, for example, Mr. Speaker, bolsters the President's Millennium Challenge Corporation to nearly \$1.8 billion. It is about a quarter of a billion more than last year. This is an expansion of assistance meant to help bring really economic security and the rule of law to some of the world's poorest countries by insisting on American aid going to countries where there is transparency for the aid that we send, not corruption.

□ 0915

It is an important initiative.

The Millennium Challenge provides assistance through a competitive selection process to developing nations that are genuinely in the path of political and economic reforms in three areas: ruling justly, in other words, treating their people decently; investing in people; and fostering economic freedom. Economic development genuinely succeeds when it is linked to free market economic and democratic principles and policies and where governments are committed to implementing reform measures when they are needed to achieve such goals.

Two years ago in the State of the Union address, President Bush announced the President's emergency plan for AIDS relief. It is the largest international health initiative in history initiated by a single government to address one disease. This legislation shows Congress's continued support to the fight against HIV/AIDS. It includes \$2.8 billion, an increase of over \$600 million over last year to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS, as well as tuberculosis and malaria.

The resolve of this Congress to help all those across the globe to fight this disease is strong and serious, as is the commitment of the President of the United States. In addition to funding, the Federal Government enlists the expertise of agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration, which assures that the medicines we send to the areas most affected by this horrible pandemic are safe and effective to help those with HIV/AIDS.

In other foreign assistance, H.R. 3057 funds the Andean Counterdrug Initia-

tive at the President's request, \$735 million, \$9 million more than in 2005. Economic growth in the area since the start of Plan Colombia, for example, is proof that the assistance that we have provided Colombia has made a difference in that country.

I visited Colombia in April of last year. It was a great honor for me to do so. I have tens of thousands of distinguished constituents, very hard-working, honorable people from Colombia.

It was a pleasure to visit that country and to witness, Mr. Speaker, the extraordinary progress that the Colombian Government and the Colombian people have made against the narcoterrorists. They constantly reiterate, they did so during my visit and they have done so since and I know they have done so to countless colleagues in this House, they reiterate their gratitude to this Congress for the important assistance that the American people, the taxpayers of this country, through their Congress have provided them and continue to do so in their fight against narcoterrorism.

Now, we must not take progress in the Andean region for granted. If the United States turns its back on the region, a scenario may very well ensue that would require greater U.S. investment at a time when we have significant responsibilities worldwide.

The underlying legislation provides also \$2.5 billion for military and economic assistance to Israel. We have to continue to ensure that our friends and allies remain secure; and, of course, we have no better friend, no better ally than Israel. We are committed to doing everything we can to see that Israel is safe and secure within its borders as it continues to move in this very difficult era toward the achievement of a lasting peace with all of its neighbors.

The conference report funds the President's request to fund the foreign military financing for Egypt at \$1.3 billion. It provides almost half a billion dollars for economic assistance to Egypt, including assistance set to help with political reform programs and education assistance. Of course, that is a very, very important initiative that this country has been involved in for decades now.

I would like to thank Chairman LEWIS, who has worked very hard again, and Chairman KOLBE for their extraordinary leadership in moving this bill forward for our consideration today. I obviously support the conference report. I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying legislation, the conference report.

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

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

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, lately when Americans turn on the news at

night, they do not see the government that they recognize. They hear about a war in the Middle East gone wrong, and they see suffering people left to fend for themselves in times of crisis. They learn more and more about a White House under siege, and they are forced to recognize the ugly truth that many of their congressional leaders are entangled in a web of corruption.

While the criticism is justified and the concerns are real, the failures do not define America. It is important to remember that in difficult times, especially in difficult times, we must always keep close, in spite of the challenges at home and abroad, and that no other nation has shined the light of freedom and liberty as brightly as we have here in our country. No nation in history has given so much and asked for so little in return.

That romantic and powerful notion of America as a force for good in a troubled world strikes at the very heart of what it means to be an American. It is that spirit which drives us as a Nation to create a government as good as its people, and today we take one step in helping to restore that feeling in America to embody the ideal of what we hold dear. It is a bill that will help Americans recognize their government once again.

