

# RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science and Technology:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 10, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker of the House, U.S. Capitol Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: I am writing to notify you of my resignation from the Committee on Science and Technology, effective today.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

DARLENE HOOLEY,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

# RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 9, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker, Capitol, H-232,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER, Thank you for the tremendous opportunity to serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Due to the pending assignment, please accept my resignation from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee effective Tuesday, June 10.

It was an honor to serve on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee under the tremendous leadership of Chairman Oberstar. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has provided me with a useful forum to help shape our country's investment in our roadways and transportation systems. I look forward to continuing to following the success of the committee and offering my assistance wherever possible.

It is with great enthusiasm and dedication that I look forward to serving on the Energy and Commerce Committee. My strongest desire as a Member of Congress is to improve the lives of the people I represent, and serving on this committee will afford me invaluable opportunities to make a demonstrative and positive difference in their lives.

I appreciate your attention to my resignation, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

DORIS O. MATSUI,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

# RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 10, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker, Capitol Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: I am writing to notify you of my resignation from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Please consider this resignation effective today.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

MIKE DOYLE,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

# RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Financial Services:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 10, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker, Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: At the request of the Speaker and to provide a slot for a newly-elected colleague, I resign my membership on the Financial Services Committee.

Very truly yours,

JIM MARSHALL.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

# ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

# MERIDA INITIATIVE TO COMBAT ILLICIT NARCOTICS AND REDUCE ORGANIZED CRIME AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6028) to authorize law enforcement and security assistance, and assistance to enhance the rule of law and strengthen civilian institutions, for Mexico and the countries of Central America, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6028

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

# SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.  
Sec. 2. Definitions.

# TITLE I—ASSISTANCE FOR MEXICO

Sec. 101. Findings.

Sec. 102. Declarations of policy.

## Subtitle A—Law Enforcement and Security Assistance

Sec. 111. Purposes of assistance.

Sec. 112. Authorization of assistance.

Sec. 113. Activities supported.

Sec. 114. Limitation on assistance.

Sec. 115. Authorization of appropriations.

## Subtitle B—Assistance to Enhance the Rule of Law and Strengthen Civilian Institutions

Sec. 121. Sense of Congress.

Sec. 122. Authorization of assistance.

Sec. 123. Activities supported.

Sec. 124. Authorization of appropriations.

# TITLE II—ASSISTANCE FOR COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Sec. 201. Findings.

Sec. 202. Declarations of policy.

## Subtitle A—Law Enforcement and Security Assistance

Sec. 211. Purposes of assistance.

Sec. 212. Authorization of assistance.

Sec. 213. Activities supported.

Sec. 214. Limitation on assistance.

Sec. 215. Authorization of appropriations.

## Subtitle B—Assistance to Enhance the Rule of Law and Strengthen Civilian Institutions

Sec. 221. Authorization of assistance.

Sec. 222. Activities supported.

Sec. 223. Authorization of appropriations.

# TITLE III—ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Sec. 301. Conditions on provision of assistance.

Sec. 302. Limitations on provision of assistance.

Sec. 303. Limitation on monitoring.

Sec. 304. Exemption from prohibition on assistance for law enforcement forces.

Sec. 305. Relationship to other authority.

Sec. 306. Rule of construction.

# TITLE IV—SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Sec. 401. Report on reduction of drug demand in the United States.

Sec. 402. Reduction of southbound flow of illegal weapons.

Sec. 403. Reduction of southbound flow of illegal precursor chemicals and bulk-cash transfers.

Sec. 404. Report.

# TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 501. Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Implement the Merida Initiative.

Sec. 502. Metrics and oversight mechanisms.

Sec. 503. Report.

Sec. 504. Sense of Congress.

Sec. 505. Sunset.

# SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees”—

(A) means—

(i) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) for purposes of titles IV and V, includes the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

(2) COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA.—The term “countries of Central America” means

Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama and includes Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

(3) **MERIDA INITIATIVE.**—The term “Merida Initiative” means the program announced by the United States and Mexico on October 22, 2007, to fight illicit narcotics trafficking and criminal organizations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

#### TITLE I—ASSISTANCE FOR MEXICO

##### SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The drug crisis facing the United States remains a significant national security threat.

(2) The Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimates that 90 percent of illegal drugs that enter the United States come through the Mexico-Central America corridor.

(3) The same smuggling routes that are used to bring illegal narcotics north are utilized to illegally distribute arms, precursor chemicals, and bulk cash transfers south.

(4) Drug gangs that operate in the United States, Mexico, and Central America have become sophisticated and vertically-integrated operations expert at penetrating the United States-Mexico border.

(5) Narcotics-related activity and expanding cross-border trafficking is dangerously undermining the security environment for our neighbors to the South, as well as in the United States.

(6) Mexico can and has served as a critical ally and partner in stemming the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States. Under the leadership of Mexican President Felipe Calderón, the United States and Mexico have initiated an approach of joint responsibility to confront the threat of illicit narcotics trafficking and organized crime in the Western Hemisphere.

(7) The spread of illicit narcotics through United States borders and the violence that accompanies it cannot be halted without a comprehensive interdiction and security strategy planned and executed jointly with our southern neighbors.

(8) In March 2007, President George W. Bush and Mexican President Calderón held a summit in the Mexican City of Merida and agreed that the United States and Mexico must expand bilateral and regional cooperation to fight violence stemming from narcotrafficking and regional criminal organizations.

(9) On October 22, 2007, the United States and Mexico issued a joint statement announcing the Merida Initiative, a program to fight illicit narcotics trafficking and criminal organizations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

(10) In the joint statement—

(A) Mexico pledged to “strengthen its operational capabilities to more effectively fight drug-traffickers and organized crime”;

(B) the United States pledged “to intensify its efforts to address all aspects of drug trafficking (including demand-related portions) and continue to combat trafficking of weapons and bulk currency to Mexico”;

(C) both nations pledged to “augment cooperation, coordination, and the exchange of information to fight criminal organizations on both sides of the border”.

(11) A long-term strategy to adequately contain the northbound and southbound flows of illicit narcotics along the United States-Mexico border, as well as protect the vast and free flow of trade, will require the United States to partner with its southern neighbors in their efforts to build the capacity of their own law enforcement agencies and enhance the rule of law, as well as to fortify United States illicit narcotics reduction efforts.

##### SEC. 102. DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.

Congress makes the following declarations:

(1) The Merida Initiative is a critical part of a growing partnership and strategy of cooperation between the United States and its southern neighbors to confront the illegal flow of narcotics as well as violence and organized crime that it has spawned.

(2) The United States needs to ensure the free flow of trade between the United States and its critical neighbor, Mexico, while ensuring that the United States border is protected from illegal smuggling into the United States.

(3) The United States must intensify efforts to stem the flow of precursor chemicals, bulk cash, and the so-called “iron-river” of arms illegally flowing south, as well as demand-related aspects of the illicit narcotics phenomenon.

(4) The United States should provide its expertise to meet immediate security needs along the United States-Mexico border, fight the production and flow of illicit narcotics, and support Mexico in its efforts to do the same.

(5) The United States should support the Government of Mexico’s work to expand its own law enforcement to independently conduct successful counternarcotics and organized crime-related operations.

(6) The Merida Initiative reflects the belief that Mexican military involvement is required in the short-term to stabilize the security situation, but that most aspects of this problem fall into the realm of law enforcement.

(7) In implementing the Merida Initiative, the United States should work with its southern neighbors to mitigate the so-called “balloon effect” in which successful counternarcotics efforts shift narcotics-related activities to other areas.

(8) The United States should coordinate with the Congress of the Union of Mexico to ensure full partnership on the programs authorized under this Act.

#### Subtitle A—Law Enforcement and Security Assistance

##### SEC. 111. PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE.

The purposes of assistance under this subtitle are to—

(1) enhance the ability of the Government of Mexico, in cooperation with the United States, to control illicit narcotics production, trafficking, drug trafficking organizations, and organized crime;

(2) help build the capacity of law enforcement forces of Mexico to control illicit narcotics production, trafficking, drug trafficking organizations, and organized crime;

(3) aid the support role that the armed forces of Mexico is providing to law enforcement agencies of Mexico as the security situation in Mexico is initially stabilized;

(4) protect and secure the United States-Mexico border, and control illegal activity going south as well as north;

(5) strengthen the bilateral and regional ties of the United States with Mexico and the countries of Central America by assuming shared responsibility and offering concrete assistance in this area of great mutual concern;

(6) strengthen respect for internationally recognized human rights and the rule of law in efforts to stabilize the security environment relating to illicit narcotics production and trafficking and organized crime; and

(7) support the judicial branches of the Government of Mexico and the countries of Central America, as well as support anti-corruption efforts in those countries; and

(8) respond to the direct requests of the Government of Mexico that the United States reduce the demand for illicit narcotics in the United States, stem the flow of

illegal arms into Mexico from the United States, stem the flow of illegal bulk-cash transfers into Mexico from the United States, and stem the flow of illegal precursor chemicals into Mexico from the United States.

##### SEC. 112. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

To carry out the purposes of section 111, the President is authorized to provide assistance for Mexico to support the activities described in section 113.

##### SEC. 113. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Activities that may be supported by assistance under section 112 include the following:

(1) **COUNTERNARCOTICS AND COUNTERTRAFFICKING.**—To assist in building the capacity of law enforcement and security forces of Mexico to eradicate illicit narcotics trafficking and reduce trafficking-fueled violence, including along the United States-Mexico border, including assistance such as—

(A) radar and aerial surveillance equipment;

(B) land and maritime interdiction equipment and training, including—

(i) transport helicopters and night-operating capabilities;

(ii) surveillance platform planes; and

(iii) maintenance and training relating to maintenance of aircraft; and

(C) training of security and law enforcement units to plan and execute counternarcotics operations.

(2) **PORT, AIRPORT, AND RELATED SECURITY.**—To assist in monitoring and controlling the United States-Mexico border and the border between Mexico and Central America to combat illicit narcotics trafficking, including assistance such as—

(A) computer infrastructure and equipment;

(B) secure communications networks; and

(C) nonintrusive monitoring technology.

(3) **OPERATIONAL TECHNOLOGY.**—

(A) **ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES.**—To assist in investigation and collection of intelligence against illicit drug trafficking organizations, including—

(i) expansion of intelligence databases; and

(ii) hardware, operating systems, and training for updating the communications networks of security agencies.

