

who built the Capitol that the Capitol Visitor Center be renamed Emancipation Hall and celebrate the freeing of all Americans from bondage, oppression, and restraint.

The Capitol symbolizes our nation's core values of freedom and liberty and the basic rights of all humans. It symbolizes who we are as a nation. However, though countless visitors walk its halls each day, few know the important role slaves played in the construction of the Capitol.

Many slaves worked in quarries, extracting the stone used to construct this building. Others were used as carpenters. Women and children often molded clay in kilns. District of Columbia financial records show that hundreds of local residents received payment for the work of slaves, recorded in the ledger as "Negro hire." In all, hundreds of slaves helped build the Capitol from the late 1700s until the mid-1800s.

Indeed, it was Philip Reid, a slave laborer who figured out how to take apart the plaster mold for the "Freedom" statue, which still crowns the dome, beneath which we toil, to allow it to be cast in bronze. What irony, what symbolism: Slaves built our monument to freedom; and the "Freedom" statue was cast in bronze by a man who was not free.

Today we have an opportunity to celebrate freedom; to make sure that every person who visits the Capitol knows that it is for preserving and protecting freedom that we, as Members of Congress, gather in this building and work every day; and that it is for liberty, democracy and freedom—emancipation—that our nation stands.

Emancipation Hall is an important reminder that the floors on which we walk, the walls that surround us and, yes, the "Freedom" statue atop the Capitol dome, were constructed in significant part by men and women who knew no liberty and were not free. We should never forget that.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3315—legislation which would designate the great hall of the new Capitol Visitor Center as Emancipation Hall. As Vice Chair of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I must note that similar language was added to H.R. 2771—the House-passed 2008 Legislative Branch appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, this recognition is long over due. For nearly two centuries, the slaves who helped to build our Capitol have been overlooked, brushed aside, and denied their just recognition. How ironic that this great building that is viewed world-wide as a symbol of freedom, a symbol of justice, and a symbol of democracy, was constructed in part, piece by piece, by those who did not know freedom nor justice.

That is why I would like to thank the Slave Laborers Task Force, chaired by Rep. JOHN LEWIS, for their diligence and commitment in ensuring that the slaves who labored to build our Nation's Capitol are both recognized and honored.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this historic legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3315.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMPACTS OF FREE ASSOCIATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2705) to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2705

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Compacts of Free Association Amendments Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence of subsection (a), by inserting before the period at the end the following: " including Article X of the Federal Programs and Services Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, as amended under the Agreement to Amend Article X that was signed by those two Governments on June 30, 2004, which shall serve as the authority to implement the provisions thereof"; and

(2) in the first sentence of subsection (b), by inserting before the period at the end the following: " including Article X of the Federal Programs and Services Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as amended under the Agreement to Amend Article X that was signed by those two Governments on June 18, 2004, which shall serve as the authority to implement the provisions thereof".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall be effective as of April 30, 2008.

SEC. 3. FUNDS TO FACILITATE FEDERAL ACTIVITIES.

Unobligated amounts appropriated before the date of the enactment of this Act pursuant to section 105(f)(1)(A)(ii) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 shall be available to both the United States Agency for International Development and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to facilitate each agency's activities under the Federal Programs and Services Agreements.

SEC. 4. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 105(f)(1)(A) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(f)(1)(A)) is amended to read as follows:

"(A) EMERGENCY AND DISASTER ASSISTANCE.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), section 221(a)(6) of the U.S.-FSM Compact and section 221(a)(5) of the U.S.-RMI Compact shall each be construed and applied in accordance with the two Agreements to Amend Article X of the Federal Programs and Service Agreements signed on June 30, 2004, and on June 18, 2004, respectively, provided that all activities carried out by the United States Agency for International Development and the Federal Emergency Management Agency under Article X of the Federal Programs and Services Agreements may be carried out notwithstanding any other provision of law. In the sections referred to in this clause, the term 'United States Agency for International Development, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance' shall be construed to mean 'the United States Agency for International Development'.