The foreign operations bill funds a number of different foreign assistance agencies and international organizations and, as such, has become both a critical and effective tool for this democracy to spread democratic values and concern for human rights around the world. This is legislation that the American people can take great pride in.

After all, today you will generously give \$2.82 billion to some of our noblest callings, such as easing the suffering of those around the world stricken by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and particularly in Africa. \$14 billion that Americans earned this year will be used to give foreign assistance.

These moneys will also help economic development in countries like Israel, Egypt, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Tibet, Colombia, and a number of other Eastern Bloc countries now struggling to become functioning democracies.

It further spends \$1.6 billion to help fund many of the well-intentioned international financial institutions which the United States participates in, such as the World Bank, the African Development Fund, and the voluntary U.N. programs such as UNICEF and the U.N. Development Program. These American dollars will assist those struggling societies to build a better life for themselves and their families.

What we often fail to recognize is that foreign operations also help us here at home. The spending in the bill directly benefits our domestic economy. Through our many foreign assistance programs, we export American goods, American services and agricultural products all over the world. That means jobs for American families and a

brighter future for families across the world.

Of course, as with many complex pieces of legislation, I have some concerns with the conference report. Key among them is the Bush administration's insistence on maintaining a global gag rule which prevents critical family planning and health services aid from reaching the U.S. health clinics in underdeveloped and overpopulated countries where abortion counseling services are provided.

Clinics in overpopulated regions are not even allowed to take a public pro-choice position, and the United Nations fund for Population Assistance Program, which provides critical family planning services abroad, has been unfairly targeted by such administration policy.

The UNFPA does not provide abortion services, but the program has been repeatedly denied critical U.S. funding by the Bush administration under the gag rule. As a result, thousands of women in overpopulated developing nations are without the health care and family planning resources each of us takes for granted here in America.

Thankfully, this conference report provides \$34 million in funding for this important program. But antichoice House and Senate conferees stripped the language which would protect the funding from the gag rule, and as a result that money will most likely never reach those it was intended to help.

Despite these attempts to politicize the considerable aid this Nation provides abroad, this legislation, on the whole, serves an unqualified good for the people all over the world.

I would submit, though, that through the money we spend here today on foreign ops, we do a better job of spreading universal values of democracy and liberty and freedom than with the hundreds of billions of dollars we have spent on the war in Iraq.

By helping to improve the quality of life for people all over the world, we export the seeds of our American Dream; and by investing in international organizations that open markets, create trade, foster economic development and promote democracy, we create a rising tide that truly lifts all boats.

This is the way America spreads its values most effectively. By serving the world community and investing as both a partner and leader in the global community, we exemplify what it truly means to be American; and as a result, we provide a living example that the America we have long known is still standing tall.

These programs effectively address global challenges at their root source and seek to overcome those challenges the right way, by fostering hope and opportunity, rather than fear and hostility. They are the best ambassadors of the American spirit that we could ever hope to export. After all, what better way is there for us to spread democracy, freedom, and social justice than through the methods that have

proven time and time again to actually work.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN).

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Chairman KOLBE, Ranking Member Lowey, and their respective staffs for consistently working in a bipartisan fashion and trying year after year to bring before the House a bill that all Members can support.

For those of us who care in particular about the contributions made by the United States in reducing global poverty and hunger, increasing educational opportunities, access to health care and food security in some of the poorest places on this Earth, we very much appreciate the time and the effort that they invest in making sure that this bill responds to these needs and priorities.

I must express, however, Mr. Speaker, my regret that the final conference report did not include the Leahy-McConnell language dealing with the paramilitary demobilization taking place in Colombia. I recognize the language in the conference report is the result of some compromise, but it appears to me that the majority of compromising had to be done on the Senate side.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about news reports that demobilized paramilitary groups are regrouping into Mafia-like criminal organizations. New paramilitary groups seem to be springing up like daisies and their ranks are often made up of newly demobilized paramilitary troops.

