

ANN WAGNER, and Democrats and Republicans on both sides of the aisle, as well as the organizations supporting this bipartisan bill.

The United States should always stand with our neighbor in the Western Hemisphere and the Haitian people as they fight for a self-governing, democratic, and prosperous nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I once again thank Mr. JEFFRIES for authoring this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5586, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill To measure the progress of recovery and efforts to address corruption, rule of law, and media freedoms in Haiti."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1400

CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7703) to authorize appropriations for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, enhance the United States-Caribbean security partnership, prioritize disaster resilience, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7703

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 "Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Authorization Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE.

(a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$74,800,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 to carry out the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative to achieve the purposes described in subsection (b).

(b) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes described in this subsection are the following:

(1) To promote citizen safety, security, and the rule of law in the Caribbean through increased strategic engagement with the governments of beneficiary countries and with elements of local civil society, including the private sector, in such countries.

(2) To carry out the promotion of such safety, security, and the rule of law through efforts including the following:

(A) Capacity building for law enforcement and military units, including professionalization, anti-corruption and

human rights training, vetting, and community-based policing.

(B) Maritime and aerial security cooperation, including assistance to strengthen Caribbean maritime and aerial interdiction operations capability and the provision of support systems and equipment, training, and maintenance.

(C) Border and port security cooperation, including support to strengthen capacity for screening and to intercept narcotics, weapons, bulk cash, and other contraband at airports and seaports.

(D) Support for justice sector reform and strengthening of the rule of law, including capacity building for prosecutors, judges, and other justice officials, and support to increase the efficacy of criminal courts.

(E) Cybersecurity and cybercrime cooperation, including capacity-building and support for cybersecurity systems.

(F) Countering transnational criminal organizations and local gang activity, including capacity-building, equipment, and support for operations targeting the finances and illegal activities of transnational criminal networks and local gangs such as their recruitment of at-risk youth, and the provision of assistance to populations vulnerable to being victims of extortion and crime by criminal networks.

(G) Strengthening special prosecutorial offices and providing technical assistance to combat corruption, money laundering, financial crimes, extortion, and human rights crimes, and conduct asset forfeitures and criminal analysis.

(H) Strengthening the ability of the security sector to respond to and become more resilient in the face of natural disasters, including by carrying out training exercises to ensure critical infrastructure and ports are able to come back online rapidly following disasters and providing preparedness training to police and first responders.

(I) Supporting training for civilian police and appropriate security services in criminal investigations, best practices for citizen security, and the protection of human rights.

(J) Improving community and law enforcement cooperation to improve effectiveness and professionalism of police and increase mutual trust.

(K) Increasing economic opportunities for at-risk youth and vulnerable populations, including workforce development training and remedial education programs for at-risk youth.

(L) Improving juvenile justice sectors through regulatory reforms, separating youth from traditional prison systems, and improving support and services in juvenile detention centers.

(3) To prioritize efforts to combat corruption and include anti-corruption components to programs, including by—

(A) strengthening national justice systems and attorneys general and supporting independent media and investigative reporting;

(B) supporting multilateral anti-corruption mechanisms; and

(C) encouraging cooperative agreements between the Department of State, other relevant Federal departments and agencies, and the attorneys general of relevant countries to fight corruption in the Caribbean.

(4) To promote the rule of law in the Caribbean and counter malign influence from authoritarian regimes, including China and Russia, by:

(A) Monitoring security assistance from authoritarian regimes and taking steps necessary to ensure that this assistance does not undermine or jeopardize U.S. security assistance.

(B) Evaluating and, as appropriate, restricting United States involvement in investment and infrastructure projects fi-

nanced by authoritarian regimes that might obstruct or otherwise impact United States security assistance to beneficiary countries.

(C) Monitoring and restricting equipment and support from high risk vendors for telecommunications infrastructure in beneficiary countries.

(D) Countering disinformation by promoting transparency and accountability from beneficiary countries.

(E) Eliminating corruption linked to investment and infrastructure facilitated by authoritarian regimes through support for investment screening, competitive tendering and bidding processes, the implementation of investment law, and contractual transparency.