"(ii) DEFINITION OF WILL PROVIDE FUNDING.—In the second sentence of paragraph 12 of each of the Agreements described in clause (i), the term 'will provide funding' means will provide funding through a transfer of funds using Standard Form 1151 or a similar document or through an interagency, reimbursable agreement.".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall be effective as of April 30, 2008.

SEC. 5. CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING PALAU.

Section 105(f)(1)(B) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(f)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii)(II), by striking "and its territories" and inserting " its territories, and the Republic of Palau";

(2) in clause (iii)(II), by striking " or the Republic of the Marshall Islands" and inserting " the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau"; and

(3) in clause (ix)—

(A) by striking "Republic" both places it appears and inserting "government, institutions, and people";

(B) by striking "2007" and inserting "2009"; and

(C) by striking "was" and inserting "were".

SEC. 6. AVAILABILITY OF LEGAL SERVICES.

Section 105(f)(1)(C) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(f)(1)(C)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: " which shall also continue to be available to the citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands who legally reside in the United States (including territories and possessions)".

SEC. 7. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) TITLE I.—

(1) SECTION 177 AGREEMENT.—Section 103(c)(1) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921b(c)(1)) is amended by striking "section 177" and inserting "Section 177".

(2) INTERPRETATION AND UNITED STATES POLICY.—Section 104 of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921c) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting "the" before "U.S.-RMI Compact,";

(B) in subsection (e)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of paragraph (8), by striking "to include" and inserting "and include";

(ii) in paragraph (9)(A), by inserting a comma after "may"; and

(iii) in paragraph (10), by striking "related to service" and inserting "related to such services"; and

(C) in the first sentence of subsection (j), by inserting "the" before "Interior".

(3) SUPPLEMENTAL PROVISIONS.—Section 105(b)(1) of the Compact of Free Association

Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(b)(1)) is amended by striking “Trust Fund” and inserting “Trust Funds”.

(b) TITLE II.—

(1) U.S.-FSM COMPACT.—The Compact of Free Association, as amended, between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (as provided in section 201(a) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (117 Stat. 2757)) is amended—

(A) in section 174—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking “courts” and inserting “court”; and

(ii) in subsection (b)(2), by striking “the” before “November”;

(B) in section 177(a), by striking “, or Palau” and inserting “(or Palau)”;

(C) in section 179(b), by striking “amended Compact” and inserting “Compact, as amended,.”;

(D) in section 211—

(i) in the fourth sentence of subsection (a), by striking “Compact, as Amended, of Free Association” and inserting “Compact of Free Association, as amended”;

(ii) in the fifth sentence of subsection (a), by striking “Trust Fund Agreement,” and inserting “Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia Implementing Section 215 and Section 216 of the Compact, as Amended, Regarding a Trust Fund (Trust Fund Agreement);”;

(iii) in subsection (b)—

(I) in the first sentence, by striking “Government of the” before “Federated”; and

(II) in the second sentence, by striking “Sections 321 and 323 of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended” and inserting “Sections 211(b), 321, and 323 of the Compact of Free Association, as amended.”;

(iv) in the last sentence of subsection (d), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “and the Federal Programs and Services Agreement referred to in section 231”;

(E) in the first sentence of section 215(b), by striking “subsection(a)” and inserting “subsection (a)”;

(F) in section 221—

(i) in subsection (a)(6), by inserting “(Federal Emergency Management Agency)” after “Homeland Security”; and

(ii) in the first sentence of subsection (c), by striking “agreements” and inserting “agreement”;

(G) in the second sentence of section 222, by inserting “in” after “referred to”;

(H) in the second sentence of section 232, by striking “sections 102 (c)” and all that follows through “January 14, 1986” and inserting “section 102(b) of Public Law 108-188, 117 Stat. 2726, December 17, 2003”;

(I) in the second sentence of section 252, by inserting “, as amended,” after “Compact”;

(J) in the first sentence of the first undesignated paragraph of section 341, by striking “Section 141” and inserting “section 141”;

(K) in section 342—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking “14 U.S.C. 195” and inserting “section 195 of title 14, United States Code”; and

(ii) in subsection (b)—

(I) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295(b)(6)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6) of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6))”; and

(II) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6)(C)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6)(C) of that Act”;

(L) in the third sentence of section 354(a), by striking “section 442 and 452” and inserting “sections 442 and 452”;

(M) in section 461(h), by striking “Telecommunications” and inserting “Telecommunication”;

(N) in section 462(b)(4), by striking “of Free Association” the second place it appears; and

(O) in section 463(b), by striking “Articles IV” and inserting “Article IV”.

(2) U.S.-RMI COMPACT.—The Compact of Free Association, as amended, between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (as provided in section 201(b) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (117 Stat. 2795)) is amended—

(A) in section 174(a), by striking “court” and inserting “courts”;

(B) in section 177(a), by striking the comma before “(or Palau)”;

(C) in section 179(b), by striking “amended Compact,” and inserting “Compact, as amended,.”;

(D) in section 211—

(i) in the fourth sentence of subsection (a), by striking “Compact, as Amended, of Free Association” and inserting “Compact of Free Association, as amended”;

(ii) in the first sentence of subsection (b), by striking “Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Regarding Military Use and Operating Rights” and inserting “Agreement Regarding the Military Use and Operating Rights of the Government of the United States in the Republic of the Marshall Islands concluded Pursuant to Sections 321 and 323 of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended (Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Regarding Military Use and Operating Rights)”;

(iii) in the last sentence of subsection (e), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “and the Federal Programs and Services Agreement referred to in section 231”;

(E) in section 221(a)—

(i) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “Section 231” and inserting “section 231”; and

(ii) in paragraph (5), by inserting “(Federal Emergency Management Agency)” after “Homeland Security”;

(F) in the second sentence of section 232, by striking “sections 103(m)” and all that follows through “(January 14, 1986)” and inserting “section 103(k) of Public Law 108-188, 117 Stat. 2734, December 17, 2003”;

(G) in the first sentence of section 341, by striking “Section 141” and inserting “section 141”;

(H) in section 342—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking “14 U.S.C. 195” and inserting “section 195 of title 14, United States Code”; and

(ii) in subsection (b)—

(I) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295(b)(6)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6) of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6))”; and

(II) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6)(C)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6)(C) of that Act”;

(I) in the third sentence of section 354(a), by striking “section 442 and 452” and inserting “sections 442 and 452”;

(J) in the first sentence of section 443, by inserting “, as amended.” after “the Compact”;

(K) in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of section 461(h)—

(i) by striking “1978” and inserting “1998”; and

(ii) by striking “Telecommunications” and inserting “Telecommunication Union”; and

(L) in section 463(b), by striking “Article” and inserting “Articles”.

SEC. 8. TRANSMISSION OF VIDEOTAPE PROGRAMMING.

Section 111(e)(2) of title 17, United States Code, is amended by striking “or the Trust

Territory of the Pacific Islands” and inserting “the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, or the Republic of the Marshall Islands”.

SEC. 9. PALAU ROAD MAINTENANCE.

The Government of the Republic of Palau may deposit the payment otherwise payable to the Government of the United States under section 111 of Public Law 101-219 (48 U.S.C. 1960) into a trust fund if—

(1) the earnings of the trust fund are expended solely for maintenance of the road system constructed pursuant to section 212 of the Compact of Free Association between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Palau (48 U.S.C. 1931 note); and

(2) the trust fund is established and operated pursuant to an agreement entered into between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of Palau.

SEC. 10. CLARIFICATION OF TAX-FREE STATUS OF TRUST FUNDS.

In the U.S.-RMI Compact, the U.S.-FSM Compact, and their respective trust fund subsidiary agreements, for the purposes of taxation by the United States or its subsidiary jurisdictions, the term “State” means “State, territory, or the District of Columbia”.

