

## **H. Res. 256**

### ***In the House of Representatives, U.S.,***

*June 21, 2005.*

Whereas on November 4, 1979, Islamic extremists occupied the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran, and took 66 American hostages, of whom 13 were released in a matter of days, on November 19 and 20, 1979;

Whereas after months of unsuccessful diplomatic negotiations for the release of the remaining 53 hostages and after extensive planning and intergovernmental debate, a complex rescue mission designated as “Operation Eagle Claw” was approved by President Carter on April 16, 1980;

Whereas on April 24, 1980, a task force comprised of Army Special Operations Forces, Army Rangers, Air Force Special Operations Wing personnel, and United States Navy, Marine, and Air Force pilots succeeded in moving thousands of miles undetected until reaching a remote location in the Iranian desert 200 miles from Tehran designated by the code name “Desert One”;

Whereas at Desert One, a combination of helicopters and MC-130/EC-130 gunships rendezvoused with the intention of rescuing the hostages 200 miles away in Tehran the following evening;

Whereas the bravery, dedication, and level of operational expertise of the men who participated in the mission were

evident from the onset and tested by the mechanical and weather problems suffered en route to the rendezvous point;

Whereas due to mechanical failures and weather problems only six out of eight helicopters successfully arrived at the Desert One rendezvous;

Whereas six helicopters was the minimum number of helicopters that could successfully complete Operation Eagle Claw;

Whereas once the six helicopters arrived, the rescue attempt was dealt a final blow when it was learned that one of the helicopters had lost its primary hydraulic system and would be unsafe to use fully loaded for the final assault on Tehran;

Whereas as the various aircraft began moving into position to return to their respective launching points, one of the helicopters collided with a C-130 aircraft on the ground;

Whereas flames engulfed the helicopter and the C-130 and resulted in the death of 5 airmen and 3 Marines;

Whereas other members of the task force were burned but survived, while their comrades acted bravely in restoring order and managed to evacuate the wounded personnel and salvageable equipment back to friendly territory;

Whereas Members of Congress were dismayed with the poor equipment, lack of funding, and inattention that had been given to special operations forces up to that time that came to light because of the aborted rescue mission;

Whereas in response, legislation was enacted in 1986 to establish a new unified command for special operations forces that is designated as the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM);

Whereas the United States Special Operations Command continues to prove its immense value to the national defense as witnessed by the performance of special operations forces in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in many other countries of the world; and

Whereas the Nation owes a great debt of gratitude to special operations forces personnel and their families: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who participated in Operation Eagle Claw in April 1980 in the attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran and particularly remembers the sacrifice of those who died in that attempt; and

(2) commends all special operations forces personnel currently in service.

Attest:

*Clerk.*