Aceh, a province in Sumatra, Indonesia.

Before I discuss the merits of this resolution, I would like to thank my colleagues who have joined me in support of this resolution, in particular the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER).

Aceh was brought to my attention in the year 2000 by one of my constituents, Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, a human rights lawyer from Aceh. Mr. Jafar told me about the abysmal human rights record of the Indonesian military and others throughout the province of Aceh. Upon his return to Aceh in August of 2000, not long after we met, Mr. Jafar was abducted in Medan, tortured for several weeks, and found mutilated in a mass grave in the fall of 2000. Cases like Mr. Jafar's happened too often and motivated me to push for an end to his 3-decade-long conflict that he so much wanted to see ended, that took over 15,000 Aceh lives.

This resolution expresses support for the peace agreement signed on August 15 of this year by the Free Aceh Movement and the government of Indonesia. This agreement saw both sides making several concessions in order to broker this peace.

The Free Aceh Movement has abandoned its demands for independence and has agreed to disarm. On the other side, the government of Indonesia has granted amnesty for the Free Aceh prisoners and has agreed to a timeline of troop withdrawal.

The memorandum has also given the people of Aceh new political powers that will allow them to retain 70 percent of the revenue from the natural resources of their province.

A truth and reconciliation commission and a human rights court will also be established, giving the people the machinery for justice, as well as for peace.

The considerable compromises that both sides made in this memorandum of understanding shows their willingness to secure peace for the citizens of Indonesia and Aceh.

This resolution acknowledges and expresses support for the memorandum signed by the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement. This resolution further expresses hope that both parties will fulfill their commitments so that peace will be instilled in the region.

Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, this resolution encourages the Secretary of State and the Administrator for the United States Agency for International Development to commit resources so that peace can be supported and so that peace will endure.

I support this resolution to show the people of Aceh and the government of Indonesia that the U.S. Congress supports this progress as well.

Lastly, as my good colleague from California mentioned, the devastation of the tsunami, the tsunami that took so many, many lives, perhaps that tsunami did take many lives and we know it did. This peace accord will ensure, if carried through, that many, many more people within Aceh will not lose their lives, and for that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to support this worthy resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 456.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SAUDI ARABIA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 275) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 275

Whereas the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, were carried out by 19 hijackers, including 15 Saudi Arabian nationals;

Whereas since September 11, 2001, multiple terrorist attacks have occurred inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that were carried out by Saudi nationals;

Whereas Saudi nationals have joined the insurgency in Iraq, carrying out terrorist activities and providing financial support;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia controls and regulates all forms of education in public and private schools at all levels;

Whereas Islamic religious education is compulsory in public and private schools at all levels in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the religious curriculum is written, monitored, and taught by followers of the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, the only religion the Government of Saudi Arabia allows to be taught;

Whereas rote memorization of religious texts continues to be a central feature of much of the educational system of Saudi Arabia, leaving thousands of students unprepared to function in the global economy of the 21st century;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has tolerated elements within its education system that promote and encourage extremism;

Whereas some textbooks in Saudi Arabian schools foster intolerance, ignorance, and anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views;

Whereas these intolerant views instilled in students make them prime recruiting targets of terrorists and other extremist groups;

Whereas extremism endangers the stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region, and threatens global security;

Whereas the events of September 11, 2001, and the global rash of terrorist attacks since then, have created an urgent need to promote moderate voices in the Islamic world as an effective way to combat extremism and terrorism;

Whereas the report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States stated that ''Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamist terrorism''; and

Whereas the ascension of King Abdullah to the throne in August 2005 presents a new opportunity for education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) urges the Government of Saudi Arabia to reform its textbooks and education curriculum in a manner that promotes tolerance and peaceful coexistence with others, develops civil society, and encourages functionality in the global economy;

(2) urges the President to direct the Secretary of State to use existing public diplomacy channels, international visitor exchanges, professional development, and educational reform programs, including those under the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Broader Middle East Initiative, to focus on the issue of educational reform in Saudi Arabia in accordance with the objectives enumerated in paragraph (1);

(3) expresses extreme disappointment with the slow pace of education reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

(4) urges the President to take into account progress in meeting the goals outlined in paragraph (1) when determining the level and frequency of United States bilateral relations with the Government of Saudi Arabia; and

(5) requests that the Secretary of State examine the educational system in Saudi Arabia, monitor the progress of the efforts to reform the education curriculum, and report on such progress, in classified form if necessary, to the appropriate congressional committees.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 275, which expresses the sense of Congress regarding modifications in the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It is unfortunate that some of the textbooks which are used in Saudi Arabian schools foster intolerance, ignorance and anti-Semitic, anti-American and anti-Western views. Extremism in

any form endangers the stability of the Middle East and undermines the efforts to create a conflict-free environment. There is an urgent need to promote moderate voices in the Islamic world as an effective way of fighting extremism.

Educational reform, with an emphasis on tolerance and respect for religious differences, can enhance the possibilities of harmony in this troubled region. Our children need to learn the concepts of peace and tolerance, not war and hatred.

The resolution recognizes the opportunity presented by the ascension of King Abdullah to the thrown in Saudi Arabia to call for education reform in his country.

It also establishes that progress on such reform is a priority for the United States and a factor to be considered when determining the level of our diplomatic engagements with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It also urges the President to direct the Secretary of State to use the means at her disposal to assist the Saudis in such education reform.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution. I congratulate my colleague from Florida.

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

□ 1500

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

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to commend my good friend and distinguished colleague from Florida (Mr. DAVIS), a former member of the International Relations Committee, for introducing this most important measure relating to the curriculum in Saudi Arabia. We all appreciate his leadership on this important matter.

Mr. Speaker, as all of us as parents know, we have an enormous obligation not only to ensure that our children receive an education which will enable them to function in this century, but that their education include an important quotient of understanding other religions and other cultures, and an education that resists the temptation to demonize those that we do not understand.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saudi Arabia has singularly failed to accomplish this important task. The extremist Wahhabi religious education which is present in Saudi schools encourages and promotes extremism, viciously anti-American, anti-Western, and anti-Semitic attitudes. It fosters hatred and intolerance.

It is no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that 15 of the 19 hijackers on September 11 were Saudi nationals. The vile hatred filling the minds of so many young Saudis in schools makes them prime targets for terrorists and other extremist groups. I urge all my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member, Congressman LANTOS, for his support on this legislation that has been pending for about 3 years, and the chair of the committee, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, my colleague from Florida, and also the cosponsor of this legislation, Mr. KING of New York, the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

As has been described, this resolution is actually very simple. It is constructive pressure on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to reform the content of their school system to rid that content of anti-Semitic, anti-Western extremist material that is forced upon the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by radical extremists in the Wahhabi sect in Saudi Arabia.

This legislation is the product of two trips I have taken to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Like many Americans, like many Members of Congress, I searched for the answers after September 11 to make sure that what happened on that day would never happen again. My personal search, my search as a Member of Congress, took me to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia just a few months after September 11.

I visited, as did other Members of Congress, with the Minister of Education of Saudi Arabia and with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, now the King of Saudi Arabia. The King of Saudi Arabia understands this problem. For far too long, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has allowed radical elements within the country to control the school system. As was mentioned by Mr. LANTOS, it is not a coincidence that 15 of the 19 hijackers on September 11, 2001, came from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

What this legislation specifically says is that the Congress is directing the President of the United States to provide a report to the Congress and to the American people as to the status of efforts by Saudi Arabia to reform their school system, and we are in fact pressuring and calling upon and encouraging the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to do exactly that.

We need to have a relationship with this country that allows us to be open and honest in expressing our concerns. These are not just issues within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These are not just threats of terrorism to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. These are, in fact, as we sadly know from our history, threats to the United States as well.

There has been a report card issued by the 9/11 Commission in the last few weeks about the efforts of this country to learn from September 11. I am sad to report that one of the areas that received a D was the failure of this Congress and this administration to openly discuss changes and to make changes in our policy towards the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is my hope today that this resolution represents an overdue step in that direction as Democrats and Republicans coming together, I believe unanimously, to say to the administration that it is time to speak out on this issue and to do so constructively.

Mr. Speaker, on this Sunday in my hometown of Tampa, in my State, it is a game day for many communities. I believe what the United States Government needs in the war on terrorism is the same thing that the Tampa Bay Bucks need right now in my hometown, which is a strong defense and a smarter offense. A smarter offense is identifying the root causes of terrorism and aggressively addressing them.

This is, in fact, one of the root causes of terrorism. It is the creation of extremism and extremists in the schools of Saudi Arabia in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And this bill represents an attempt to work with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to put an end to that root cause of terrorism as well as others.

I want to urge my colleagues to join Congressman PETER KING and me, Congressman LANTOS, and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN in strongly and unanimously supporting this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend for his thoughtful and powerful statement.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 275.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. 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 question will be postponed.

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 797) to amend the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-determination Act of 1996 and other Acts to improve housing programs for Indians.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Page 3, line 14, strike out ''and''

Page 3, strike out line 24 and all that follows through page 4, line 4 and insert the following: *of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.); and*