Like all Members of Congress who follow Colombia, I want the demobilization process to work. I want it to succeed. But the process is not helped when the Congress or the administration turns a blind eye to serious failings in its implementation, as has been done over and over and over again.

For these reasons, I believe that the certification provision on Colombia's demobilization process in this bill, even though it is watered down, I think is important and needs to be faithfully implemented.

Last night during the Rules Committee hearing, I was very reassured when Chairman KOLBE told me that his committee would be vigilant in monitoring the demobilization of Colombia's paramilitary organizations and in overseeing the implementation of the certification conditions contained in the bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have often raised on the floor of this House my concerns about the long-standing ties between Colombia's armed forces and paramilitary forces and drug traffickers. I have constantly been told by the administration, by the Colombian Government, and even by some Members of this House, that these allegations also simply are not true.

Well, last week, on October 28, the New York Times reported how the top two directors of Colombia's intelligence agency, commonly called their secret police, have been forced to resign because the attorney general's office has finally begun an investigation into how the 7,100-member agency has been engaged in a money-making operation to sell intelligence and surveillance equipment to right-wing paramilitary groups.

Mr. Speaker, I will include the New York Times article in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned by a new wave of threats, disappearances and murders of Colombian trade unionists, human rights defenders, legal advocates and community leaders which appears to be under way.

□ 0930

The violence in Colombia appears to be sharply escalating once again. I would like to mention in particular the murder of Mr. Orlando Valencia, an Afro-Colombian community leader who was forcibly captured off the street by paramilitary forces shortly after he was first briefly detained and then released by the Colombian police on October 15, which shows you the collaboration between the security forces and paramilitaries. His tortured and mutilated body was found a few days later along the side of a local road.

At the time of his disappearance, I wrote to our embassy in Bogota, asking them to do all they could to find Mr. Valencia before he was killed; and I am still waiting for a response from our embassy to that letter.

So let me say to those who continue to champion billions of dollars in additional aid to the Colombian military and security forces, please pay attention not only to the spokespeople of the Colombian government but to the realities in that country. We should be more concerned. For all that we have invested in that country, we should expect better.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York for allowing me the time to express these concerns. I support the rule, and I will support the bill.

[From the New York Times, Oct. 28, 2005]

TWO TOP DIRECTORS LEAVE COLOMBIA'S SECRET POLICE AS SCANDAL MOUNTS
(By Juan Forero)

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA, Oct. 27.—The top two directors of Colombia's secret police were forced out this week as the government investigated allegations that the agency was mounting a money-making operation to sell intelligence and surveillance equipment to right-wing death squads.

The scandal at the agency, the Administrative Department of Security, comes as human rights groups and some legislators have exposed heightened paramilitary activity, including infiltrations of Congress and the attorney general's office. The paramilitaries also continue trafficking in cocaine, despite disarmament talks that underpin President Álvaro Uribe's effort to pacify Colombia with billions in American aid.

The 7,100-member intelligence agency has long been dogged by allegations that its

agents have worked with paramilitaries of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, an illegal antiguerrilla organization that the State Department has branded a terrorist group. But the latest scandal has been especially explosive, coming amid international criticism that the government has been overly generous with paramilitaries who disarm by treating them leniently in prosecutions.

On Tuesday, after consultations with Mr. Uribe, Jorge Noguera, the director of the agency, resigned and its sub-director, José Miguel Narvaez, was dismissed.

The agency's internal affairs unit and the attorney general's office are investigating whether the Special Intelligence Group, controlled by Enrique Ariza, a close ally of Mr. Noguera, had been planning to sell phone-tapping equipment to Javier Montañes, one of several powerful paramilitary commanders who could then use the system to monitor police and military activity.

Mr. Noguera denied the accusations, calling them part of a smear campaign.

Mr. Narvaez said in an interview that he and Mr. Noguera were not involved in a conspiracy with the militias. But he said there were agents at the agency "who veered away from their mission and may have committed crimes."

The allegations are particularly grave because they add to a string of revelations of paramilitary influence in everything from local governments and the health care system to provincial lotteries. Indeed, a former official at the intelligence agency, Rafael Garcia, has been under investigation for having erased computerized case files containing information on paramilitaries and drug traffickers.

"This is more serious because this is not just having sources on the inside and knowing when they're coming against you," said Sergio Jaravillo, a former Defense Ministry official, referring to infiltration of the intelligence agency. "It is something closer, having active help."

A political scientist who closely studies the paramilitaries, Mauricio Romero, said the disclosures also showed that the paramilitaries were "not playing clean" in peace talks.

"It would be understandable if they were at war with the state," said Mr. Romero, a professor at Rosario University in Bogotá. "The fact that there is infiltration and that they are mounting a parallel intelligence system is a security problem not just for the state, but for society."

Though the paramilitaries have demobilized thousands of fighters, they continue to wreak havoc.

On Saturday, Hernando Cadavid, who owned a flower farm next to Mr. Uribe's ranch in northern Colombia, was dragged from his farm and hacked to death with machetes by former paramilitaries. Investigators are trying to determine if the order came from Diego Fernando Murillo, a paramilitary boss recently jailed on Mr. Uribe's orders.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are also concerned about Colombia, and we are concerned about increased assistance from the terrorist network throughout the world, the Iranians, Chavez in Venezuela, Castro's Cuba. We are concerned about their support for the narcoterrorists in Colombia, and that is why it is so important to provide assistance to the democratically elected government of Colombia.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Two things. Is the gentleman saying that the President of Venezuela is a terrorist?

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that it is a dictatorship. It is a dictatorship, a dictatorship that supports the regime in Iran publicly; a dictatorship, the regime in Caracas. The first foreign head of State to visit Saddam Hussein while Saddam Hussein was in power after the Gulf War of the 1990s was the President of Venezuela. So, yes, I am concerned about the President of Venezuela's links to terrorism and his assistance to the FARC guerillas in Colombia.

One of the reasons why we continue to help and assist the democratically elected government of Colombia, elected by an overwhelming majority of the Colombian people, is because they face multiple challenges. That is one of the reasons why, in a bipartisan fashion, this Congress continues to help the democratically elected government.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will further yield, I appreciate his concerns about the violence by the FARC. I would also just appreciate it if he would also be concerned about the fact that we are supporting the Colombian military and security forces and they continue to be linked to right-wing paramilitary forces which commit crimes.

All I am simply saying is that we have certification language, we should enforce it and not continuously waive it because we want to continue to let the money flow. If we stand for human rights, then we need to put our actions where our rhetoric is, and we have not been doing that in Colombia.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, we have certification language. We do not condone in any way terrorism from any source in Colombia. We have consistently had safeguards in our legislation to make sure that our assistance is not used by terrorists of any sort in Colombia, but I think that we have to keep our eye on the ball here, and that is that there is a democratically elected government challenged by narcoterrorists, heavily funded because of their trade in narcotics, their narcotrafficking, and that government, that democratically elected government, is a friend of this country and merits our continued support.

So I am honestly very pleased that, in a bipartisan fashion, this Congress continues to support the democratically elected government of Colombia; and that is one of the great foreign policy initiatives, bipartisan foreign policy initiatives, by the way, that this country is engaged in, which is very connected to the security of this country in addition to the foreign policy objectives of this country.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, there is much in this bill to support, and I rise in support of the rule and the bill. This is a bill which demonstrates America's capacity to be sensitive to the world, America's willingness to feed the hungry, to help those who are depressed and oppressed all around the world.

The heart of America is open to people everywhere. That is why it is such a tragedy that, while we simultaneously will pass this bill today, our country is involved in action in Iraq that is undermining all the goodwill that America creates with this bill. What an irony it is that we are here talking about the needs of people all over the globe and, at the same time, we are alienating people all over the globe by pursuing a war in Iraq, a country that did not attack us, based on false information from an administration that should have known better.

