

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. PAS-TOR). 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 VIC-
TIMS OF FLOODING IN SOUTH-
ERN 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 SANCHEZ, 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

of the city of Villahermosa on October 31, there were more than 60 helicopters ready to carry out nonstop rescue and relief missions. President Calderon and half his cabinet were on the ground, giving televised updates on everything from how to use satellite phones in shelters to the drop points of millions of bottles of water. The President's reaction is most impressive, and I take this opportunity here on the House floor to applaud this leader's efforts.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution expresses the empathy of the United States House of Representatives during this time and pledges our continued assistance. We applaud the prompt humanitarian response of the Mexican government, international organizations, and relief bodies. We must continue to support these efforts as long as they are necessary.

In this resolution, it is resolved that the House of Representatives urge the U.S. Government to immediately make available all possible assistance to Mexican authorities and reaffirms its commitment to provide relief aid to the victims as the effects of the flooding continue to unfold.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I stand to join my colleague, my good friend from American Samoa, today to express my sincere sympathy and support for those who have suffered as a result of the recent torrential storms in southern Mexico. The damage has been devastating. It is reported that as many as 1 million people have been affected by the flooding, with the homes of an estimated 500,000 people being destroyed or damaged. The Governor of the State of Tabasco has stated that 100 percent of the State's crops have been lost and 80 percent of his state is underwater. What a shame.

Sadly, with more than 300,000 people reported trapped inside their homes or on rooftops and additional downpour predicted, it is still too early to quantify the total destruction wrought by these unrelenting rains. Just over 2 months ago, Mexico was ravaged by Hurricanes Dean and Henriette. Now what President Calderon has characterized, and I quote, one of the worst natural disasters in the history of Mexico has followed.

I am awed by the perseverance of our friends in Mexico and commend the courage they continue to demonstrate in their efforts to overcome the damage of these storms. Furthermore, I admire the contributions made by relief organizations and private citizens from around the world to assist in the aftermath. My prayers are with the families and friends of those harmed by the perils of this storm.

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

Mr. FALDOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 10 minutes to

the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ).

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. I want to thank the gentleman for graciously yielding me so much time. I would also like to thank the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman TOM LANTOS, and the distinguished ranking member, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, for supporting this important resolution that I am offering today.

The U.S. has had its share of natural disasters recently, from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 to this year's southern California wildfires, some of which are still burning as I speak. As we have learned, it is difficult even for the United States, one of the wealthiest nations in the world, to adequately care for our victims and rebuild our communities once we have experienced one of these natural disasters.

In both of those disasters, our neighbor was there to help us with emergency relief units and firefighters. Now Mexico faces the challenge of a devastating natural disaster within its own borders.

This resolution recognizes the plight of our Mexican neighbors and expresses our desire and commitment to support Mexico during one of the worst natural disasters in its history, a disaster which the country's President has described as one of the worst not only because of the size of the area affected but because of the number of people affected.

As many Americans already know, a series of storms brought torrential rainfall to southern Mexico, especially the States of Tabasco and Chiapas, causing various rivers to overflow their banks.

At least half a million people's homes have been damaged or destroyed and perhaps double that number are without utilities or cut off from transportation routes.

In the State of Tabasco, as was already mentioned, 100 percent of the agricultural crops have been lost and 80 percent of the state is underwater. It's incredible.

Truly, this is a disaster of epic proportions. In this agricultural area, even those who were able to stay safe during the storm will face many challenges in the weeks ahead. Having lost their crops, which for many are their sole source of income, surviving and keeping their families fed and intact will be difficult.

In addition to picking up the pieces of their lives after losing their homes and crops and everything that they owned, the flood survivors face increased threats from diseases like malaria, dengue fever and cholera.

As a good neighbor, it is imperative that we do all that we can to help Mexico ensure that the flood victims can indeed get back on their feet. It is the least we can do for a neighbor who did what it could to help us in our times of need when we experienced natural disasters.

I also want to take a moment to commend and comment on Mexican President Felipe Calderon for leading his country's rapid response to this devastation and for the work that he did before the rains fell to avert an even greater catastrophe. The President's swift reaction avoided even greater disaster, and I applaud his efforts. They really were impressive.

This resolution today expresses the sympathy of the U.S. House of Representatives during this time and pledges our continued assistance. We want to acknowledge the prompt humanitarian response that has come from many quarters, not just the Mexican Government but international organizations and relief bodies. We must continue to support these efforts as long as they are necessary.

I urge my colleagues not only to support this resolution but to work together to ensure that its goals are realized. I urge us to continue to work in a bi-partisan manner to address this humanitarian crisis. We must not just speak of our good intentions; we must act on them. We must immediately make assistance available to Mexican authorities so that Mexico can continue to provide relief aid to the victims as the effects of the flooding continue to unfold.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this resolution.

□ 1315

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

Mr. FALDOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentlewoman for her most eloquent remarks before the floor of this House and, again, I want to urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALDOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 812, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. FALDOMAVAEGA. 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

SUPPORT FOR THE MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALDOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass