

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. 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 this bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 3739, as introduced by our friend and colleague, Congressman RAUL GRIJALVA of Arizona, our colleague on the Natural Resources Committee and chairman of the subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, amends the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act to modify one technical, enforceability condition necessary to implement the water settlement for the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we support this bill. It was passed through our committee on a bipartisan basis, and we look forward to working with other tribes who have similar concerns in the future; and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. My colleague from the majority has adequately described this technical correction bill. We have no objection. We urge its passage.

I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, having no further speakers, I will only mention that it was a pleasure working with my ranking member, CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, and some of my colleagues on the other side to get this very important piece of legislation for the tribe.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3739.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1245

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO THE VICTIMS OF CYCLONE SIDR IN SOUTHERN BANGLADESH

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 842) expressing sympathy to and pledging the support of the House of Representa-

tives and the people of the United States for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 842

Whereas on November 15, 2007, Cyclone Sidr hit the coast of southern Bangladesh with 155 mile-an-hour winds that smashed tens of thousands of homes, damaged roads and buildings, and caused a 15-foot tidal surge that ruined thousands of hectares of crops;

Whereas early reports have branded the destruction from Cyclone Sidr as the worst in Bangladesh in 16 years;

Whereas the resulting damage from the cyclone affected more than 8,000,000 people through loss of their homes and livelihoods;

Whereas over half of the affected internally displaced population are children;

Whereas Bangladesh's Disaster Ministry estimates that the cyclone damaged or destroyed 1,500,000 houses;

Whereas the death toll from the cyclone stands at more than 3,000;

Whereas as the 4 districts in southern Bangladesh that were most drastically affected by the cyclone are Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Barisal, and Pirojpur;

Whereas one relief worker commented that Bagerhat looked like a "valley of death" in the days after the storm;

Whereas an entire island in Barisal, another district of southern Bangladesh, was submerged under at least 6 feet of water and houses were blown away by winds;

Whereas the capital, Dhaka, which is located over 130 miles away from the devastated southern coastline, was also impacted by the storm, losing access to power and water for days;

Whereas a massive tidal wave that was caused by Cyclone Sidr hit the Sunderbans, the world's biggest mangrove forest that is home to the endangered Royal Bengal tiger, leaving a wake of death and destruction that have caused experts to declare the forest an "ecological disaster";

Whereas officials at the United Nations World Food Program have appealed for international aid to help save lives in Bangladesh, noting that food supplies have been severely disrupted by the cyclone; and

Whereas, due to the limited access to water supply and sanitation facilities that millions of Bangladeshis will face, health officials have warned against the possibility of cholera, dysentery, and other waterborne diseases: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the victims of Cyclone Sidr, which has affected southern Bangladesh;

(2) conveys its sincere support to the people of Bangladesh;

(3) supports the United States Government's efforts to immediately make available all appropriate assistance requested by Bangladeshi authorities; and

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS of New York. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank my good friend and colleague, Mr. ROTHMAN from New Jersey, for introducing this timely resolution. More than 2 years ago, Hurricane Katrina struck our gulf coast with a fury rarely seen. Katrina caused severe loss of life and property to the citizens of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and our Nation continues to deal with the enormous human and financial consequences of this devastating storm.

Unfortunately, halfway across the world, our friends in Bangladesh are undergoing their own nightmare scenario in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr. Cyclone Sidr struck on November 15, with 155-mile-an-hour winds and 15-foot tidal waves. The destruction that this cyclone left in its wake is the worst Bangladesh has seen in 16 years, and that is not a trivial statement, considering that Bangladesh is a nation that suffered through horrific droughts, floods and other natural disasters on almost an annual basis.

The numbers from Cyclone Sidr are astounding: 3,300 dead, over 800 missing, and 1.5 million houses damaged or destroyed. All told, at least 8.7 million people have been affected, and the economic and social impacts will undoubtedly loom large for years to come.

Just as the world offered their help to us during Hurricane Katrina, Bangladesh needs immediate support from the international community. In that regard, I am proud of the way that the United States Government has responded to this disaster. The U.S. Agency for International Development has already dispatched millions in emergency assistance, and our United States Navy is busy airlifting necessary food and supplies to those that have been affected.

This resolution supports our efforts and reaffirms our commitment to our friends in Bangladesh. I strongly support this resolution and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 842, as amended, expressing sympathy and support for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh. At the outset, I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) for introducing this timely measure, and also extend my appreciation to Chairman LANTOS, as well as Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for helping to expedite its consideration before the House today.

As my colleagues may know, on the 15th of November a powerful, category five-equivalent tropical cyclone struck low-lying areas of Bangladesh from the Bay of Bengal. Mr. Speaker, in the West we call these tropical storms hurricanes, and in the Far East they call them cyclones. Be that as it may, they both have destructive power. Being from southeast Texas on the gulf coast, we call the area "hurricane alley," and we are not unfamiliar with hurricanes. Even this year, Hurricane Humberto, and Hurricane Rita 2 years ago hit my area of the State of Texas.

So, the effects of hurricanes and cyclones are devastating. The effects of Cyclone Sidr has been extremely devastating to the people. Some 6.8 million people have been affected by this disaster, 3,000 people have died, 1,000 people are unaccounted for, and approximately 15,000 people have been injured. In the immediate aftermath of this storm, President and Mrs. Bush offered condolences to the victims, especially those who lost loved ones, people who lost homes and livelihoods in this tragedy.

The United States immediately conveyed to the authorities in Dhaka its willingness to assist in responding to this natural disaster. The United States Agency for International Development provided more than \$19 million in emergency funds to support relief and early recovery activities, including shelter and water, sanitation, hygiene programs and emergency food assistance. The United States Department of Defense has also provided invaluable assistance, with 2,400 United States marines and sailors helping the Bangladesh Government provide clean water, medical aid, food, and other relief supplies to the victims of this cyclone. Indeed, more than 162,000 pounds of relief supplies have been delivered to Bangladesh by USS *Kearsarge* and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit as of early this month.

Mr. Speaker, Bangladesh and the United States have been close friends since 1971. Our hearts go out to those who have suffered so grievously during this disaster, and on behalf of the American people it is fitting that we reiterate our commitment to assist the people of Bangladesh as they recover from this devastating storm, and I urge support of this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 842, expressing sympathy to and pledging the support of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh, introduced by my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Representative ROTHMAN. This important resolution reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the people of Bangladesh in the wake of the devastation of Cyclone Sidr.

Mr. Speaker, Bangladesh has long been a valued ally of the United States; and a key Muslim democracy in a region where adherence to democratic principles is at a premium. Recently, I met with Mr. Don Haque, nephew

of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. After listening to his concerns and insights, it is my hope that Bangladesh will move swiftly toward regaining its status as a thriving, emerging democracy and set an example for its neighbors and the rest of the world.

The region has been undergoing serious political and economic changes, with several nations undergoing significant political upheaval. Key among these is Bangladesh, where emergency rule was declared by President Iajuddin Ahmed following opposition protests during the run-up to the January 2007 elections. This military-backed caretaker government, currently headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed, is expected to continue to hold power through 2008, though some observers have estimated that elections will not actually take place until 2009 or later.

It is my sincere hope that the military-backed caretaker government currently in power in Bangladesh will promptly lift the state of emergency and move expeditiously toward holding free and fair elections. It would also be my expectation that the caretaker government will abide by internationally recognized standards of human rights and due process in its activities. I am personally concerned by reported events in Bangladesh, including the ban on political and union activity; the restrictions on free movement, free assembly, free association, free speech and a free press; and the denial of bail and other due process rights to more than 200,000 jailed individuals, according to some accounts.

In this key period of political change, one that will hopefully ensure a more free and fair democratic Bangladesh, the nation has been hit by an unthinkable natural disaster that has affected all ways of life. On November 15, the southern coast of Bangladesh was struck by Cyclone Sidr with raging winds of 155 miles-per-hour smashing tens of thousands of homes, damaging roads and buildings, and causing a 16 foot tidal surge that has destroyed thousands of hectares of crops.

This natural disaster is estimated to have affected over 4 million people thus far, with millions being evacuated from their homes due to loss or damage. The Bangladesh Disaster Ministry now estimates that some 750,000 homes were damaged or destroyed in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr. As a Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am especially concerned by the internal displacement of millions of Bangladeshis, over 400,000 of whom are children below the age of five. The catastrophic death toll has already reached 3,500, though the Bangladesh Red Crescent has warned that the number of deaths may climb as high as 10,000 in what is being called the greatest destruction from a cyclone in Bangladesh in 16 years.

It appears we are only just beginning to see the effects of this great human catastrophe. While Cyclone Sidr is responsible for widespread destruction, the five provinces of Patuakhali, Barguna, Bagerhat, Barisal, and Pirojpur that sit on the southern coast of Bangladesh were the most drastically affected. The nation's capital, Dhaka, which is located over 130 miles away from the country's devastated coastline, still lost access to power and food for days following the storm. Hundreds of thousands of people in southern Bangladesh's remote areas have been cut off from relief operations leading to massive suffering

and starvation due to the current lack of access to drinking water and medicines. One relief worker in Bagerhat went so far as to say that the region looked like a "valley of death." Unfortunately, the worst may be yet to come. Health officials have begun to warn against the serious threat posed by cholera, dysentery, and other waterborne diseases as a result of the limited access to water supplies and sanitation facilities that millions of Bangladeshis will face.

As a member of the international community, the United States must offer its support and assistance to a nation that has been devastated by such a tremendous natural disaster. The United Nations World Food Program has appealed to the international community to provide aid to the peoples of Bangladesh, noting that food supplies have been severely disrupted by the cyclone leading to an increased and very real threat of famine. This resolution is significant because it reaffirms the commitment of the United States to provide relief aid to the victims of Cyclone Sidr as its effects continue to unfold. Furthermore, this resolution calls upon the United States to immediately make available any and all appropriate assistance that has been requested by the Bangladeshi authorities.

I believe that it is imperative that the United States government express its heartfelt sympathy and support to the people of Bangladesh in the wake of this terrific disaster, which is why I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me in strongly supporting this legislation, and to call for still more to be done.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 842, 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. MEEKS of New York. 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.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 708) honoring the life and accomplishments of Luciano Pavarotti and recognizing the significant and positive impact of his astounding musical talent, his achievement in raising the profile of opera with audiences around the world, and his commitment to charitable causes.