So, yes, we ought to support this rule and we ought to support the bill, because the word that ought to go out, far and wide, about the United States is that we care about suffering people, that we want to find a way of lifting up people everywhere, that we want to try to find a way of making this a better world. But, as we do that, we also need to be consistent. We need to remember that we are simultaneously pursuing a path in Iraq that is wrong. We need to take a new direction there so that we can bring America's aspirations to help the world in line with our policy everywhere.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield such time as he may consume to the chairman of the Rules Committee.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule and the legislation itself.

I would like to begin by congratulating my very good friend from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and my friend from New York (Ms. Lowey) for working in a bipartisan way to ensure that we could get this conference report to the floor.

I also want to congratulate, of course, the leadership of the full committee. I see the gentleman from Wisconsin here and Chairman LEWIS, who I know have worked long and hard on these issues.

It is great that we are able to continue down this road of getting our work done when it comes to appropriations. That has been a high priority that Chairman LEWIS has established; and, obviously, what we are going through today is evidence of that.

I want to especially, as we look at what is a multi-billion-dollar piece of legislation designed to ensure the national security of the United States of America and our interests around the world, I would like to talk about a tiny

bit of money that is in here. It is a lot of money to me, it is a lot of money to us as individuals, it is \$1 million, but in the big scheme of things, if you look at a \$20 billion package, the \$1 million is relatively small.

It has to do with funding for something known as the House Democracy Assistance Commission. This is a very, very important initiative that was launched by Speaker HASTERT and Minority Leader PELOSI to put us on the road towards assisting, from this institution, emerging parliaments around the world.

One of the things that we found in the aftermath of Iraq is that there has been really a tremendous expansion of democracy. We know that in this hemisphere, and I heard the gentleman from Massachusetts and the gentleman from Florida having an exchange about this hemisphere, and I cannot help but think about the fact that we need to herald, herald the fact that, as the Summit of the Americas is taking place in Argentina at the moment, there are 34 democratically elected leaders in this hemisphere, and that is something that is unprecedented, unpreceded. We never in the history of the world have seen this kind of expansion of pluralism in this hemisphere, but it is also taking place in other parts of the world. Hence, we put together this Democracy Assistance Commission.

I was very honored that the Speaker asked me to chair this, and I am joined by my very good friend from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) who has worked on this. This is an idea that goes, frankly, all the way back to our former colleague, Doug Bereuter, who worked on this initiative.

What we are doing is, in the coming months, we are going to see members of parliaments from these new democracies, new parliaments coming to the United States and spending time in State capitals, working in congressional district offices, dealing with the wide range of issues that Members of the House of Representatives face. They are going to do that for 1 week.

Then, for a week, they are going to be coming to Washington, DC, and they are going to have an opportunity to focus attention on these very important issues of committee establishment, of budget process, oversight of the executive branch, things that we have a tendency to take for granted that these new democracies are just beginning to learn about.

One of those countries is the newest democracy on the face of the earth. It happens to be a country that just gained its independence 6 years ago from Indonesia: East Timor, a nation established in 1999. We also are going to include Indonesia. We are going to be including Kenya, the Republic of Georgia, Macedonia. Those are going to be the first five countries that we are going to include. So we will have roughly 10 parliamentarians from each of those five countries come to the

United States and expend time and effort learning about this process, which we have a tendency to take for granted.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) is working very hard on this commission. We appreciate all the work that he has put into it, and we also appreciate the fact that he understands the importance of making sure that it succeeds.

This is all part of our quest to win the global war on terror. As has been pointed out time and time again, as we see the expansion, Mr. Speaker, of these democracies, we are in a position where we now have an opportunity to create a chance for people in these countries to succeed without resorting to terrible, terrible things.

So I congratulate my friends for this overall bill. I congratulate them and the bipartisan spirit in dealing with this appropriations process. I support the rule, and I look forward for voting for final passage on this very important conference report.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for the fiscal year 2006 foreign operations conference report, which provides further foreign assistance to the Republic of Armenia, including \$75 million in economic assistance. I would like to thank the House Appropriations Committee for its continued support of both Armenia and resolving the humanitarian situation in Nagorna-Karabakh.

