

They have hired 19 lawyers, 40 FBI agents, and issued nearly 3,000 subpoenas, all of which have further confirmed what we already knew before the investigation started: there was no collusion.

□ 1215

Importantly, Mueller confirmed that no one with the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian Government. Additionally, we found out through this investigation the Russians made many attempts to offer to help the Trump campaign, and time and time again, the Trump team stood up and rejected Russia.

I want the media, which spent thousands of hours painting a picture of collusion and conspiracy, to cover these Mueller findings that show the President stood firm against the Russian's multiple attempts. And I ask the Democrats, who misled the public for months, to come forward and speak the truth.

Instead, what does the biased media and Democrats say in response to Mueller's verdict? Absolutely nothing. You could almost hear a pin drop as I walked through the Capitol today. It is so quiet. No Democrats are here today for morning-hour debate. What does that say?

As I stand on the House floor today, I have one question for this Chamber and for this Nation: Can we please move on and work with our President, rather than against him, and focus on policy rather than fantasy?

NEBRASKA FLOODING AND SEVERE WEATHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the harsh weather and flooding experienced throughout the State of Nebraska over the past few weeks.

On Wednesday, March 13, a large storm, known as a bomb cyclone, hit our State of Nebraska and much of the Midwest. It brought with it blizzard conditions, high wind, and large amounts of rain, followed by highly destructive flooding, which continues in some areas today.

As I spent the past week touring damage and recovery efforts, one theme was clear: Nebraskans don't scare from a challenge, nor do they stand by as their friends and neighbors suffer. Entire communities have come together to fill sand bags, open shelters, and rescue neighbors in need. Ranchers across the State have battled to clear pastures, reunify herds, and reach newborn calves.

I appreciate President Trump moving quickly to approve a Federal disaster declaration requested by Governor Ricketts and supported by the entire Nebraska congressional delegation. Governor Ricketts has estimated the cost of rebuilding infrastructure de-

stroyed by the storm at more than \$400 million, and the Nebraska Farm Bureau estimates the toll from lost crop and livestock production could top even \$1 billion.

The recovery will not be easy, but the hard work and dedication of Nebraskans across the State will be on full display as we recover, rebuild, and renew what was lost in these tragic events.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LOWENTHAL) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Send us Your spirit. Enlighten the hearts of those who are faithful and tireless in securing equal justice under the law. Fulfill the hopes of those who long for peace and security for their children. Guide and protect all elected officials and all who choose to serve this Nation and local communities through public service.

May Your will be done in and through those who pray for divine guidance and who trust in Your providence, even in the midst of conflicting opinions, philosophical differences, and the threat of violence.

Unite Your people and keep them focused on essentials that reflect Your kingdom. May the fires of Your love, and human freedom, renew the face of the Earth.

And may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:45 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1645

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LOWENTHAL) at 4 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.

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 votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

VENEZUELA ARMS RESTRICTION ACT

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 920) to restrict the transfer of defense articles, defense services, and crime control articles to any element of the security forces of Venezuela that is under the authority of a government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate government of Venezuela by the Government of the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 920

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Venezuela Arms Restriction Act".

SEC. 2. RESTRICTION ON EXPORT OF COVERED ARTICLES AND SERVICES TO CERTAIN SECURITY FORCES OF VENEZUELA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, covered articles or services may not be exported from the United States to any element of the security forces of Venezuela that is under the authority of a government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate government of Venezuela by the Government of the United States.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and the heads of other departments and agencies as appropriate, shall—

(1) determine, using such information that is available to the Secretary of State, whether any covered article or service has been

transferred since July 2017 to the security forces of Venezuela without a license or other authorization as required by law; and

(2) submit such determination in writing to the appropriate congressional committees.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce as appropriate, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the transfer by foreign persons of covered articles or services to elements of the security forces of Venezuela that are under the authority of a government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate government of Venezuela by the Government of the United States.

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

(1) A list of all significant transfers by foreign persons of covered articles or services to such elements of the security forces of Venezuela since July 2017.

(2) A list of all foreign persons who maintain an existing defense relationship with such elements of the security forces of Venezuela.

(3) Any known use of covered articles or services by such elements of the security forces of Venezuela or associated forces, including paramilitary groups, that have coordinated with such security forces to assault, intimidate, or murder political activists, protesters, dissidents, and other civil society leaders, including Juan Guaido.

SEC. 4. TERMINATION.