(B) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(i) operational technology transferred to the Government of Mexico for intelligence or law enforcement purposes should be used solely for the purposes for which the operational technology was intended; and

(ii) the United States should take all necessary steps to ensure that use of operational technology described in clause (i) is consistent with United States law, including protections of freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and freedom of association.

(4) **PUBLIC SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT.**—To assist in the modernization of law enforcement entities and prevent crime, including assistance and activities such as—

(A) law enforcement training and equipment, including—

(i) transport helicopters;

(ii) surveillance aircraft, including Cessna Caravan light utility aircraft;

(iii) nonintrusive inspection equipment; and

(iv) human rights training for law enforcement units;

(B) enhancement of the Government of Mexico’s financial intelligence unit;

(C) safety-related equipment for law enforcement officers and prosecutors, including protective vests and helmet sets;

(D) reduction of drug demand in Mexico, including activities such as—

(i) assistance to the National Council Against Addictions (CONADIC) to establish an Internet web-based support network;

(ii) establishment of a national data center to support the CONADIC; and

(iii) training of CONADIC and other agency staff in best practices and outreach and treatment programs, and design of a methodology to implement best practices in conjunction with the National Network for Technological Transfers in Addiction.

(b) **PROVISION OF HELICOPTERS.**—Funds made available to carry out this subtitle to provide helicopters to the Government of Mexico, shall, to the extent possible, be used to procure or provide helicopters that are of a similar manufacture to those helicopters already in the possession of the Government of Mexico in order to facilitate integration of those assets into Mexico's existing air fleet.

(c) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that the United States shall ensure, to the extent possible, that assistance under this subtitle is made available and cross-utilized by the armed forces of Mexico and relevant law enforcement agencies of the Government of Mexico, including the Mexican Office of the Attorney General.

#### **SEC. 114. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE.**

(a) **LIMITATION.**—No assistance may be provided under this subtitle to any unit of the armed forces of Mexico or any unit of the law enforcement agencies of Mexico if the Secretary of State determines that, consistent with section 620J of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2378d), there is credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights.

(b) **EXCEPTION.**—The limitation in subsection (a) shall not apply if the Secretary of State determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of Mexico is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the unit of the armed forces or law enforcement agencies, as the case may be, to justice.

#### **SEC. 115. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—To carry out this subtitle, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President \$350,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$390,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

(b) **LIMITATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a)—

(A) not more than \$205,000,000 may be provided as assistance for the armed forces of Mexico for 2008;

(B) not more than \$120,000,000 may be provided as assistance for the armed forces of Mexico for 2009; and

(C) not more than \$9,000,000 may be provided as assistance for the armed forces of Mexico for 2010.

(2) **ADDITIONAL LIMITATION.**—None of the funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) for fiscal year 2009 may be provided as assistance for the Mexican Secretariat of Public Security until the President determines that the Mexican National Registry of Police Personnel (Registro Nacional de Personal Policial) is operational at the federal, state, and local levels.

(c) **AVAILABILITY.**—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) are—

(1) authorized to remain available until expended; and

(2) in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, including funds available under chapter 8 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291 et seq.).

### **Subtitle B—Assistance to Enhance the Rule of Law and Strengthen Civilian Institutions**

#### **SEC. 121. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

It is the sense of Congress that, as a critical part of a joint, comprehensive security, counternarcotics, and organized crime initiative, the United States should support—

(1) programs of the United States Agency for International Development and other United States agencies focused on strengthening civilian institutions and rule of law programs in Mexico at the federal, state, and local levels; and

(2) anti-corruption, transparency, and human rights programs to ensure due process and expand a culture of lawfulness in Mexico.

#### **SEC. 122. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.**

The President is authorized to provide assistance for Mexico to support the activities described in section 123.

#### **SEC. 123. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.**

Activities that may be supported by assistance under section 122 include the following:

(1) **INSTITUTION BUILDING AND RULE OF LAW.**—To assist Mexico's efforts to expand the rule of law and build the capacity, transparency, and trust in government institutions, including assistance such as—

(A) rule of law and systemic improvements in judicial and criminal justice sector institutions, including—

(i) courts management and prosecutorial capacity building;

(ii) prison reform activities, including those relating to anti-gang and anti-organized crime efforts;

(iii) anti-money laundering programs;

(iv) victim and witness protection and restitution; and

(v) promotion of transparent oral trials via training for the judicial sector;

(B) police professionalization, including—

(i) training regarding use of force;

(ii) human rights education and training;

(iii) training regarding evidence preservation and chain of custody; and

(iv) enhanced capacity to vet candidates;

(C) support for the Mexican Office of the Attorney General, including—

(i) judicial processes improvement and coordination;

(ii) enhancement of forensics capabilities;

(iii) data collection and analyses;

(iv) case tracking and management;

(v) financial intelligence functions; and

(vi) maintenance of data systems.

(2) **ANTI-CORRUPTION, TRANSPARENCY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS.**—To assist law enforcement and court institutions in Mexico to develop mechanisms to ensure due process and proper oversight and to respond to citizen complaints, including assistance such as—

(A) enhancement of polygraph capability in the Mexican Police agency (SSP);

(B) support for greater transparency and accountability in the Mexican legal system, including—

(i) establishment of a center in the Mexican Office of the Attorney General for receipt of citizen complaints;

(ii) establishment of clerk of the court system to track cases and pretrial detentions;

(iii) reorganization of human and financial resources systems; and

(iv) equipping and training of criminal investigators; and

(C) promotion of human rights, including—

(i) support for human rights organizations, bar associations, and law schools; and

(ii) training for police, prosecutors, and corrections officers.

(3) **PREVENTION.**—To assist in the prevention of individuals from participating in illicit narcotics-related violent activities, such as—

(A) establishment of programs that address domestic violence and increase school attendance rates; and

(B) expansion of intervention programs, including after-school programs and programs for at-risk and criminal involved youth.

(4) **DEVELOPMENT.**—To assist in the development of areas where lack of jobs breeds illicit narcotics-related violence, including—

(A) expansion of alternative livelihood programs, including job creation programs and rural development programs and the provision of microenterprise development assistance under title VI of chapter 2 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2211 et seq.); and

(B) establishment of gang reeducation and training programs.

#### **SEC. 124. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—To carry out this subtitle, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President \$120,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and \$110,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

(b) **AVAILABILITY.**—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) are—

(1) authorized to remain available until expended; and

(2) in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, including funds available under chapter 8 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

### **TITLE II—ASSISTANCE FOR COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA**

#### **SEC. 201. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds the following:

(1) A May 2007 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) argues that countries of Central America are particularly vulnerable to violent crimes fueled by illicit narcotics trafficking and corruption because such countries are geographically located between the world's largest drug producing and drug consuming countries.

(2) According to Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Thomas Shannon, "[T]he nations of Central America have committed to collective action to address these common security concerns. Through the Central American Integration System (SICA), the governments have expressed the political resolve to join forces to strengthen regional security; however they lack sufficient tools and capacity to execute such will."

(3) Crime and violence in Central America has increased in recent years.

(4) In 2005, the estimated murder rate per 100,000 people was roughly 56 in El Salvador, 41 in Honduras, and 38 in Guatemala.

(5) Youth gang violence has been one of the major factors contributing to increased violence in Central America, with the United States Southern Command estimating that there are 70,000 gang members in Central America.

(6) Many Central American youth gangs are transnational and negatively impact both Central America and the United States.

(7) Youth gang violence cannot be curbed only through enforcement, but must also include a substantial investment in prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

(8) Deportees sent from the United States back to Central America, while not a central cause of crime and violence, can contribute to crime and violence in Central America.

(9) Guatemala has experienced a surge in murders of women in recent years, many of which have been committed by illicit narcotics traffickers and other organized criminals.

(10) Violence between partners, particularly violence by men against their wives or girlfriends, is widespread in Central America, and an international violence against

women survey comparing selected countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia found that 60 percent of women in Costa Rica—often considered the least violent country in Central America—reported having experienced domestic violence during their lives.

(11) Weak justice systems in the countries of Central America have led to a high level of impunity in Central America.

(12) The United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was recently created to begin to address impunity related to illegally armed groups in Guatemala.

(13) The United States and the Central American Integration System (SICA) signed an agreement in July 2007 to improve intelligence sharing and policing and to institutionalize dialogue on regional security.

#### SEC. 202. DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.

Congress makes the following declarations:

(1) A long-term United States strategy to curb illicit narcotics trafficking must include Central America, which is the corridor for 90 percent of the cocaine that transits from South America to the United States.

(2) It is in the interest of the United States to support a long-term commitment to assisting the countries of Central America to improve security by combating illicit narcotics trafficking, investing in prevention programs, increasing intelligence sharing, improving regional security coordination, improving border and customs capabilities, professionalizing police, justice, and other government officials, and funding programs to reintegrate deportees from the United States.

(3) The countries of Central America are committed to combating illicit narcotics trafficking and its related violence and crime, including gang violence, and the United States must seize the opportunity to work in partnership with Central America.

#### Subtitle A—Law Enforcement and Security Assistance

#### SEC. 211. PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE.

The purposes of assistance authorized by this subtitle are to—

(1) enhance the ability of governments of countries of Central America to control illicit narcotics production, trafficking, illicit drug trafficking organizations, and organized crime;

(2) help build the capacity of law enforcement agencies of the countries of Central America to control illicit narcotics production, trafficking, illicit drug trafficking organizations, and organized crime;

(3) strengthen the bilateral ties of the United States with the countries of Central America by offering concrete assistance in this area of great mutual concern;

(4) strengthen respect for internationally recognized human rights and the rule of law in efforts to stabilize the security environment relating to illicit narcotics production and trafficking and organized crime; and

(5) support the judicial branch of governments of the countries of Central America, as well as to support anti-corruption efforts in such countries.

#### SEC. 212. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

To carry out the purposes of section 211, the President is authorized to provide assistance for the countries of Central America to support the activities described in section 213.

#### SEC. 213. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.

Activities that may be supported by assistance under section 212 include the following:

(1) COUNTERNARCOTICS, COUNTERTRAFFICKING, AND RELATED SECURITY.—

(A) ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES.—To assist in the following:

(i) Investigation and collection of intelligence against illicit narcotics trafficking.

(ii) Combating illegal trafficking in arms.

(iii) Prevention of bulk currency smuggling.

(iv) Collection of information on crime and establishment of a regional database.