Foreign Operations Subcommittee Chairman KOLBE and Ranking Democrat NITA LOWEY realize how important these funds are to Armenia and Nagorna-Karabakh, and I would like to thank them for their continued support.

I would also like to thank my friend and co-chair of the Armenian Caucus, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), for his key support as a member of the subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that this House continue to recognize the plight of the victims of the Nagorna-Karabakh conflict. The conference committee included \$3 million in humanitarian assistance to Nagorna-Karabakh. While the United States does not officially recognize the State of Nagorna-Karabakh, this assistance shows that the United States supports Nagorna-Karabakh as an Armenian enclave that needs our continued help.

It is also important to point out that the conference report maintains military assistance parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan, providing \$5 million allocated to each country. By allocating equal levels of military and security assistance to both nations, the U.S. Government will preserve its credibility as an impartial and leading mediator in the continuing sensitive peace negotiations for the Nagorna-Karabakh conflict. Given the ongoing

Azerbaijani blockades and threats to renew military aggression against Armenia and Karabakh, it is critically important that the administration continue to promote balanced short- and long-term policies that elevate regional cooperation and reduce the risk of conflict in the south Caucasus region.

Again, let me thank the members of the Appropriations Committee for their continued support for Armenia.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 3 minutes to a great leader in this House, the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the rule supporting the conference report for Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs. It is an example of Congress demonstrating the ability to fund our national and international priorities in a fiscally responsible way, and I come to this floor to extol its virtues and urge all of my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

This legislation will fund the Nation's priorities in a meaningful way, addressing the AIDS pandemic, bringing innovative reforms to our foreign assistance programs and, of ultimate significance, supporting the global war on terror.

But specifically with regard to the internal mechanics of this legislation, I am particularly moved by the leadership of Chairman JERRY LEWIS of the Appropriations Committee and subcommittee chairman JIM KOLBE who, in an effort to ensure that this legislation was brought to this floor not only on time but on budget, are in the midst of an extraordinary effort to amend the Budget Act to embrace a new road map that will bring not only this bill but all of the appropriations to the \$843 billion level embraced by this Congress this spring.

Many of us have expressed concerns in recent days that three of the four preceding conference reports that came to the floor did not conform precisely with the details of that spring-adopted budget.

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In response to that, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee shared with us and with other Members the road map to help us to achieve what will be, in a historic manner, a real cut to nonsecurity discretionary spending before Congress adjourns this year.

But in an effort to go one step further, the Appropriations Committee began the process this week of amending that road map into the Budget Act itself.

It is my understanding that the Budget Committee as well as many fiscal hawks in the Republican majority

have been moved by that leadership and see it as an example of the energetic, principled, executive renewed leadership in the Appropriations Committee under Chairman JERRY LEWIS.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule. I urge all of my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill. I rise to give credit where credit is due, to Chairman JERRY LEWIS and Subcommittee Chairman JIM KOLBE, for a job well done, proving once again it is possible to fund the Nation's priorities on time, on budget, in a generous, but fiscally responsible, way.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and in support of the conference report, the Foreign Operations and Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2006. At this time, I want to commend the chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee for the very fair and bipartisan manner in which he has brought this bill forward. I will save my comments on the substance of the conference report for the general debate.

However, I do want to make clear that we had a tough job taking this bill through conference. The very low initial allocation in the House was compounded by a low conference allocation that cut the President's request by \$2 billion. I would have preferred to increase funding levels for many of the important programs contained in this bill, including refugee assistance.

However, I do think this conference report represents a fair, bipartisan, bicameral compromise. The chairman conducted this process in an inclusive manner, and I do commend him for it. I urge my colleagues to support the rule and to support the conference report on H.R. 3057.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time and permitting me to speak on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and of the underlying legislation. I want to highlight the \$200 million that has been set aside for safe drinking water.

I must acknowledge not just the leadership of the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), but the special interests of the Senate majority leader, BILL FRIST, with whom I have been working on efforts to increase our commitment to provide sanitation and safe drinking water around the world, a United States priority that we have undertaken together with the United Nations; but it is one where we have not yet backed that up with dollars and with an overall strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this bill is an important step towards meet-

ing that obligation. I am pleased that next week it appears as we will be voting on legislation, the Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act, which will suggest that this will be a cornerstone in our foreign aid strategy.