This Act shall expire on the earlier of—

(1) the date that is 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(2) the date on which the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of Venezuela has returned to a democratic form of government with respect for the essential elements of representative democracy as set forth in Article 3 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

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

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(2) COVERED ARTICLE OR SERVICE.—The term “covered article or service”—

(A) for purposes of section 2, means—

(i) any defense article or defense service, as such terms are defined in section 47 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2794); and

(ii) any article included on the Commerce Control List set forth in Supplement No. 1 to part 774 of the Export Administration Regulations under subchapter C of chapter VII of title 15, Code of Federal Regulations, and controlled for crime control purposes, if it is determined that the end-user is likely to use the article to violate the human rights of the citizens of Venezuela; and

(B) for purposes of section 3, means—

(i) any defense article or defense service of the type described in section 47 of the Arms Export Control Act; and

(ii) any article of the type included on the Commerce Control List set forth in Supplement No. 1 to part 774 of the Export Administration Regulations and controlled for crime control purposes.

(3) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign person” means a person that is not a United States person.

(4) PERSON.—The term “person” means an individual or entity.

(5) SECURITY FORCES OF VENEZUELA.—The term “security forces of Venezuela” includes—

(A) the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, including the Bolivarian National Guard;

(B) the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service;

(C) the Bolivarian National Police; and

(D) the Bureau for Scientific, Criminal and Forensic Investigations of the Ministry of Interior, Justice, and Peace.

(6) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term “United States person” means—

(A) a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States; or

(B) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or of any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. Sires. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 920, the Venezuela Arms Restriction Act, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 920.

I would like to begin by thanking Ms. Shalala for her leadership in authoring this important piece of legislation. She has been a leading voice in supporting the Venezuelan people.

Sadly, human rights violations in Venezuela are nothing new. In recent months, Nicolas Maduro and his cronies have intensified their brutal crackdown on those who have bravely and peacefully pushed for change.

With an increasing wave of demonstrations protesting the Maduro regime, Congress must do all it can to support efforts by the Venezuelan people to restore its democracy. This means making sure that weapons from the United States aren't being used to commit these horrific acts of violence against civilians. U.S. companies and individuals should not be able to profit from the repression of the Venezuelan people.

H.R. 920 codifies existing restrictions on arms exports to Venezuela's security forces and adds new restrictions on items like tear gas and riot gear that have been used to suppress peaceful protesters.

As the protests continue, you can be sure that the Maduro regime will do

everything it can to silence the Venezuelan people; so Congress must do everything in its power to keep these dangerous items out of the hands of the Venezuelan security forces.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Venezuela Arms Restriction Act introduced by my colleagues from Florida, Congresswoman SHALALA and Congressman DIAZ-BALART, to whom we are deeply grateful. I would also like to thank Chairman Sires for his support and leadership both of our committee and of this bill.

The criminal socialist dictatorship of Nicolas Maduro is systematically violating the human rights of the Venezuelan people through violence, intimidation, torture, and murder. According to local NGO Foro Penal, there are more than 850 political prisoners in Venezuela today.

Just last week, Maduro's intelligence services arrested Roberto Marrero, the chief of staff for the interim President and constitutional leader of Venezuela, Juan Guaido. The regime has made ludicrous claims that Marrero was leading a terrorist cell and it reportedly planted weapons and cash to try to frame him.

The Congress and the people of the United States must stand united with the people of Venezuela to help ensure that all individuals who violate their human rights are held accountable.

This bill supports these efforts by identifying and holding accountable any U.S. entities providing defense articles to Maduro's security forces, and it restricts all U.S. sales of defense articles to his socialist criminal dictatorship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in demonstrating our commitment to defending the security and human rights of the Venezuelan people by supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Sires. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. SHALALA), the author of this bill.

Ms. SHALALA. Mr. Speaker, this evening, Congress will vote on a bill I introduced, H.R. 920, the Venezuela Arms Restriction Act. This bipartisan bill prohibits the export of defense articles and crime control materials from the United States to the security forces of Venezuela.

The United States should have no business selling these tools for oppression to the Maduro regime, as it punishes and kills those who are peacefully protesting and demanding a return to democracy.

Since Maduro usurped power in January, we have seen headline after headline:

“Maduro's Forces Kill, Injure Protestors as Standoff Over Aid in Venezuela Escalates”;

“Four Dead, Hundreds Detained After Venezuela Blackout”; and

“Venezuela Security Forces Kill, Punish Anti-Maduro Protestors.”

A few weeks ago, I traveled to the Venezuela-Colombia border, where I heard heartbreaking stories of friends and family members dying of starvation and treatable diseases, all while a brutal dictator does everything possible to prevent aid from being delivered.