(B) ASSISTANCE.—Activities under subparagraph (A) may include—

(i) automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS);

(ii) vetting sensitive investigative units to collaborate on counternarcotics at the federal, state, and local levels;

(iii) technical assistance to develop strong and effective financial crimes investigation units;

(iv) maritime security support, including refurbishing and procuring patrol boats;

(v) firearms interdiction training; and

(vi) illicit narcotics demand reduction programs.

(2) PUBLIC SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT.—To assist in building the capacity of the police in countries of Central America, supporting efforts to combat transnational gangs, investing in gang prevention and rehabilitation programs, and programs for the reintegration of deportees, including assistance such as—

(A) funding to continue the United States-Central American Integration System (SICA) Dialogue;

(B) youth gang prevention activities, including targeted education for at-risk youth, vocational training and funding of community centers in areas with high youth gang violence rates and other risk factors;

(C) programs to reintegrate deportees from the United States back into the societies of their home countries to avoid further criminal activity;

(D) transnational anti-gang initiatives;

(E) police professionalization, including—

(i) training regarding use of force;

(ii) human rights education and training;

(iii) training regarding evidence preservation and chain of custody; and

(iv) enhanced capacity to vet candidates;

(F) utilization of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in El Salvador consistent with traditional respect for human rights and professional police practices;

(G) police training programs of the Organization of American States (OAS);

(H) police equipment, including communications equipment; and

(I) anti-domestic violence education programs and women's shelters.

#### SEC. 214. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE.

(a) LIMITATION.—No assistance may be provided under this subtitle to any unit of the armed forces of a country of Central America or any unit of the law enforcement agencies of a country of Central America if the Secretary of State determines that, consistent with section 620J of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2378d), there is credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights.

(b) EXCEPTION.—The limitation in subsection (a) shall not apply if the Secretary of State determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that the government of the relevant country of Central America is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the unit of the armed forces or law enforcement agencies, as the case may be, to justice.

#### SEC. 215. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this subtitle, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) are—

(1) authorized to remain available until expended; and

(2) in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, including funds under chapters 2 and 8 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2166 and 2291 et seq.).

(c) LIMITATION.—Of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) for any fiscal year, at least \$15,000,000 should be made available to carry out section 213(2)(B).

#### Subtitle B—Assistance to Enhance the Rule of Law and Strengthen Civilian Institutions

#### SEC. 221. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

The President is authorized to provide assistance for the countries of Central America to support the activities described in section 222.

#### SEC. 222. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.

Activities that may be supported by assistance under section 221 include assistance in building the capacity, transparency, and trust in the justice system of the countries of Central America and reducing high impunity rates in the countries of Central America, including assistance such as—

(1) improved police academies and entry level training on crime investigations;

(2) courts management and prosecutor capacity building;

(3) witness and victim protection programs, including in Guatemala in coordination with the United Nations International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG);

(4) programs to enhance transparency in the procedures to designate and remove personnel in the recipient country's judicial system;

(5) prosecutor and judge protection programs, including in Guatemala and in coordination with the CICIG;

(6) short-term assignment of United States Government personnel to the CICIG to provide technical assistance for criminal investigations, specifically but not limited to investigations involving money laundering so long as this assignment does not negatively impact United States domestic operations;

(7) regional juvenile justice reform;

(8) prison management;

(9) programs to rehabilitate gang members released from prison, including job training; and

(10) community policing, including human rights and use of force training for community policing projects.

#### SEC. 223. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this title, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and \$95,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) are—

(1) authorized to remain available until expended; and

(2) in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, including funds available under chapters 2 and 8 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2166 and 2291 et seq.).

#### TITLE III—ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

#### SEC. 301. CONDITIONS ON PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President may not provide assistance under title I or II to a foreign country for a fiscal year until the end of a 15-day period beginning on the date on which the President transmits to the appropriate congressional committees a determination that the requirements described in

subsection (b) have been met with respect to the government of such foreign country for such fiscal year.

(b) **REQUIRED DETERMINATION.**—The requirements referred to in subsection (a) are the following:

(1) The provision of assistance will not adversely affect the human rights situation in the foreign country.

(2) Vetting procedures are in place to ensure that members and units of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of the foreign country that may receive assistance under title I or II have not been involved in human rights violations.

(3) The civilian authority in the foreign country is investigating and prosecuting any member of any government agency or entity receiving assistance under title I or II who has been credibly alleged to have committed human rights violations on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(4) Equipment and material provided as support is being used only by officials and employees of the government of the foreign country who have been approved by such government to perform counternarcotics activities, including on the basis of the background investigations by such government.

(5) The government of the foreign country has cooperated with the Secretary of State to ensure that—

(A) the equipment and material provided as support will be used only by the officials and employees referred to in paragraph (4);

(B) none of the equipment or material will be transferred (by sale, gift, or otherwise) to any person or entity not authorized by the United States to receive the equipment or material; and

(C) the equipment and material will, to the extent possible, be used for the purposes intended by the United States Government and will be utilized by those agencies for which such assistance is intended.

(6) The government of the foreign country has implemented, in consultation with the Secretary of State, a system that will provide an accounting and inventory of the equipment and material provided as support.

(7) The government of the foreign country will, along with United States personnel, conduct periodic observation and review of the use of the equipment and material provided as support under terms and conditions similar to the terms and conditions imposed with respect to such observation and review under section 505(a)(3) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2314(a)(3)).

(8) To the extent the foreign country has received equipment in the past, it has utilized the equipment properly and in a manner that warrants additional provision of equipment or assistance.

#### **SEC. 302. LIMITATIONS ON PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.**

(a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) activities undertaken under titles I and II of this Act should be performed wherever possible by official employees, personnel, or officers of the federal, state, or local government of the recipient foreign country; and

(2) the United States should limit, to the maximum extent possible, the number of United States civilians and foreign nationals retained as contractors in a recipient country.

(b) **LIMITATIONS.**—Except as provided in subsection (c)—

(1) none of the funds made available to carry out title I may be available for the employment of any United States individual civilian retained as a contractor in Mexico or any foreign national retained as a contractor if that employment would cause the total number of individual civilian contractors employed in Mexico in support of the Merida

Initiative who are funded by United States funds to exceed 50;

(2) none of the funds made available to carry out title II may be available for the employment of any United States individual civilian retained as a contractor in a country of Central America or any foreign national retained as a contractor if that employment would cause the total number of individual civilian contractors employed in all countries of Central America in support of the Merida Initiative who are funded by United States funds to exceed 100; and

(3) none of the funds made available under this Act shall be made available for budget support or cash payments.

(c) **EXCEPTION.**—The limitations contained in subsection (b) shall not apply if the President determines that it is in the national interest of the United States that such limitations shall not apply and transmits to the appropriate congressional committees a notification thereof.

#### **SEC. 303. LIMITATION ON MONITORING.**

Beginning on October 1, 2009, no surveillance-related equipment may be transferred under this Act to any entity of Mexico or a country of Central America unless the President determines that the recipient country has cooperated with the United States to ensure that such equipment will be used principally for the purposes for which it is provided.

#### **SEC. 304. EXEMPTION FROM PROHIBITION ON ASSISTANCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT FORCES.**

Notwithstanding section 660 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2420; relating to the prohibition on assistance to foreign law enforcement forces), the President may provide assistance under title I or II if, at least 15 days before providing the assistance, the President notifies the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, in accordance with the procedures applicable to reprogramming notifications pursuant to section 634A of the Foreign Assistance Act (22 U.S.C. 2394–1), that (1) it is in the national interest to provide such assistance, and (2) the recipient country is making significant progress to eliminating any human rights violations.

#### **SEC. 305. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AUTHORITY.**

(a) **ASSISTANCE UNDER TITLE I.**—The authority to provide assistance under title I is in addition to any other authority to provide assistance for Mexico.

(b) **ASSISTANCE UNDER TITLE II.**—The authority to provide assistance under title I is in addition to any other authority to provide assistance for the countries of Central America.

#### **SEC. 306. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

Nothing in title I or II shall be construed to alter, modify, or otherwise affect the provisions of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.) unless otherwise specified in this Act.

### **TITLE IV—SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

#### **SEC. 401. REPORT ON REDUCTION OF DRUG DEMAND IN THE UNITED STATES.**

(a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) supply-side drug reduction strategies when executed alone are not an effective way to fight the phenomenon of illegal narcotics;

(2) the Government of Mexico has identified reduction of United States drug demand as among the most important contributions the United States can make to a joint strategy to combat illicit narcotics trafficking; and

(3) the United States pledged in the United States-Mexico October 2007 Joint Statement

on the Merida Initiative, to “intensify its efforts to address all aspects of drug trafficking (including demand related portions)” here in the United States.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the measures taken to intensify United States efforts to address United States demand-related aspects of the drug-trafficking phenomenon in accordance with the Joint Statement on the Merida Initiative announced by the United States and Mexico on October 22, 2007.

#### **SEC. 402. REDUCTION OF SOUTHBOUND FLOW OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS.**

(a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) much of the increased violence in Mexico is perpetrated using firearms and ammunition smuggled illegally from the United States into Mexico;

(2) the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has told Congress of an “iron river of guns” with thousands of weapons per week illegally crossing into Mexico from the United States;

(3) more than 90 percent of the guns confiscated yearly in Mexico originate in the United States and approximately 40 percent of the total trafficked weapons are linked to drug trafficking organizations;

(4) along the 2,000 mile border from Brownsville, Texas, to San Diego, California, there are 6,700 licensed gun sellers, but only 100 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) special agents to investigate allegations of weapons trafficking and only 35 inspectors to ensure compliance with United States laws;

(5) on January 16, 2008, ATF announced that it will add 25 special agents and 15 inspectors to their Project Gunrunner along the Southwest Border. And, the ATF budget request for fiscal year 2009 includes funding for another 12 inspectors; and

(6) an effective strategy to combat these illegal arms flows is a critical part of a United States contribution to a jointly executed anti-narcotics strategy with Mexico.

(b) **PROJECT GUNRUNNER INITIATIVE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Attorney General shall, to the extent amounts are made available to carry out this subsection pursuant to paragraph (4), use such amounts for the Project Gunrunner initiative (hereafter in this subsection referred to as the “initiative”) of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to expand the resources provided to identify, investigate, and prosecute individuals involved in the trafficking of firearms across the United States-Mexico border.