(5) To promote strategic engagement with the governments of beneficiary countries through effective branding and messaging of United States assistance and security cooperation, including by developing a public diplomacy strategy for educating citizens of beneficiary countries about United States assistance and security cooperation programs and benefits.

SEC. 3. STRATEGY TO IMPROVE DISASTER RESILIENCE.

(a) **PRIORITIZATION.**—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Inter-American Foundation, prioritize efforts to increase disaster response and resilience by carrying out programs in beneficiary countries for the following purposes:

(1) Encouraging coordination between beneficiary countries and relevant Federal departments and agencies to provide expertise and information sharing.

(2) Supporting sharing of best practices on disaster resilience including constructing resilient infrastructure and rebuilding after natural disasters.

(3) Improving rapid-response mechanisms and cross-government organizational preparedness for natural disasters.

(b) **STRATEGY.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and in consultation with the President and Chief Economic Officer of the Inter-American Foundation, submit to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy that incorporates specific, measurable benchmarks to achieve the purposes described in subsection (a) and to inform citizens of beneficiary countries about the extent and benefits of United States assistance to such countries. In developing such strategy, the Secretary of State shall also consult with nongovernmental organizations in beneficiary countries and in the United States.

(c) **ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE.**—The Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator, shall annually submit to the appropriate congressional committees a written description of the progress made as of the date of such submission in meeting the benchmarks included in the strategy submitted pursuant to subsection (b).

SEC. 4. MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

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 an implementation plan that includes a timeline and stated objectives for actions to be taken with respect to the Caribbean Basin Security

Initiative. The plan shall also include the following elements:

(1) A multi-year strategy with a timeline, overview of objectives, and anticipated outcomes for the region and for each beneficiary country, with respect to each program area described in section 2.

(2) Specific, measurable benchmarks to track the progress of the Initiative towards accomplishing the outcomes described pursuant to paragraph (1).

(3) A plan for the delineation of the roles to be carried out by the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, and any other Federal department or agency in carrying out the Initiative, to prevent overlap and unintended competition between activities and resources.

(4) A plan to coordinate and track all activities carried out under the Initiative between all relevant Federal departments and agencies, in accordance with the publication requirements described in section 4 of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-191; 22 U.S.C. 2394c).

(5) The results achieved during the previous year—

(A) of monitoring and evaluation measures to track the progress of the Initiative in accomplishing the benchmarks included pursuant to paragraph (2); and

(B) of the implementation of the strategy and plans described in paragraphs (1), (3), and (4).

(6) A description of the process for co-locating Caribbean Basin Security Initiative projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, to ensure that crime prevention funding and enforcement funding are used in the same localities as necessary.

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 Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(2) **BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES.**—The term “beneficiary countries” means the beneficiary countries of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on H.R. 7703.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank Chairman ENGEL for his leadership of

the Foreign Affairs Committee and his role in passing this important bill.

I also want to thank my colleague, Mr. ROONEY, a staunch supporter of the Caribbean, for leading this bill with me, and Ranking Member MCCAUL for his collaboration.

The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative is a vital tool to combat the illicit drug trade, promote good government, and improve civil society. The international narcotics trade has a devastating impact across our hemisphere, and much of the demand for illegal drugs, unfortunately, comes from right here in the U.S.

We have worked hard to stop drug trafficking and combat corruption in Central America and Mexico, but all too often, our allies in the Caribbean are overlooked.

The Caribbean is our third border and, for decades, has been growing as a hub for the illegal and illicit drug trade. Proper investment in the Caribbean will help to improve our allies' capacity to combat transnational crime, violence, and regional instability, while also enhancing our security.

Crime from the drug trade has rattled many of our allies in the region, and this funding will go to programs that interdict traffickers, provide programming for at-risk youth, and improve the independence of the judicial system in those Caribbean countries.

This bill also adds a focus on disaster resilience, given the increasingly frequent and worsening hurricanes in the region, which I believe is of primary importance as we continue to see the impact of climate change on national and regional security.

We have seen the success of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative over the last decade, and this bill will build on the success by authorizing \$74.8 million per year for the next 5 years to further deepen our commitment to that region.

By partnering to increase the security and stability of our Caribbean allies as we combat the narcotics trade, we will also be reducing the flow of illicit drugs into the United States.