At any given time, one-half of the people in the world who are sick are sick needlessly from waterborne diseases; and before I finish the 3 minutes that the gentlewoman has kindly allocated to me, more than 10 children will die from waterborne disease.

But the programs in this bill are more than just humanitarian efforts to reduce human suffering. As valuable as they are, they are cost-effective investments in shared prosperity, collective security, and a common future.

I hope that next year we will make it possible for the subcommittee to do its job easily and that the United States is not ranked 21st out of 22 donor countries in terms of how much we invest in ending global poverty compared to the size of our economy.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, additionally, that we are able to correct one area that is of deep concern to me, the loss of \$50 million for the African Union Mission in Darfur, cut just at the point where security is getting worse, when the African Union is coming under attack, and the innocent people in Darfur are most in need of protection.

It troubles me deeply. However, overall I think the job that has been done by the subcommittee in fighting for our priorities and particularly in the renewed investment in safe drinking water and sanitation is to be commended. It will have a transformational effect, even this small amount. Bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that if Americans would allocate just what we give each year for elective cosmetic surgery, or the Europeans would invest what they spend on perfume, we could meet the targets that the United States and the United Nations have set to reduce the scourge of unsafe drinking water and lack of sanitation.

I appreciate the work that is here. I look forward to supporting the bill.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman KOLBE and Ranking Member LOWEY for increasing the amount of money that has been put into the alternative development program in Colombia. It is a program that gets people away from growing coca into growing alternative crops. And I stand in support of the rule on this bill.

I am a returned Peace Corps volunteer from Colombia and very much interested in building the capacity of local people to handle their own issues. If there is anything that we have learned from the Iraq war, it is the necessity to build local capacity for host country nationals to be able to run their own government and their own programs.

And if you have a lot of people that are displaced, meaning they have no place to live, no jobs, no schools, no infrastructure to support them, you have a lot of problems. So what you need to do is provide abilities for them to have, in the rural areas, good economic opportunity. You do that by providing a base of what we call alternative development of programs that will keep them economically viable and thus not pressured into growing illicit crops and things like that.

The committee in the House marked this with good money. The Senate raised it. And the conference committee brought it a little bit down, \$5.5 million over last year's level. I really want to commend the committee for doing that.

I think, frankly, that we need to, as a Congress, really address how much money gets to these countries, rather than just gets to K Street and lobbyists that are doing reports and doing studies of countries, rather than really helping the money get down to the people. And this is one program that focuses on local issues and NGOs, non-governmental organizations, rather than multimillion dollar contracts for U.S. contractors.

Building capacities is absolutely essential to survivability of a country. Now, one concern I have is that the report contains \$20 million for demobilization activities from an unspecified account. I think it is great that we are helping with the demobilization of the paramilitaries and the FARC and other kinds of insurgents, terrorists in a sense; but I want to make sure that that demobilization money is not taken from the alternative crop money.

I would appreciate if the chairman in his remarks could, perhaps for the record, respond to what conditions have been put on that demobilization money when they decide what account to take it from.

Again, I want to thank the chairman and ranking member, and I really appreciate their efforts to look for how to make a saner and smarter world to live in, rather than just sticking to the old adage that we are going to give money to K Street and let them decide what are the priorities abroad.

Anything we can do to build the capacities of local countries to sustain themselves will make this world a much safer and saner place to live.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to respond to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) and his comments about the demobilization funds that we have in the bill for Colombia.

The legislation provides that the funds can come from any place in the Act. I cannot guarantee where the administration might ask for those funds

to come from. However, the law would require that they consult with us and notify the subcommittee. And I can assure you that if they were to ask to take funds out of a program that is working and working well, such as the alternative development program in Colombia, we would object to such a request.