(2) **ACTIVITIES.**—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall—

(A) assign additional agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to the area of the United States adjacent to the United States-Mexico border to support the expansion of the initiative;

(B) establish not fewer than 1 initiative team in each State along the United States-Mexico border; and

(C) coordinate with the heads of other relevant federal law enforcement agencies and State and local law enforcement agencies to address firearms trafficking in a comprehensive manner.

(3) **ADDITIONAL STAFF.**—The Attorney General may hire additional persons to be Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives agents for, and may use such other resources as may be necessary to adequately support, the initiative.

(4) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—To carry out this subsection, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General \$15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2010.

(c) **ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In carrying out this subsection, the Attorney General, in cooperation with the Secretary of State, is authorized and encouraged, as appropriate, to—

(A) assign agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to the United States mission in Mexico, specifically in areas adjacent to the United States-Mexico border, to work with Mexican law enforcement agencies in conducting investigations relating to firearms trafficking and other criminal enterprises;

(B) provide the equipment and technological resources necessary to support investigations and to trace firearms recovered in Mexico; and

(C) support the training of vetted Mexican law enforcement officers in serial number restoration techniques and canine explosive detection.

(2) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—To carry out this subsection, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General \$9,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2010.

**SEC. 403. REDUCTION OF SOUTHBOUND FLOW OF ILLEGAL PRECURSOR CHEMICALS AND BULK-CASH TRANSFERS.**

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) a significant quantity of precursor chemicals used in the production of illegal narcotics flows south from the United States to Mexico;

(2) the Government of Mexico has identified reduction of southbound flows from the United States of precursor chemicals and bulk-cash transfers as a critical component of its anti-narcotics strategy; and

(3) an effective strategy to combat these illegal flows is a critical part of a United States contribution to a jointly executed anti-narcotics strategy with Mexico.

**SEC. 404. REPORT.**

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the measures taken to combat the southbound flow of illegal precursor chemicals and bulk cash transfers into Mexico.

**TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**SEC. 501. COORDINATOR OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE MERIDA INITIATIVE.**

(a) **DECLARATION OF POLICY.**—Congress declares that the Merida Initiative is a Department of State-led initiative which combines programs of numerous United States Government departments and agencies and therefore requires a single individual to coordinate and track all Merida-related efforts government-wide to help avoid duplication and facilitate accountability to Congress.

(b) **DESIGNATION OF HIGH-LEVEL COORDINATOR.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The President shall designate, within the Department of State, a Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Implement the Merida Initiative (hereafter in this section referred to as the “Coordinator”) who shall be responsible for—

(A) designing an overall strategy to advance the purposes of this Act;

(B) ensuring program and policy coordination among agencies of the United States Government in carrying out the policies in Mexico and Central America set forth in this Act;

(C) ensuring that efforts of the United States Government under this Act in Mexico

and Central America are in full consonance with the efforts of the Government of Mexico and the governments of Central America in implementing the Merida Initiative;

(D) tracking all United States Government assistance which fulfills the goals of the Merida Initiative or is closely related to the goals of the Merida Initiative, including information required under section 620J of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2378d) with respect to Mexico and the countries of Central America;

(E) coordinating among agencies of the United States Government on all United States assistance to Mexico and the countries of Central America, including assistance from other relevant government agencies, which fulfills the goals of the Merida Initiative to avoid duplication or conflict among programs; and

(F) consulting with the Attorney General with respect to the activities of Federal, State, and local law enforcement authorities in the United States related to the goals of the Merida Initiative, particularly along the United States-Mexico border.

(2) **RANK AND STATUS OF THE COORDINATOR.**—The Coordinator shall have the rank and status of ambassador.

**SEC. 502. METRICS AND OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS.**

(a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) to successfully support building the capacity of recipient countries' civilian security institutions, enhance the rule of law in recipient countries, and ensure the protection of human rights, the President should establish metrics and oversight mechanisms to track the effectiveness of activities undertaken pursuant to this Act;

(2) long-term solutions to Mexico and Central America's security problems depend on strengthening and holding accountable civilian institutions;

(3) it is difficult to assess the impact of United States assistance towards these goals absent specific oversight and monitoring mechanisms; and

(4) the President, in developing metrics, should consult with Congress as well as the Government of Mexico and the Central American Integration System (SICA).

(b) **REQUIREMENT.**—The President shall develop metrics to identify, track, and manage the progress of activities authorized pursuant to this Act and use these metrics to determine the allocation of resources for such activities.

(c) **INITIAL REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that specifies metrics of achievement for each activity to be undertaken under this Act.

(2) **CONTENTS OF REPORT.**—The report shall be divided into two sections, the first addressing those activities undertaken pursuant to subtitle A of title I and subtitle A of title II, and the second addressing those activities undertaken pursuant to subtitle B of title I and subtitle B of title II. Metrics may include the following:

(A) Indicators on long-term effectiveness of the equipment and training provided to Mexican and Central American security institutions.

(B) Statistics of counter narcotics-related arrests.

(C) Number of interdictions of drug shipments.

(D) Specific progress on police reform.

(E) Counternarcotics-related arrests.

(F) Quantification of reduction of supply of illicit narcotics into the United States.

(G) Cross-utilization, if any, of equipment among the armed forces and law enforcement entities.

(H) Increased school attendance rates.

(I) Attendance in primary prevention programs

(J) The level of cooperation among United States, Mexican, and Central American law enforcement agencies.

**SEC. 503. REPORT.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report concerning the programs and activities carried out under this Act during the preceding fiscal year. The first report shall be transmitted not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and subsequent reports shall be transmitted not later than October 31 of each year thereafter.

(b) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) **METRICS.**—A general description of the progress in stabilizing the security situation in each recipient country as well as combating trafficking and building its capacity based on the metrics developed under section 502.

(2) **COORDINATION.**—Efforts of the United States Government to coordinate its activities pursuant to section 501, including—

(A) a description of all counternarcotics and organized crime assistance provided to recipient countries in the previous fiscal year;

(B) an assessment of how such assistance was coordinated; and

(C) recommendations for improving coordination.

(3) **TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT.**—A description of the transfer of equipment, including—

(A) a description of the progress of each recipient country toward the transfer of equipment, if any, from its armed forces to law enforcement agencies;

(B) a list of organizations that have used the air assets provided to the government of each recipient country, and, to the extent possible, a detailed description of those agencies that have utilized the air assets, including a breakdown of the percentage of use by each agency; and

(C) a description of training of law enforcement agencies to operate equipment, including air assets.

(4) **HUMAN RIGHTS.**—Consistent with sections 116(d) and 502B(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151n(d) and 2304(b)) and section 504 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2464), an assessment of the human rights impact of the equipment and training provided under this Act, including—

(A) a list of accusations of serious human rights abuses committed by the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of recipient countries from the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) a description of efforts by the government of recipient countries to investigate and prosecute allegations of abuses of human rights committed by any agency of the recipient countries.

(5) **EFFECTIVENESS OF EQUIPMENT.**—An assessment on the long-term effectiveness of the equipment and maintenance packages and training provided to each recipient country's security institutions.

(6) **MEXICO PUBLIC SECURITY STRATEGY.**—A description of Mexico's development of a public security strategy, including—

(A) an update on the effectiveness of the Mexican federal Registry of Police Personnel to vet police recruiting at the National, state, and municipal levels to prevent rehiring from one force to the next after dismissal for corruption and other reasons; and



(B) an assessment of how the Merida Initiative complements and supports the Mexican Government's own public security strategy.

(7) FLOW OF ILLEGAL ARMS.—A description of efforts to reduce the southbound flow of illegal arms.

(8) USE OF CONTRACTORS.—A detailed description of contracts awarded to private companies to carry out provisions of this Act, including—

(A) a description of the number of United States and foreign national civilian contractors awarded contracts;

(B) a list of the total dollar value of the contracts; and

(C) the purposes of the contracts.

(9) CENTRAL AMERICAN REGIONAL SECURITY PLAN.—A description of implementation by the countries of Central America of the Central American Regional Security Plan, including an assessment of how the Merida Initiative complements and supports the Central American Regional Security Plan.

(10) PHASE OUT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—A description of the progress of phasing out law enforcement activities of the armed forces of each recipient country.

(11) DISPLACEMENT AND DIVERSION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING PATTERNS.—A description of any displacement effect and diversion of drug trafficking patterns from Mexico and the countries of Central America to other routes, including through potentially vulnerable Caribbean countries.

(12) IMPACT ON BORDER VIOLENCE AND SECURITY.—A description of the impact that activities authorized under this Act have had on violence against United States and Mexican border personnel and the extent to which these activities have increased the protection and security of the United States-Mexico border.

#### SEC. 504. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States Government requires an effective public diplomacy strategy to explain the purposes of the Merida Initiative; and

(2) to the extent practicable, the Secretary of State, in coordination with other relevant heads of agencies, shall design and implement a public diplomacy campaign regionally regarding the Merida Initiative.

#### SEC. 505. SUNSET.

The authority of this Act shall expire after September 30, 2010.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Madam 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 bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the drug crisis facing the United States remains a top national security threat. The GAO states that 90 percent of illegal drugs entering

our country transit the Central American-Mexican corridor.

Drug gangs that operate in the United States, Mexico, and Central America are dangerously undermining the security environment for our neighbors to the south, and the spillover effects on our own soil are undeniable.

President Calderon of Mexico made a brave decision early in his presidency to fight illegal narcotics in a way that no Mexican government had done before, and he and his countrymen have paid a high price for it. Drug cartels have been blamed for 6,000 deaths in two-and-a-half years in Mexico alone, 4,000 of them in the year-and-a-half since Mr. Calderon assumed the presidency.

A significant percentage of these deaths are law enforcement personnel, outgunned and outspent from the proceeds of illegal drugs. There seems to be no limit to the brazenness of the drug gangs. A month ago, the chief of Mexico's Federal police was shot dead in his own home.

It is high time for the United States to do more than applaud President Calderon's courage. We must work together to tackle this difficult problem.

President Bush and President Calderon met in the Mexican city of Merida last year to craft a new and innovative proposal to confront this scourge. That proposal is largely reflected in the legislation we have before us today.

The central tenet of this bill is that, while the violence must stop and security must be restored, the ultimate solution to this problem lies in respect for the rule of law and the strength of institutions charged with upholding it.

□ 1145

H.R. 6028 represents the U.S. implementation of a new partnership with Mexico and Central American countries to face the immediate security threat of drug gangs, help these neighbors build the capacity of their law enforcement agencies, and enhance the rule of law in the region.