I believe CBSI is a crucial program, and I ask my colleagues to join in bolstering it.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7703, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Authorization Act, authored by Mr. ESPAILLAT and Mr. ROONEY, and I want to thank them for their leadership on this.

The countries of the Caribbean continue to face serious security challenges from criminal organizations, drug trafficking, corruption, and threats to the rule of law that seriously jeopardize the people of these nations as well as U.S. security interests in the region.

Since 2010, the U.S. Congress has provided nearly \$677 million to support the region's efforts to address these threats under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, or CBSI. Funding under CBSI has supported training for law enforcement, counternarcotics efforts, border and port security, and strengthening of the rule of law. The assistance has strengthened U.S. security cooperation with our Caribbean partners and remains critical as transnational criminal and terrorist organizations continue to threaten their security.

The legislation before us today authorizes \$74.8 million for the CBSI for each year until 2025 and continues to prioritize capacity building for local law enforcement, disruption of criminal organizations, drug and firearm interdiction, rule of law, and anticorruption efforts.

The bill also supports disaster resilience and requires the State Department to establish benchmarks and indicators to track progress towards CBSI's stated objectives.

I would also point out this legislation also includes important requirements for monitoring and countering the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party in the region.

I congratulate the gentleman on his very fine bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague representing the great people of New York, but also who hails from the Caribbean and understands the importance of legislation like this.

As the representative of a Caribbean island, an English-speaking Caribbean island, I am grateful to be yielded the opportunity to talk about this important Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.

Traffickers frequently transport cocaine and other contraband from South America through the Caribbean Sea. Building the law enforcement and interdiction capabilities of our Caribbean partners helps them stop illicit flows, making our Caribbean nations safer.

By developing these capabilities, partner countries also can hold perpetrators accountable and deter further criminal activity that might harm their citizens, threaten their economies, and endanger U.S. citizens at home and as tourists in the Caribbean.

The United States has committed over \$556 million for CBSI for fiscal years 2010 to 2018. Congress has appropriated \$58 million for fiscal year 2020.

Bravo.

To enhance maritime domain awareness and interdiction, we have improved radar coverage and sharing capacity, enhanced port security, and provided boats, equipment, and training to partner nations.

In the Dominican Republic, the largest Caribbean transit point for cocaine,

CBSI programs have yielded a 250 percent increase in cocaine interdictions. USAID programming targets the drivers of youth crime and violence to reduce the risk of youth involvement in transnational organized crime.

USAID uses risk assessment tools to identify at-risk youth in countries like St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana. USAID then partners with those host countries, delivering support to families and youth. Across those three countries, 75 percent of the youth targeted have reduced risk levels.

To augment law enforcement, CBSI supports efforts to professionalize and reform law enforcement institutions and enables partner governments to better prevent, investigate, and prosecute crime. These are tremendous tools.

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are transshipment points for illicit drugs that have been smuggled from source countries into the U.S. mainland, as well as destination points for drugs distributed within the two territories. This bill is very essential to us.

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are situated between the U.S. mainland and drug-source countries such as Colombia and Peru, making them ideal gateways for movement of illicit drugs onward to the U.S. mainland.

The Caribbean sits as a transshipment area for so many goods: first, people, sugar, and, in many instances, drug trafficking now.

Drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups use commercial and private maritime vessels, commercial private aircraft, and package delivery services to smuggle illicit drugs into and through Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Large drug shipments are often offloaded in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, repackaged, and stored in secluded areas until they are distributed locally or transported to the U.S. mainland.

What is the outcome of this? Wreaking havoc in our communities.

There were 52 murders this year on the Virgin Islands, 49.2 per 100,000 people; in 2018, a whopping 52 individuals in a community of 100,000 people. Many of those deaths—most of those deaths—related to drug trafficking, drugs that we do not even use on the islands.

This bill is vital to combating drug trafficking, promoting good governance, independent justice sectors, and empowering civil society in the Caribbean.