SEC. 11. TRANSFER OF NAVAL VESSELS TO CERTAIN FOREIGN RECIPIENTS.

(a) TRANSFERS BY GRANT.—The President is authorized to transfer vessels to foreign countries on a grant basis under section 516 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2321j), as follows:

(1) TURKEY.—To the Government of Turkey—

(A) the OLIVER HAZARD PERRY class guided missile frigates GEORGE PHILIP (FFG-12) and SIDES (FFG-14); and

(B) the OSPREY class minehunter coastal ship BLACKHAWK (MHC-58).

(2) LITHUANIA.—To the Government of Lithuania, the OSPREY class minehunter coastal ships CORMORANT (MHC-57) and KINGFISHER (MHC-56).

(b) TRANSFERS BY SALE.—The President is authorized to transfer vessels to foreign recipients on a sale basis under section 21 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2761), as follows:

(1) TAIWAN.—To the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States (which is the Taiwan instrumentality designated pursuant to section 10(a) of the Taiwan Relations Act (22 U.S.C. 3309(a))), the OSPREY class minehunter coastal ships ORIOLE (MHC-55) and FALCON (MHC-59).

(2) TURKEY.—To the Government of Turkey, the OSPREY class minehunter coastal ship SHRIKE (MHC-62).

(c) GRANTS NOT COUNTED IN ANNUAL TOTAL OF TRANSFERRED EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLES.—The value of a vessel transferred to a recipient on a grant basis pursuant to authority provided by subsection (a) shall not be counted against the aggregate value of excess defense articles transferred in any fiscal year under section 516(g) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

(d) COSTS OF TRANSFERS.—Any expense incurred by the United States in connection with a transfer authorized by this section shall be charged to the recipient.

(e) REPAIR AND REFURBISHMENT IN UNITED STATES SHIPYARDS.—To the maximum extent practicable, the President shall require, as a condition of the transfer of a vessel under this section, that the recipient to which the vessel is transferred have such repair or refurbishment of the vessel as is needed before the vessel joins the naval forces of the recipient performed at a shipyard located in the United States, including a United States Navy shipyard.

(f) EXPIRATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority to transfer a vessel under this section shall expire at the end of the 2-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days 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 gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would first like to recognize a distinguished colleague and dear friend of mine, the gentlelady who currently chairs the Subcommittee on International Affairs, the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. DONNA CHRISTENSEN, for introducing this legislation.

This bill makes conforming, clarifying, and technical amendments to the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, which are important to ensuring that we maintain our obligations under the act to our friends in Micronesia.

This bill also approves agreements made pursuant to the act which determines how disaster relief will be handled for the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, through amending the Compact of Free Association, this legislation before us today transfers excess military equipment to friendly foreign governments for their legitimate defense needs. It is a strong statement of trust and cooperation from the United States when we transfer excess U.S. military naval vessels.

While excess to our own needs, these refurbished vessels conserve significant and deeply appreciated roles in the navies of the recipient nations.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also authorizes the transfer of excess U.S. naval vessels to three of our most important friends and allies, Turkey, Lithuania and Taiwan.

As my colleagues well know, Turkey is one of our most valued NATO members, and is one of the United States' closest allies. Turkey serves as one of the most important conduits for the transit of supplies to our forces in Iraq. The transfer of these missiles, two guided missile frigates and two minesweepers, will again reinforce our close relationship with Istanbul and our common commitments to each other's security needs.

Lithuania has been a staunch U.S. ally in the global war on terror. It makes an outside contribution to global security, contributing troops to military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the leading provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan.

The two minesweeper vessels in this bill will allow Vilnius to clear leftover sea mines from the two world wars in the Baltic Sea and supports Lithuania's commitment to NATO's Mine Counter-Measures Forces North mission.

Taiwan is a thriving and energetic democracy. Our two nations share a complex web of economic, political, and strategic ties that only deepens over time. Taiwan is a bulwark of democracy in the Asia-Pacific region, and we must do all we can to further strengthen our political, security and economic ties. This bill authorizes the sale of two minesweepers to Taiwan.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2705, the Compacts of Free Association Amendments Act of 2007.