As many of my colleagues know, the supplemental appropriations bill includes funding for year one of the Merida Initiative, but the legislation before us today authorizes the full 3 years of this plan in an exhaustive and complete manner necessary to undertake this critical partnership with our southern neighbors.

For example, this legislation authorizes \$1.6 billion over 3 years in the areas of counter-narcotics, the fight against organized crime, law enforcement modernization, institution building, and rule of law support.

Mexico has requested that the U.S. provide certain high-tech equipment. And in this bill we authorize transport helicopters with night operating capabilities, aerial and radar surveillance equipment, land and maritime interdiction equipment, and secure communication networks.

This legislation supports a variety of programs designed to enhance the transparency and capacity of civilian institutions at the Federal, State and local level. They include assistance in courts management, prison reform, money laundering capabilities, witness protection, and police professionalization. The latter emphasizes human rights and use of force training, as well as forensics and polygraph capabilities.

In the realm of prevention, the bill supports programs to increase school attendance and expansion of intervention programs. It also seeks to promote development in areas where joblessness feeds the narcotics problem, including alternative livelihood and rural development efforts.

It concentrates considerable funding in the fragile Central America region, as well as in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, in programs tailored to that region's specific needs.

The legislation contains significant human rights safeguards as well as end-use monitoring provisions for equipment and training. It provides no cash transfers.

It calls on the President to devise standards up front that will be used to measure the success of the initiative, and to regularly report to Congress on progress made toward meeting these standards.

Significantly, because this was a specific request from our Mexican neighbors, the legislation bolsters by \$73.5 million America's efforts to stem the illegal flow of arms going south by significantly expanding ATF's Project Gun Runner.

Finally, the bill establishes a coordinator for the initiative to provide accountability and harmonize its wide-ranging programs.

Perhaps most importantly the legislation recognizes that the spread of illicit drugs through Mexico and Central America and into the United States, as well as the violence that accompanies it, cannot be halted without a comprehensive interdiction and security strategy planned and executed jointly with our southern neighbors. Madam Speaker, with this authorization of the Merida Initiative we demonstrate our Nation's commitment to work closely with our friends and neighbors to the south in a meaningful and long-term fashion to battle illegal narcotics.

I strongly urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROSELEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise as a proud cosponsor of the Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008.

Based on co-responsibility and cooperation, the Merida Initiative creates an invaluable partnership between the United States, Mexico, the rest of

Central America, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic to work together to fight illicit drugs and organized crime. It is a historic opportunity, an essential collaboration between all of our countries to present a united front against the drug cartels and the gangs who callously threaten the safety and future of our communities every day.

The growing operational and financial capabilities of these groups pose a clear and present threat to the lives and well-being of our citizens. By supporting this authorization, we are supporting the goals of the Merida Initiative to confront these dangers. Furthermore, we are supporting the goals of our friends in Mexico, Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic to combat these dangers as well.

The Merida Initiative, as considered under this authorization, is a comprehensive program focused on strengthening democratic institutions, on bolstering law enforcement capabilities, on supporting local communities, and on promoting human rights at all levels of the Initiative's implementation.

For years, drug traffickers and organized crime have used a regional strategy to carry out their illicit activities. Now, under the Merida Initiative, we have a chance for our governments to join forces and match this transnational approach. In Mexico, President Calderon has deployed nearly 30,000 soldiers and federal police to the country's most dangerous drug trafficking hotspots.

In Guatemala, the government has announced plans to send hundreds of troops, elite presidential guards and antidrug police to its northern border to stem the growing violence.

In the United States, our law enforcement agents have been met with increasing hostile actions while working to preserve the security of our borders.

The Merida Initiative enables us to combine all of these efforts to capitalize on all of our strength and confront narcotraffickers and organized crime with the same determination that they so vigorously employ to wreak havoc on our communities.

I was pleased to see that both the House and Senate versions of the supplemental included funding to support the Merida Initiative. I am hopeful that the conferees will look at this bill for direction when determining the final face of the Merida Initiative. I believe that it offers an effective guide for ensuring U.S. interest, while respecting our partners' sovereignty.

For too long, narcotraffickers and organized crime have run free, plaguing the prosperity of our region. By supporting the Merida Initiative, we are making the way for democracy and for development to take hold, and addressing the precursor conditions that help breed instability in the region, and that help create fertile territory even for Islamic extremist recruitment.

Madam Speaker, again I rise in full support of this initiative, and I look

forwarding to helping to enhance our Nation's security by fighting and overcoming these daily threats.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I greatly appreciate the gentlelady's strong comments on this bill.

I yield 4 minutes to the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6028. And I would like to commend Chairman BERMAN for his leadership on this important legislation that authorizes full funding for the Merida Initiative.

In my subcommittee, as Chair, we held three hearings on the Merida Initiative, so we've covered it really quite extensively. And I'm more convinced than ever that this is such an important bill and such an important proposal.

Recent events in Mexico make the Merida Initiative more crucial than ever. Just last month, the chief of the Mexican federal police was brutally murdered at his home. Shortly thereafter, the deputy police chief of Ciudad Juarez, a city smack on the border with the United States, was shot dead.

The narcoviolence in Mexico is not only undermining the safety and security of our friends to the south, but it is fueling the drug trade and violence here in the United States.

As Western Hemisphere Subcommittee chairman, I worked with Chairman BERMAN in developing this legislation and was pleased to contribute two key parts. First, the Central American piece of this legislation authorizes a much greater amount of assistance for the subregion than the Bush administration proposed. The initial \$50 million for Central America was really a drop in the bucket when you look at the whole thing and the needs that are necessary, especially considering that 90 percent of the cocaine shipped from the Andes to the U.S. flows right through Central America.

H.R. 6028 sets aside at least \$15 million per year for youth gang prevention programs. That was something that I care very much about as well. With approximately 70,000 gang members in Central America, and the transnational connections linking gang members there to the United States, this is a vast improvement over the administration's proposal. I hope we have learned by now that failing to adequately invest in prevention programs will only hurt us in the future.

I was also pleased to work with the chairman on a provision in H.R. 6028 which establishes a Merida coordinator at the State Department. My staff and I have too often been frustrated by the inability to obtain information on Merida activities or to figure out who was responsible for what, and what would fall under Merida. The Merida coordinator will keep track of all U.S.

government assistance, which fulfills the goals of the Merida Initiative.

Madam Speaker, the Merida Initiative is moving on two legislative tracks; this authorization bill, and the supplemental appropriations bill. I understand that the Mexican Government has expressed concerns with certain language in the Senate supplemental proposal. It is my hope that the final product will include important human rights provisions while respecting Mexican sovereignty and the spirit of partnership in which the Merida Initiative was designed. Our relationship with our neighbors to the south is very important, and we need to work with them in a collaborative way and in a partnership.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for your leadership on this important legislation and your commitment to the governments and people of Central America and Mexico.

I urge my colleagues to support this crucial legislation. And I want to again say that it's important not only to have funds in there and language in there for Mexico, but for Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic as well.

It's also important that we look at the whole situation of guns. Guns that are manufactured in the United States are smuggled over the border, and 90 percent of the guns that are collected come from the United States. And they fuel narcotrafficking, they fuel violence, they fuel the drug trade, and we need to do something about that. So I am pleased that my provision, the Southwest Border Violence Reduction Act, was incorporated into this language to look at this problem, to deal with this problem, and understanding that what we do in the United States goes hand in hand with what happens south of our border as well.

So again, Mr. Chairman, I thank you. I thank the ranking member, with whom I've collaborated on so many things through the years.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT). He is an esteemed member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be brief. Let me just start by saying that I appreciate both the chairman's and the ranking member's work on this critical issue. Drugs and cartels and the violence and terror that they bring not only undermine public safety but threaten our security as a Nation. We need to work cooperatively with those nations that are on the front lines of this drug war that we've been involved in for such a long time.

However, I want to mention one fact that I think is very important. Last summer, news reports highlighted the unwillingness of the Mexican Government to work with the U.S. to resolve a mile and a half boundary dispute near Columbus, New Mexico. Because



of a mapping error, the fence that we're building was constructed on Mexican land. Although the U.S. government promptly notified the Mexican Government of the error, the Mexican Government demands that the mistake be corrected at a cost of \$3 million to the United States; this, despite the fact that the previously existing boundary had never been in dispute prior to notification by the U.S., and the fact that the U.S. has provided more than \$270 million in aid to Mexico between 2004 and 2007, including more than \$140 million for counter-narcotics and law enforcement.

Today, we are authorizing funding for an additional \$1.6 billion over 3 years. Last July, I introduced House Resolution 545, which states that it is the sense of this Congress that if Mexico doesn't work together to resolve this boundary dispute, U.S. assistance to Mexico should be reduced in a corresponding amount; in other words, \$3 million. If it is costing the taxpayers of this country \$3 million to do this, which was previously an undisputed border area, it seems like it ought to come out of their money and not ours, since we were the ones that brought it to their attention to begin with.

□ 1200

Now, some people up here in Washington may think that \$3 million isn't a lot of money. Well I can tell you it is a lot of money to the folks back in my district and districts all over this country, particularly when you figure that we are spending approximately \$4 a gallon for gas nowadays. So it is a lot of money and ought to be taken seriously.

If the U.S. and Mexico are truly partners, and we claim to be, and they claim to be, we should be working together in all areas, including the construction of this fence. We ought to be working cooperatively in this matter. And it plays a key role in our international interdiction efforts, not to mention the border security.

So this \$3 million, if we are going to have to go back and rebuild this because of this good faith error, I believe that ought to be taken out of the U.S. aid which is going in their direction, and not from the U.S. taxpayer.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute of time if I may.

The gentleman from Ohio raises an issue of controversy between the United States and Mexico. What I urge the Members of this body to do is to focus on the purpose of this initiative. This is an initiative that is in America's deep national interest. The whole issue of illicit narcotics trade, the role of the corridor between Central America and Mexico in contributing and supplying these illicit narcotics, the war going on in Mexico between the drug cartels, and a president and a leadership that is now taking this head on serves our national interests. Our effort to stem illegal immigration is directly connected, and the effective-

ness of it will be greatly dependent on our ability to stop these cartels and to smash this trade in illicit narcotics.

Whatever one's concern is about a particular aspect of the U.S.-Mexican relationship, I would suggest from America's interest point of view that this issue, this initiative, is a compelling one and should be supported.

I am now pleased to yield 3 minutes to chairman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection and a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me associate myself with the words of our chairman. This is in the interests of the American people. I thank Chairman BERMAN for introducing this legislation and the ranking member, as well, for the collaboration that our committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee, always engages in.

I think it is important to note that this is an initiative that was entered into by the United States and Mexico that announced a multiyear, \$1.4 billion plan to use U.S. assistance to combat drug trafficking and other criminal organization activities. This has been labeled the "Merida Initiative," and the administration has requested \$500 million.

Some would ask why? Because we are at a crisis. And I come from the State of Texas. There is bloodshed on the border. The violence is enormous. The wars between drug cartels have caused some 1,800 to 1,900 deaths to Mexicans in the first 9 months of 2007. And it is attributable to the cartel-related violence. More than 60 American citizens have been kidnapped in Nuevo Laredo, a Mexican town directly across the border from the city of Laredo, a fine, wonderful city. And the mayors of those cities have come and asked for relief. But unfortunately, it hasn't been listened to in the way that I believe it could be. Recognizing that the violence or the cause is not Laredo or the border towns as much as it is the violence that is now spilling over.

So I hope as we move forward in our initiative it will have a number of elements to it, and certainly one of the elements has to be the war against drugs here in the United States. It is important to note that Mexico is, in fact, the main foreign supply of marijuana and meth, and as well even though there is a small production of heroin, interestingly enough, they are a large producer of the heroin supply here in United States.

And for this reason, there needs to be a number of collaborations. I disagree, for example, with the Secretary of Homeland Security, who says that we can't put the virtual fence at the border because he realizes that we are being conflicted by the questions of a barrier fence, reasonably so, because

we are used to the ingress and egress of trade in that area. And so I hope this initiative will have a balance and recognize that we have to look at many options to secure the border.

I want to also make mention of the fact that I am a member of the Homeland Security Committee and will hope, as this legislation moves forward, that we will have a collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security with this effort. You cannot make this work unless DHS is involved.

And I was prepared to offer an amendment that dealt with assessing the role of the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, in supporting the Merida Initiative, providing specific information on what staff, equipment and other resources the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security would need to support this initiative, and assessing the impact of the initiative on the border security operations of the relevant United States Government departments and agencies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady 1 additional minute.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the chairman.

Assessing the impact of the Merida Initiative on the border security operations of the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, and identify additional resources, if any, that the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, need to make available to carry out this initiative.

I recall specifically as a member of the Subcommittee on Border Security writing legislation and the ranking member on the Immigration Subcommittee in our past Congresses on providing more resources for our Border Patrol. It was interesting that the administration was always voicing their leadership on the idea of border security, and our Border Patrol agents were suffering. There were not enough. They didn't have the kind of speedboats, night goggles and computers. Now you see it is like night and day because of legislation carried by members of the Democratic Caucus.

And so it is important that as we go forward we find a collaboration of the Department of Homeland Security because human trafficking and drug trafficking are intertwined. The violation of the borders is intertwined with all we are doing here, and we need to have a collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security. I support this initiative, and I know it can be expanded.

I rise today in cautious support of H.R. 6028, the "Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Act of 2008." I would like to thank my colleague

Congressman BERMAN for introducing this legislation, as well as for his ongoing leadership as Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. While I do support this bill, I am extremely disappointed in the manner in which it was brought to the floor today. Like many Members, I have outstanding concerns about this legislation that have not yet been addressed, and I believe Members should have been given the opportunity to offer amendments to this important and far-reaching bill. I remain concerned about human rights in the region and I believe that the United States must do far more to address the demand for drugs in the United States, but I also believe that this legislation represents a positive step toward partnering with our southern neighbors to combat a problem that we share.

Mr. Speaker, I had planned to introduce an amendment to this legislation that will require the President to submit a report

(1) assessing the role of the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, in supporting the Merida Initiative;

(2) providing specific information on what staffing, equipment, and other resources the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, have provided for the Merida Initiative;

(3) assessing the impact of the Merida Initiative on the border security operations of the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security; and

(4) identifying additional resources, if any, that the relevant United States Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, need to make available to carry out the Merida Initiative.

As a senior Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am cognizant of the fact that the Department of Homeland Security will play a major role in the implementation of the Merida Initiative. Among other things, Customs and Border Patrol will be involved in the procurement and training of non-intrusive inspection equipment (scanners, x-ray vans) and rescue and communications equipment, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement will be involved in modernizing Mexico's immigration database and the training of vetted units focused on anti-gang and anti-money laundering.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the Merida Initiative will not be complete or successful without the cooperation of the Department of Homeland Security and the dedication of its brave men and women. The report required by my Amendment would have made sure Congress knows what resources DHS is contributing to the Merida Initiative and whether more are needed. It would also have let Congress know how the Merida Initiative is affecting DHS's ability to carry out its other missions, including border security. As we continue to fight criminal syndicates and terrorism organizations around the world, we must ensure that there is accountability for our precious resources and that we are not losing focus of the needs at home. I am extremely disappointed that this legislation has been brought up under suspension, as I believe that my amendment would have improved the legislation.

On October 22, the United States and Mexico, in a joint statement, announced a multi-year, \$1.4 billion plan to use U.S. assistance

to combat drug trafficking and other criminal organizations. As part of this plan, known as the Mérida Initiative, the Administration has requested \$500 million for Mexico and \$50 million for Central America in the FY 2008 Supplemental Appropriations. Since March 2007, when Presidents George W. Bush and Felipe Calderon met in Mérida, officials of both governments, without the input of the legislative branch of either country, have been working on an initiative to expand bilateral and regional cooperation, in order to combat organized crime and criminal gangs in the region.

Mexico has, in recent years, experienced an increase in drug violence. Much of the recent violence has been attributed to turf wars between drug cartels, with between 1,800 and 1,900 deaths of Mexicans in the first nine months of 2007 alone being attributed to cartel-related violence. More than 60 American citizens have been kidnapped in Nuevo Laredo, a Mexican town directly across the border from the city of Laredo, in my own state of Texas. Some of this violence is reportedly spilling over the border into the United States.

Spill-over violence and attacks on Americans are not the only reasons Mexico's drug trade is of intimate interest to the United States. Mexico is the main foreign supplier of marijuana and a major supplier of methamphetamine to the United States, and, though it produces only a small share of global heroin production, it produces a sizeable proportion of the heroin distributed in the United States. In addition to production of drugs, Mexico is also a major transit country. According to State Department estimates, 90% of the cocaine entering the United States transits through Mexico.

With the demise of powerful cartels in Colombia, Mexican drug cartels have recently become increasingly significant. According to the National Drug Intelligence Center, Mexican cartels now dominate the illicit U.S. drug market, using "well-established overland transportation networks to transport cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin—Mexican and increasingly South American—to drug markets throughout the country." Though Colombian groups retain a significant share of smuggling and distribution operations in the United States, the operations of Mexican groups continue to account for an increasingly large percentage of the market.

Recent years have indicated that much more needs to be done to address issues of drug production and trafficking in Mexico. While I certainly agree that the Mérida Initiative represents an important and much needed effort, I am extremely disappointed that neither members of the U.S. nor the Mexican congress were included in the discussion process. In addition, I have significant concerns about the initiative itself, and I believe there are many outstanding issues that remain to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe we can address the problem of drug trafficking by combating the supply side alone. This legislation does require the President to submit a report on efforts to reduce demand in the United States, and I believe that this language is extremely important, acknowledging that this is not just a foreign issue. I would like to see this Congress take a more active role in reducing the prevalence of drug use and addiction in our own communities, in conjunction with working to eliminate the flow of drugs across our borders.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that this Committee stay engaged with this program after it is implemented, particularly monitoring its effects on human rights. U.S. dollars absolutely should not be going to fund abuses; they should be used to build a culture of respect for fundamental human rights. To this end, I am pleased that this legislation states that one of the purposes of this initiative is to "strengthen respect for internationally recognized human rights and the rule of law in efforts to stabilize the security environment relating to the illicit narcotics production and trafficking and organized crime." Further, this legislation restricts funding to any units known to commit gross violations of human rights, provides assistance for human rights training in relevant law enforcement units, and, perhaps most crucially, requires the President to report to Congress on the human rights impact of the equipment and training provided in this bill. Mr. Speaker, this language is important, but alone it is not enough, and I fully expect that this committee will remain engaged in this important issue following the implementation of this program.

Mr. Speaker, despite my outstanding concerns and my disappointment over the manner in which this legislation was brought before us today, I do believe that this legislation will strengthen the bonds of cooperation with our southern neighbors on an important issue in which we all share a stake. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) who is also an esteemed member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. I thank the gentlelady from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, let me say first that I support a military strategy to deal with the drug cartels. Having come from Texas, having worked counterterrorism with the Justice Department at the Mexican border, I know firsthand what a direct threat to the security of this Nation these drug cartels present. They export drugs. They poison our children. They export human trafficking. They bring special interest aliens into this country, some of whom are not caught. And in the post-9/11 world, they present a threat that we can no longer ignore. And they must be dealt with. That is why I have been supportive of this initiative.

However, I believe that we need a strategy on this side of the border, as well. I believe we need a two-pronged approach, if you will, a comprehensive strategy that deals not only with the Mexican side but with the U.S. side. And for too long, our border sheriffs and our Border Patrol agents have been outmanned and outgunned. And if we are going to provide assistance to Mexico, it seems to me we ought to be providing assistance to our men and women on our side fighting this war every day.

I had a unique opportunity to meet with President Calderon. He told me that he is at war with the drug cartels. He is at war with these drug cartels. And we need to fight this war against the drug cartels.

And I believe the best way to do that is provide the military assistance, but also provide the resources necessary on this side of our border, which is why I offered an amendment at the foreign affairs markup of this bill to provide \$1.4 billion, an equal amount, if you will, over 3 years for our Federal, State and local law enforcement, including the border sheriffs. And Chairman BERMAN was supportive of this amendment. The chairman sits on the Judiciary Committee. It was my sincere hope that this amendment would have been taken up by the Judiciary Committee when they marked up this bill, as well.

Unfortunately, that didn't happen. And the Judiciary Committee decided not to take up this bill. In addition, instead of having an open rule whereby it could offer this amendment on the floor, we have a closed rule, and this vote is now under suspension. I believe this is a missed opportunity. I believe it is a missed opportunity to have a really comprehensive bill that could have had strong bipartisan support, that had the approach and the strategy that I just outlined, a military strategy on the Mexican side of the border, and a beefed up law enforcement on this side of the border. That is how we are going to achieve true border security in this Nation. So I just wanted to present that objection.