Too often, the Caribbean is ignored. We must correct this by deepening our partnerships and cooperation with some of our closest allies. Working together, we can help increase citizen security, build resilience to natural disasters caused by climate change, and improve strategies to reduce illegal narcotics trafficking.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HORSFORD). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from the Virgin Islands an additional 1 minute.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I won't need all of that minute, but I want to thank the gentleman for the time.

This bill is so vital, not only to stopping drug trafficking, but supporting our communities, helping youth within the Caribbean to reach their potential.

I want to thank the authors of this bill. I am grateful this is a bipartisan effort to not forget the Caribbean. I thank my colleague, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and the members of the committee.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7703, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF THREE SEAS INITIATIVE IN ITS EFFORTS TO INCREASE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 672) expressing support of the Three Seas Initiative in its efforts to increase energy independence and infrastructure connectivity thereby strengthening the United States and European national security, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 672

Whereas, in 2015, 12 Central and European nations of the European Union established the Three Seas Initiative to increase energy, infrastructure, and digital communications autonomy and resilience through support of collective financing for new infrastructure projects to connect the region between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas;

Whereas the United States pledged support and willingness to serve as a steadfast partner of the Three Seas Initiative's effort at the July 2017 Warsaw summit;

Whereas, in February 2020, the Secretary of State announced a United States commitment of up to \$1,000,000,000 in financing for Three Seas Initiative countries to promote energy security and economic growth;

Whereas the Three Seas Initiative will advance economic growth, resilience, transport and digital connectivity, and energy security in this strategic region, thereby increasing the national security of the United States;

Whereas the President of the European Commission recognized the Three Seas Initiative as a "catalyst for the cohesion and convergence of the EU and for the strengthening of the transatlantic link";

Whereas Soviet-imposed communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe left the region with a significant infrastructure deficit, especially in the realm of north-south transportation and energy lines;

Whereas the current state of infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe nations restricts energy, water, and telecommunications interconnectivity across the region;

Whereas the infrastructure deficit leaves these nations overly dependent on Russia for their energy and additional economic needs;

Whereas Russia seeks to undermine democratic institutions and liberty in Europe through hybrid means, including using energy as a tool for coercion;

Whereas Russian gas pipeline projects, such as Nord Stream II and Turk Stream, are political and seek to undermine Europe's energy security;

Whereas the Three Seas Initiative provides a positive alternative for financing for transport, energy and digital connectivity projects in the Three Seas region to China's 17+1 and Belt and Road Initiatives, which have exported corruption, debt traps, and poor labor and environmental standards;

Whereas diversification of energy sources and supply routes, including development of renewable energy sources and technology, is critical to bolstering energy security;

Whereas members of the Three Seas Initiative have prioritized key energy projects such as the Krk, Croatia LNG terminal, Gas Interconnector Republic of Poland-Republic of Lithuania, the Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria (BRUA) gas interconnector, and other cross-border interconnections;

Whereas members of the Three Seas Initiative have also prioritized key digital infrastructure and transportation projects to support modern and vibrant economies including the Three Seas Initiative Digital Highway, the Viking Train, the Adriatic TEN-T Core Network Corridor, and the FAIRway Danube, among others; and

Whereas the Three Seas Initiative includes vital allies of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the Three Seas Initiative in its efforts to increase energy resilience and infrastructure connectivity across Central and Eastern Europe and to further the process of building a Europe that is undivided, secure, prosperous, and free;

(2) encourages Three Seas Initiative nations to take action on joint financing of projects to strengthen energy, infrastructure, and digital communications projects in Central and Eastern Europe, including through national contributions to the Three Seas Initiative Infrastructure Fund;

(3) reaffirms the authority of the President under the Build Act of 2018 (division F of Public Law 115-254) to provide United States financing to the Three Seas Initiative and its projects in cases that advance national economic or foreign policy interests of the United States and would produce significant developmental outcomes or provide developmental benefits to the poorest population;

(4) reaffirms the authority of the United States International Development Finance Corporation under the European Energy Security and Diversification Act of 2019 (title XX of division P of Public Law 116-94) to provide support for the Three Seas Initiative and its energy infrastructure projects in countries with upper-middle-income or high-income economies in cases described in paragraph (3) or if such support is necessary to preempt or counter efforts by a strategic competitor of the United States to secure significant political or economic leverage or