I met with refugees at hospitals in Colombia and heard their harrowing stories of being on the verge of death due to a lack of medical care. There were a number of high-risk pregnancies as a result.

This is a humanitarian crisis that has bled through Venezuela’s borders, and it continues to grow.

This is personal for us in south Florida, where thousands of Venezuelans who have fled the crisis now call home. We will continue to push for TPS, because our response to this crisis must include supporting our friends and neighbors in south Florida and around the country.

Today, in addition to the Venezuela Arms Restriction Act, we will vote on bills introduced by my south Florida colleagues to support the people of Venezuela as they demand free and fair elections. We will vote on bills to provide humanitarian aid directly to the Venezuelan people and a bill targeting Russian influence in Venezuela and its impact on the United States.

Today, Congress will not stand idly by as this humanitarian crisis rages on. With the passage of the Venezuela Arms Restriction Act, we will move one step closer to fulfilling our obligations to ensure that no weapons originating in the United States are used to silence dissent through intimidation, repression, and execution. Congress, today, will affirm its commitment to the women and men of Venezuela who are fighting for democracy and a brighter future.

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

In closing, I thank the authors of the bill. Congresswoman SHALALA just spoke about the depth and breadth of the horrible humanitarian crisis that we see on our doorstep in Venezuela. I would like to comment that the average Venezuelan has lost over 20 kilos of weight in the last 2 years and they haven’t had protein, so the whole country is starving to death, worse than any Warsaw Pact dictatorship has ever done.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank Congressman DIAZ-BALART and certainly Chairman Sires for their leadership on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all of my colleagues to enthusiastically support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. Sires. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Ms. SHALALA for her strong and timely

leadership on this legislation. It shows a strong commitment to the Venezuelan people and to our constituents who care so deeply about this issue.

The human rights situation in Venezuela is absolutely deplorable, and it is important that we take the common-sense steps in this legislation to help end the ongoing repression. Passing this measure will send an important message that Congress stands with the Venezuelan people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Sires) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 920, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE ACT OF 2019

Mr. Sires. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 854) to provide humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people, including Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the Americas and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 854

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Humanitarian Assistance to the Venezuelan People Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. REPORT ON THE COORDINATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA INCLUDING STRATEGY ON FUTURE EFFORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report outlining the coordination of humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela, both in Venezuela and throughout the Western Hemisphere, with nongovernmental organizations and international organizations operating in Venezuela or countries in the region to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

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

(1) A description of how and under what circumstances the following humanitarian assistance has been provided:

(A) Public health commodities for Venezuelan health facilities and services, including medicines on the World Health Organization’s List of Essential Medicines, and basic medical supplies and equipment.

(B) Basic food commodities and nutritional supplements needed to address growing malnutrition and improve food security for the

people of Venezuela, with a specific emphasis on the most vulnerable populations.

(C) Technical assistance to ensure health and food commodities are appropriately selected, procured, and distributed, predominantly through local nongovernmental organizations.

(2) An identification of United States Agency for International Development and Department of State best practices in delivering humanitarian assistance, particularly with regard to food assistance, and how such best practices are being utilized in providing humanitarian assistance to Venezuela and countries in the region.

(3) A description of current and anticipated challenges to distributing humanitarian assistance in Venezuela and countries hosting Venezuelan migrants.

(4) A description of efforts to ensure that humanitarian and development assistance for Venezuelans is coordinated with other United States bilateral assistance in the Western Hemisphere and does not result in duplication or omission of such other bilateral assistance.

(5) A description of how the pre-positioning and distribution of humanitarian assistance is being monitored and evaluated, the number of beneficiaries reached, an assessment of how humanitarian and development assistance is benefitting Venezuelan migrants inside and outside of the country, and what additional staff may be necessary to manage such assistance.

(6) A strategy for future efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela that includes a description of future efforts regarding the matters described in paragraphs (1) through (5).

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF CONGRESS.

Congress strongly condemns all violent actions by the Maduro regime and Venezuela’s security forces to block and divert humanitarian assistance from entering Venezuela.

SEC. 4. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to appropriate congressional committees a report assessing the impact of United States humanitarian assistance on the people of Venezuela, both in Venezuela and throughout the Western Hemisphere, including the total number of beneficiaries reached.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to provide humanitarian assistance to support the people of Venezuela, both in Venezuela and throughout the Western Hemisphere, in accordance with established international humanitarian principles.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that not less than \$150,000,000 is necessary for each of fiscal years 2020 and 2021 to carry out this section.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2020 and 2021 to carry out this section.

SEC. 6. DEFINITION.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the following:

(A) The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(B) The Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(C) The Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.