It is my sincere hope we can fix this and add this amendment at some point in the process to give our law enforcement on this side of the border the tools that they need, also, to win this war against the drug cartels.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), an esteemed member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work that the chairman and the ranking member have done on this initiative. However, I rise in opposition to this legislation before the House. As a former prosecutor and longtime judge in Texas, I am concerned about drugs and violence on the border, but I am also concerned about corruption.

According to the DEA, 500 people were murdered in Nuevo Laredo in 2005. None of those cases was solved. Many of those murdered were police officers. There have been 400 kidnappings in Nuevo Laredo. Forty-one of them were American citizens. None of them have been solved.

I doubt if anyone would be surprised to find out that the drug cartels are to blame for most of the violence on the border. What you might be surprised to learn is that U.S.-trained Mexican forces are behind some of the attacks. The Department of Homeland Security has reported that in the last 10 years, there have been over 250 incursions by suspected Mexican military units into the United States.

In order to gain control of access corridors in the United States, drug cartels are hiring hit men from an elite force in Mexico's military. This group is known as the "Zetas." It has been reported that some of the Zetas are military deserters that may have been trained in the United States at the former School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. Reports claim that these forces were sent by the Mexican Government to the United States-Mexico border to combat drug trafficking. Instead, some of them deserted and became assassins for the Mexican drug cartels. Officials suspect that there are more than 200 Zetas. Between January and September of last year, nearly 5,000 Mexican soldiers deserted. Many of them went to work for the drug cartels because they pay more money.

The bill before the House today would authorize \$1.5 billion in money, training and equipment over the next 5 years to Mexico. Most of that amount, more than \$1 billion, would go, as I said, to Mexico. And Mexico in its arrogance objects to any conditions we want to put on this money. The administration can offer us no assurance that our equipment and training won't be used against us and neither can Mexico.

These forces are violent. They kill people and are a danger to the enforcement of our border, especially to our sheriffs. We've tried to work with Mexico in the past to stop drug trafficking. Every new president talks about how they are going to stop the drug trade, but it never has worked. Why should we send \$1 billion to Mexico when we have no idea whether the goods we send will end up in the hands of corrupt Mexican officials and be used against us? Rather than sending all this money and equipment to Mexico and the lawless Mexican officials at the border, we ought to be equipping United States border sheriffs who can use this equipment to protect our homeland. We need to keep our money on this side of the border where we need it and where we can keep up with it.

And that's just the way it is.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means. We will miss him greatly when he retires.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this important initiative, the Merida Initiative, to combat illicit narcotics and reduce organized crime authorization legislation. I commend Chairman BERMAN, Chairman ENGEL and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their work in putting together bipartisan legislation that implements not only a bipartisan agreement but also an international agreement with our neighbor and our neighbors to the south.

Ladies and gentlemen, think of it in these terms, if in the last few months

the director of the FBI had been assassinated by narcotraffickers, think about it if the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration had been assassinated by narcotraffickers, think about it if dozens of police chiefs were shot down in the streets and murdered in their homes in front of their families, how would we as Americans react?

□ 1215

Would we ask for help and want every resource we could put in place to go after those who committed those horrible crimes?

Ladies and gentlemen, in Mexico, our friend, our ally, our partner in so many ways, that has been occurring, where the head of their counternarcotics program was assassinated, where police chiefs are being shot down, where the narcotraffickers have been so brazen they have publicly posted signs listing police officers and police chiefs that they intend to target for assassination, and at the same time, saying "come join us. We will pay you better if you are in law enforcement today. Switch sides. You will be paid more."

Well, today we have a President in Mexico, President Calderon, who decided to take the fight to the narcotraffickers. He has deployed 30,000 Mexican troops against narcotraffickers throughout Mexico, for the first time, and they have asked for our help. Both our friends in Mexico and our friends in Central America have asked our help with this fight.

That is why this legislation is important, because we have an obligation to help our neighbors; because by stopping the flow of drugs it affects other issues, policy concerns many of us have talked about. Number one is the flow of drugs into our country. And if you care about illegal immigration, if that has been a point you have debated on this floor, you argued we have got to do something about illegal immigration, well, frankly, safe streets and communities in Mexico and Central America are vital to ensuring that families and their children feel safe in their own communities, rather than having to leave for the United States illegally for a safe place to live.

And if you if you care about the arguments that many have made that narcotraffickers are crossing our borders and the Mexicans need to do more, well, they are. Again, 30,000 Mexican troops have been deployed against the narcotraffickers. Unfortunately, in many cases narcotraffickers are equally or better armed than the Mexican military.

That is why this legislation is needed. That is why this legislation needs bipartisan support. I urge bipartisan support.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY).

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, FDR made a statement about why he was giving aid to England to fight Nazi Germany, and that statement was, when your neighbor's home is burning, only a fool would not let them borrow your hose to put out the fire.

Well, Mr. Speaker, our border is burning. Mexico is in flames with violence. We are not taking on a war on drugs down at the border; we are taking on the battle against narco-terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken a lot of positions about the fact that the boarders are out of control, but now is the time the American people have to wake up and this Congress has to wake up and realize that the people in Mexico are fighting desperately for their republic. They are being murdered in the streets. Police chiefs on the day they do a press conference stating that they caught a cartel smuggling drugs into San Diego County through a tunnel, the day that they do that press conference, that night that police chief is murdered by the cartel. The head of their law enforcement, who is comparable to our FBI, was murdered in their capital.

You may say, but is Mexico doing enough? I have a lot of disagreements with Mr. Calderon. The justification for ignoring the cartel when they smuggle aliens is one of them. But the same cartel that is smuggling aliens and drugs into the United States are killing law enforcement and judges and politicians in Mexico.

And do not think that this is a problem far away from us. This problem is in our front yard, in our backyard, in our lap right now. Washington can ignore it, but they are already starting to kidnap and kill people in San Diego County in the south. We have an obligation to make sure that we fight this battle on Mexican soil before it becomes a battle in the main streets of the United States.

I ask us to join now. The fact is if there is anything that we can do, we need to defend our American freedom and our security when and where we find the threat, and the threat today is in Mexico. Calderon has been brave enough to export criminals to the United States. He has judges being killed right and left down there. Mexico is willing to work with us on this and desperately asking for our help, and only a fool would not give them the help to fight the battle on Mexican soil before we are fighting it on U.S. soil.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, at a time of record national debt and deficit, at a time when gasoline prices are now well over \$4, when oil is over \$130 a barrel and Mexico is sitting on one of the largest oil reserves in the world, it is inexcusable, it is intolerable for us

to send one dime to the Mexican Government when they can afford to pay for this equipment themselves.

But even more importantly than that, our southern border not secure. We should not send a dime to Mexico until our own American law enforcement officers have the resources they need to secure the border once and for all; not one dime to Mexico until the American border is secure.

I am going to call for a record vote on this bill, because we need to defeat this legislation until our southern border is secure.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of an issue of great importance to both the Nation and my congressional district in south Texas.

As a life-long resident of the southern border region, America's relationship with Mexico is of great importance to me, to my constituents, our chambers of commerce and economic development corporations.

For far too long, our Nation has focused its attention upon far-away lands on the other side of the world while our relationship with our closest of neighbors has languished. While current and past administrations shoulder much of the blame for our history of inattention to Mexico, Congress has been complicit in this failure.

When our Nation has needed to show compassion and understanding for the Mexican people, this Congress has been unable to agree on a comprehensive immigration plan befitting our American heritage. When our Nation should be celebrating our partnership and common interests with a close geographic ally, this Congress has literally built a wall between ourselves and Mexico.

This is no way to treat a friend and neighbor and actually our second largest trading partner. Although not a solution to all of the deficiencies in our relationship with Mexico, the Merida Initiative is a step in the right direction. Border residents are keenly aware of the violence and dangers of the drug trade and the criminal networks that span our continent. While based within Mexico, these criminal cartels are an affliction of the entire continent and must be addressed through national partnerships and cooperation.

We were there in Monterrey yesterday with a large delegation of Members of Congress and the Senate and we heard from and had a great dialogue with the congressmen and senators of that country. They are the ones who are fighting this battle for us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN). The time of the gentleman from Texas has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HINOJOSA. They are the ones who are at the forefront as Colombia and other countries are bringing their drugs through Mexico, and they are the

ones who have to fight it. They are the ones who have given up their lives. They are the ones who are helping us fight the drug cartel.

I ask my colleagues to please join me in supporting this important initiative.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I know we only have 1 minute remaining, so I would like to yield myself that remaining minute to close on our side on the Merida Initiative.

I would like to point to the testimony that was given by an official of the Department of Homeland Security when he testified on the importance for the United States of the Merida Initiative, because this is not a bill for Mexico. This is not a legislative bill for Central America. This is not for Haiti. This is not for the Dominican Republic. This is for the United States citizens. This is to protect our homeland from these vicious gangs and these drug dealers.

As this gentleman said, rather than simply giving money to foreign governments, the Merida Initiative has been tailored to provide our foreign partners with the specific tools they each need to fight transnational organized crime and work cooperatively with us in the United States. This is a bill that will help our communities, our country, our national security and our children.

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

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN), a member of the committee.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. This is my first term on the Foreign Affairs Committee. But I am not here necessarily as a committee member. I am here as a Member of Congress from Texas concerning the relationship Texas has had with Mexico for generations, if not centuries, and the relationship that we need to continue.

There is literally a battle going on in Mexico, our closest neighbor, and there has been an effort to try and support them in their battle with narcotics and narco-terrorism, and that is what this bill is about.

Whatever Mexico has been doing in their country is actually protecting those of us in Texas and California and all over the United States, because if they slow that situation down or win that battle, it makes our citizens and our people a lot safer.

We should help our local police even more. We should do a lot of things. But that is a whole separate piece of legislation. What we are talking about here is stepping up to the plate and helping a neighbor who is our closest neighbor and one who is in the middle of a war and losing police chiefs, law enforcement officers, the military. Whatever they do in their own country to take

care of this problem will make us safer in our own.

There are some concerns about human rights, and I want to address that, but I would hope we would address it with members of Congress from Mexico. When I met with those members from both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico, they were concerned about some of the human rights violations in our country. We have to share that information and work with each other. Again, we are not moving, Mexico is not moving, and we need to make sure we work as a partnership with Mexico in their efforts to control their own country.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD an exchange of letters between the distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary and myself.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
Washington, DC, June 6, 2008.