The United States shares a uniquely close history and friendship with the Pacific Island nations of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States administered those islands as Trust Territories until they became independent, sovereign nations in the 1980s and the 1990s. Our relations with those countries are governed by compacts of free association which guarantees certain forms of U.S. assistance and cooperation in exchange for defense rights and obligations that are unique in the world.

Those Pacific nations remain stalwart friends of the United States and dependable partisans in the United Nations General Assembly. Some of their citizens continue to serve with great distinction and personal sacrifice in the United States Armed Forces, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 108th Congress extended and significantly restructured the compacts of free association with Micronesia and the Marshall Islands in the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003. This bill makes technical corrections, updates, and minor changes to that act, as well as to the Palau Compact. Most importantly, it improves the disaster assistance agreements required by section 105 of the act, which were subsequently negotiated between the parties and presented to Congress.

I want to thank the author, the gentlelady from the U.S. Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) for providing us this opportunity to reaffirm our friendship with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

The measure before us today has also been modified to include the text of

H.R. 3912, the Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2007, which was requested by the Department of Defense and introduced by the gentleman from California, our great chairman, TOM LANTOS.

According to the Secretary of the Navy, authority to transfer surplus vessels is an important aspect of our ship disposition strategy. It enables the Navy to manage its inventory while strengthening the ties with our allies by transferring the ships that enhance their defense capabilities.

This bill authorizes the transfer of eight decommissioned naval vessels to certain friends and allies of the United States, specifically Lithuania and Turkey and Taiwan. Five ships will be transferred on a grant basis, as excess defense articles, and three will be transferred through foreign military sales under section 21 of the Arms Export Control Act.

Importantly, the legislation also requires that any expense incurred by the United States in connection with a transfer authorized by this bill shall be charged to the recipient. Likewise, it states that, to the maximum extent feasible, repair and refurbishment of these vessels shall take place in U.S. shipyards.

I urge support of this legislation.

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

□ 1300

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 10 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you for your generosity with time. I will not use anywhere near that much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2705, the Compacts of Free Association Amendments Act, as amended by the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

This legislation I sponsored is important to usher in a new regime of how disaster assistance is provided to the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. In addition, it clarifies access to educational programs for the Republic of Palau. Lastly, the legislation makes technical corrections to Compacts of Free Association with the RMI and the FSM as was suggested by the administration.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Committee on Foreign Affairs for their attention to this legislation. Especially I would like to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, the gentlelady from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA); and the subcommittee's ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO). I would also like to thank Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in moving this legislation forward.

I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 2705.

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

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

I want first to compliment my good friend the gentleman from Florida on the other side of the aisle for part of our management of this proposed legislation.

I want to note for the record how important these islands in Micronesia were so critical in our Nation's history, and I might want to note as a matter of record that it was from Micronesia that the famous aircraft, the Enola Gay, took the two atom bombs to Nagasaki and Hiroshima which eventually ended the war against Japanese military forces. It was also in Micronesia that we initiated and conducted tests of some 67 nuclear devices that were exploded in the Marshall Islands. I think sometimes we don't seem to give a sense of appreciation of the fact that the whole Marshall archipelago, the whole Marshall Islands, were totally exposed to nuclear radiation as a result of our nuclear testing program, some 67 nuclear bombs, including the first hydrogen bomb that was exploded in the Marshall Islands, 1,000 times more powerful than the bombs that we exploded in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

I am saddened to say, Mr. Speaker, that our government has not made a definite commitment to help, to meet the medical needs of the several hundred of the Marshallese people who were exposed to nuclear radiation. To this day we still have not done enough to help the Marshallese people in this regard. We have also not helped the Marshallese people to compensate them properly for the loss of their property when we conducted these tests in Micronesia.