So it is very broad on where the money can come from. We have no assurances, I might add to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), that they are even going to request this money at all. But if they do, we will be watching very carefully as to where it would come from and make sure it is the appropriate place.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want the gentleman to know I share the concerns of the chairman. I believe that we can have far greater impact in Colombia by investing in alternative livelihoods rather than forced eradication.

Mr. Speaker, I would be very reluctant to see funding for demobilization programs come at the expense of any alternative development programs, and I look forward to working with the chairman to ensure that this just does not happen.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) for raising these concerns.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank each and every distinguished Member of the House who has spoken this morning on this legislation. Obviously, this is, appropriately so, a tremendous amount, really a consensus, which is pleasing to see support for what we are doing as a Congress and as a government, as a Nation in this legislation.

I want to take one final moment, if I may, to explain a point that I made in response to a question to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN) when I said that it is my belief that the Government of Venezuela is a dictatorship.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a second or a minute to explain why. Democracy, in order for it to exist, requires two fundamental pillars or legitimacies; the legitimacy of origin, which is obtained through free and fair elections, and the Government of Venezuela was elected. So it obviously had the legitimacy of origin.

But then I believe that for a government to be democratic, it has to have another form of legitimacy, which is legitimacy in its conduct in the process of governing. And if a government, even if democratically elected, represses the opposition, persecutes the opposition, represses the press, for example the free press, in my view, it loses that other legitimacy which is required, the legitimacy of conduct for a democracy to be a democracy.

Mr. Speaker, so I am convinced that the Government of Venezuela has lost its democratic legitimacy, and it is not a democracy. So I appreciate the opportunity to explain why I believe, as I stated before, that it is at this moment a dictatorship.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) for his extraordinary work once again in bringing forward this legislation. He is one of the people that I greatly admire in this House.

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I urge all of our colleagues to support what we are doing, the very important step we are taking for our foreign policy interests and great humanitarian causes today in this legislation.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include tabular and extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 3057.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3057, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 532, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3057) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 532, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 2, 2005, at page H9499.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased this morning to be able to bring before my colleagues in the House of Representatives the fiscal year 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations Conference Report for the bill H.R. 3057.

There is no doubt that the conferees had a difficult challenge this year,

working with an overall funding allocation that is almost \$2 billion below the fiscal year 2006 request. This is nearly 10 percent less than the President asked for. Nonetheless, the conferees took on the challenge of making the hard choices necessary to meet budgetary realities while funding this country's top foreign policy priorities at responsible levels, levels that fulfill our foreign policy objectives.

The conference report continues strong and active oversight of the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars consistent with the mandate given to us by the United States taxpayers and the leadership of this committee and the Congress.

The conference report continues the Appropriations Committee's pursuit of accountability for the expenditure of tax dollars, in particular our foreign assistance program expenditures. The oversight of our primary agencies—State Department, Treasury Department and USAID—includes quarterly reporting of expenditures, consultation on major programmatic changes and limitation on expenditures until conditions on congressional notifications are met.

The conference agreement also establishes for the first time an independent inspector general for the Export Import Bank.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a very quick summary of the bill. Let me turn now to some of the highlights that are contained in the conference report.

First, with regard to overall funding, the fiscal year 2006 budget request for the foreign operations account or appropriations bill was \$22.8 billion. As I already mentioned, the conference report funds our foreign assistance portfolio at \$20.9 billion; \$1.9 billion below what the President had asked for but \$1.4 billion over the fiscal year 2005 conference agreement.

Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The conference report includes \$2.8 million for the third year of the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Here we are actually above the President's request by \$268 million. This number is \$629 million over the fiscal year 2005 level.

The conference report includes not less than \$450 million, twice the amount requested by the President, for the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, or MCC. This agreement funds the MCC at \$1.77 billion, \$270 million or 18 percent above the \$1.5 billion provided in fiscal year 2005. We are, however, and this needs to be noted, significantly below the \$3 billion requested by the President for this year.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to be a strong supporter of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. I was there when the President announced the idea for it. I helped draft the legislation which ultimately ended up in our bill. I am a big believer in this new concept of delivering foreign assistance. But we did