Hon. HOWARD L. BERMAN,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House  
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BERMAN: This is to advise you that, as a result of your working with us to make appropriate revisions to provisions in H.R. 6028, the Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008, that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, we are able to agree to discharging our committee from further consideration of the bill in order that it may proceed without delay to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with the understanding that by forgoing further consideration of H.R. 6028 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this similar legislation. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this important legislation, and request your support if such a request is made.

I would appreciate your including this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor. Thank you for your attention to this request, and for the cooperative relationship between our two committees.

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, JR.,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, June 6, 2008.

Hon. JOHN CONYERS, JR.,  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House  
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 6028, the Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008.

I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation. I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. I acknowledge that the Committee will not seek a sequential referral of the bill and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee over subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation.

Further, as to any House-Senate conference on the bill, I understand that your committee reserves the right to seek the appointment of conferees for consideration of portions of the bill that are within the Committee's jurisdiction.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during the consideration of House debate on H.R. 6028, and I look forward to working with you on this important legislation. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me or have your staff contact my staff.

Cordially,

HOWARD L. BERMAN,  
Chairman.

I urge very strongly, don't make the best the enemy of the better. This is a very important proposal for the American people, for our interests. Yes, more police here, more Border Patrol, better technology, better employer verification. But understand what is going on in Mexico. This is a compelling initiative for our interests.

I urge an "aye" vote.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6028, the Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008. H.R. 6028 creates a foundation for future cooperation in assisting our neighbors to the south in combating the rise of organized crime.

This legislation is a good starting point but much more work will need to be done, including significant transnational and interagency cooperation, in order to ensure the success of the Merida Initiative. I was disappointed that the House Homeland Security Committee was not included in the development of this bill, despite the fact that the Department of Homeland Security will play a large role in the Initiative by coordinating its agencies that are already assisting Mexico and other foreign governments to address smuggling, trafficking and violence on our borders.

Last week the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, which I have the privilege of chairing, had a hearing entitled "The Merida Initiative: Examining U.S. Efforts to Combat Transnational Criminal Organizations." This hearing highlighted the importance of the Merida Initiative in stemming the growing transnational crime in the United States and on our borders. For example, in my home district in Orange County, CA, gang violence is on the rise as a result of the huge presence of the largest transnational gang in the United States, Mara Salvatrucha, in Los Angeles County. It is reported that there are over 900 members of Mara Salvatrucha in Los Angeles County, and many of these gang members are in the United States illegally. The rise of this type of gang in the United States can be linked to a practice by many of the drug cartels of "contracting out" drug, ammunition, and weapon smuggling activities to these gang members. The Homeland Security hearing emphasized that many agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security will need to work together closely to stop these growing transnational crime networks.

H.R. 6028 must ensure interagency cooperation within the United States in order to succeed abroad with the foreign governments we seek to assist. As I stated earlier, much more needs to be done in order to help stem the violence along the U.S. and Mexican bor-

der, but this bill helps build the necessary foundation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to help ensure further cooperation between the key departments involved in its implementation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise reluctantly in opposition to this bill.

I applaud the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, my friend and colleague Congressman BERMAN, for asserting the role of the Congress and making sure that new initiatives such as the Merida Initiative are authorized. It is the right thing to do, and I look forward to working with him over the coming weeks on a number of foreign policy matters pending before the Committee.

There is much to support in H.R. 6028, and there are also several troubling matters.

Regarding the provisions of the bill that deal with Central America—a region of Latin America that is very close to my heart—I believe H.R. 6028 takes several important steps forward, seriously investing in community-based solutions to youth and gang problems. H.R. 6028 provides strong support to non-security programs that address the endemic conditions giving rise to violence related to drugs, arms and human trafficking. It provides support for the U.N. International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), especially in the areas of witness and victim protection, an initiative that merits the very strongest support by the United States and the international community. The bill also seeks to promote transparency and an end to impunity throughout Central America by strengthening police and judicial systems so that they may more effectively and successfully carry out investigations and prosecutions of those responsible for human rights violations and other criminal acts.

This is all very good news, Mr. Speaker.

I am very concerned that this authorizing bill fails, however, to reflect the thoughtful and critically important human rights conditions contained in the Senate and House versions of the FY 2008 supplemental appropriations on military and security-related aid to Mexico. I understand that those proposed conditions are controversial in Mexico, in large measure because of the history of the very problematic drug certification process that existed in the past. I do not believe that the human rights conditions included in the supplemental appropriations bill bear any resemblance to the flawed drug certification process, and the House and Senate Appropriations Committees took great care not to mirror that flawed certification process.

By failing to include the conditions on aid provided for the Merida Initiative that are included in the Senate and House supplemental appropriations bills, passage of this authorizing measure could be viewed as an effort to weaken or eliminate those provisions from the final conference report on the supplemental that will soon be sent to the President for his signature. It is my sincere hope that this is not the intention of bringing H.R. 6028 to the House floor at such a delicate moment. There was no reason to rush this bill before the House, since we know it has no counterpart on the Senate side. So its consideration today invites concern that its passage is indeed an attempt to influence conference negotiations on the supplemental and to send a message that human rights conditions are not welcome, and certainly not the stronger, more specific

conditionality included in the Senate version of the FY08 supplemental appropriations.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that America wants to be a good partner with Mexico on fighting drugs and ending corruption and human rights violations within Mexico's judicial system and its military and police. Over the past several weeks we have all seen the effects of the bloody rampage carried out by the drug cartels, especially those targeted at assassinating key officers and members of the Mexican National Police. I hope in other legislation that may come before the House this year that we will pay special attention to investing in drug education, prevention and treatment programs, as well as our own law enforcement agencies, so that U.S. demand for illegal drugs will also be forcefully and substantially addressed.

But we cannot simply write blank checks and fail to ensure that our aid is not subject to strong conditions on human rights, transparency, justice reform and promoting and protecting the rights of civil society. These concerns are very much at the forefront of the strong Senate conditions in the FY08 appropriations bill, and are also reflected in the slightly less stringent House conditions. They should have been included in H.R. 6028, the authorizing legislation, which is where human rights conditionality appropriately belongs.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are my concerns and my hopes regarding H.R. 6028, and I will be following closely the consequences of authorizing and appropriating these funds.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 6028.

With our economy facing serious, mounting challenges, and Americans facing unprecedented energy prices, I cannot support sending money to Mexico and Central America to take up the fight on drug trafficking.

As Mexico currently profits from the sale of oil on the world market as gas prices continue to skyrocket, I seriously question why we would send their government any aid to fight this battle. Think about it: gas is so much less expensive in Mexico that border area citizens from this country are going there to fill up.

Our own borders remain porous, illegal immigration strains our economy, and Americans are vulnerable to terrorists slipping into our country: fighting Mexico's war on drugs, and essentially securing Mexico's southern border, should not be at the top of our list of priorities right now.

While sending aid to fight criminal behavior and drug trafficking abroad is laudable in theory, given the current economic hardships Americans face, I simply cannot support this bill.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6028, 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. POE. 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.

□ 1230

# MARKING THE 225TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF PARIS OF 1783

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1063) marking the 225th anniversary of the Treaty of Paris of 1783, which ended the Revolutionary War with the Kingdom of Great Britain and recognized the independence of the United States of America, and acknowledging the shared values and close friendship between the peoples and governments of the United States and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

## H. RES. 1063

Whereas the United States will celebrate this year the 225th anniversary of its relationship with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland since the September 3, 1783 signing of the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended the American Revolutionary War between the Kingdom of Great Britain and the United States of America;

Whereas both the United Kingdom and the United States are free and democratic nations with a common commitment to human rights and the rule of law;

Whereas the United Kingdom is a major ally of the United States and 2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the US-UK Mutual Defense Agreement that was signed in Washington, DC, on July 3, 1958, and renewed in Washington, DC, on June 14, 2004;

Whereas both the United Kingdom and the United States are founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), having been party to the North Atlantic Treaty signed in Washington, DC, on April 4, 1949;

Whereas the United Kingdom is a major partner in the worldwide fight against terrorism, supporting the United States in many key armed struggles;

Whereas the United Kingdom is the second largest contributor to the multinational force in Iraq;

Whereas the United Kingdom plays a significant role in the military effort to bring lasting stability to Afghanistan and is the second largest contributor to NATO's International Security Assistance Force;

Whereas the United Kingdom and the United States share a steadfast alliance and a long tradition of opposing extremism, which included fighting the forces of nazism and communism in the 20th century;

Whereas the United Kingdom is the sixth largest trading partner of the United States, and the United States is the largest trading partner of the United Kingdom;

Whereas the United States and the United Kingdom share the world's largest foreign direct investment partnership, with American investment sustaining over a million jobs in the United Kingdom and British investment sustaining over a million jobs in the United States;

Whereas approximately 675,000 British citizens reside in the United States, and 155,000 Americans reside in the United Kingdom, with both communities contributing to the fabric of life in their host countries;

Whereas approximately 8,400 British students are currently studying at universities in the United States, and 32,000 American students are studying at universities in the United Kingdom; and

Whereas the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom is one of unity and strength, and has been proven to be of mutual benefit: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) marks the 225th anniversary of relations between the United States and the Kingdom of Great Britain;

(2) recognizes that the Kingdom of Great Britain's recognition of the United States was an important event in the history of the Nation;

(3) reaffirms the value of the deep friendship that has developed between our two Countries since the signing of the Treaty of Paris; and

(4) looks forward to a continued and strengthened relationship between the British and American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I am pleased to support this resolution that marks 225 years since the Treaty of Paris concluded the Revolutionary War with Great Britain and that acknowledges the close friendship enjoyed by our two countries ever since.

I commend our distinguished colleague, Representative WU of Oregon, and Vice-Chair of the British-American Parliamentary Group, who introduced this measure. It is important that the House marks this anniversary and celebrates such a vital bipartisan partnership, bilateral partnership also.

The Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783, formally ending the Revolutionary War between the 13 original colonies and the Kingdom of Great Britain. The settlement of the war and the recognition of our young Nation by Great Britain was a moment of great significance in the infancy of our Nation.

Two hundred twenty-five years later, the United Kingdom remains one of our closest allies by virtue of our shared history and values. Both the United States and the UK have proud histories of representative democracy and respect for the rule of law.

They have also encouraged and helped many people around the world secure the freedoms and rights their