I just want to note that for the record, Mr. Speaker. I hope that in the coming months that appropriate legislation will be introduced to address these very serious issues. I think we owe it to the Marshallese people. Our government surely should be grateful for the sacrifices that the Marshallese people have had to make as a result of conducting our nuclear testing program in this area of the world.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again I thank my good friend from Florida.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2705, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY AND PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF FLOODING IN SOUTHERN MEXICO

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree

to the resolution (H. Res. 812) expressing the sympathy and pledging the urgent support of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of the devastating flooding in southern Mexico, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 812

Whereas in late October 2007, a series of storms brought torrential rainfall to southern Mexico, especially the States of Tabasco and Chiapas, causing the Grijalva, Carrizal, and Puxcatan Rivers to overflow their banks;

Whereas early reports have branded the resulting floods as the worst in Mexico in 50 years and Mexican President Calderon has called it "one of the worst natural disasters in the history of our country. Not only because of the size of the area affected, but because of the number of people affected";

Whereas the flooding is estimated to have affected 1,000,000 people so far;

Whereas Mexico's Federal Social Development Department now estimates that the homes of over 500,000 people were damaged or destroyed;

Whereas more than 300,000 people are reported to still be trapped inside their homes or on their rooftops, with uncertain access to food, medicine, and safe drinking water;

Whereas forecasts call for even more rain in the days ahead;

Whereas the Governor of the State of Tabasco Andres Granier stated that 100 percent of the states crops were lost and that 80 percent of the State of Tabasco is under water;

Whereas the capital of Tabasco, Villahermosa, has been particularly devastated, being compared to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina;

Whereas the flooding has hampered the capacity of Mexico's oil industry;

Whereas in the State of Chiapas, authorities have declared a state of emergency in 22 municipalities and at least 7,000 people have been evacuated to shelters;

Whereas Red Cross workers in Mexico have called for urgent supplies of water, food, and basic materials to assist in the rescue efforts; and

Whereas health officials have begun warning against the serious possibility of cholera and waterborne diseases: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the devastating flooding affecting southern Mexico;

(2) conveys its sincere support to the people and Government of Mexico;

(3) urges the United States Government to immediately make available all appropriate assistance requested by the Mexican authorities; and

(4) reaffirms its commitment to provide relief aid to the victims as the effects of the flooding continue to unfold.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days 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 gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank my colleague and dear friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ), and also the chairman of our House Foreign Affairs Committee and the distinguished senior ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for their support and leadership; and again especially my good friend, Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ, for her authorship of this resolution. This is very, very critical, Mr. Speaker. We cannot support Mexico enough during one of the worst natural disasters in their history.

A series of storms have brought torrential rainfall to southern Mexico, especially the States of Tabasco and Chiapas, causing the Grijalva, Carrizal, and Puxcatan Rivers to overflow their banks. The homes of an estimated half a million people have been damaged or destroyed, and at least that many more people have been affected by severed utilities and transportation corridors.

Mr. Speaker, Mexican President Felipe Calderon has called it "one of the worst natural disasters in the history of our country. Not only because of the size of the area affected but because of the number of people affected."

The Governor of the State of Tabasco, Andres Granier, stated that 100 percent of the State's crops were lost and that 80 percent of the State of Tabasco is underwater. Over a million Tabascans, half the State's population, have been directly affected, with at least half a million losing their homes and even more losing all of their material possessions. The capital of Tabasco, Villahermosa, has been particularly devastated, being compared to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Speaker, an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 people were being housed in shelters. Interior Minister Francisco Ramirez Acuna said recently in a television interview. He estimated that some 400,000 people in Tabasco would need some kind of government aid to get back on their feet. The floodwaters' descent could lead to outbreaks of diseases like malaria, dengue fever and cholera.

Mr. Speaker, we must commend President Calderon, who has led Mexico's rapid response to its worst flooding in recent history and who has personally played a major role in averting a catastrophe on the level of Katrina. Amid heavy rains, President Calderon ordered in thousands of soldiers, marines, pilots and federal police on October 29, 2 days before the most damaging flooding hit. When the riverbanks finally burst, inundating some 70 percent