

United States but to the sovereignty of nations around the world, and it deserves a policy response. That is why this bill is very important.

It is also why, again, I thank Chairman MCCAUL and Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee for working collectively in a bipartisan way.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1151, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1151 is an important step in addressing very real threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party.

I again thank Ranking Member MEEKS and Chairman MCCAUL for this bill which earned bipartisan support in the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I believe it deserves our unanimous support.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1151, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. MAST. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1730

CONDEMNING RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE RUSSIAN MILITARY TO DOWN A UNITED STATES AIR FORCE DRONE

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 240) condemning recent actions taken by the Russian military to down a United States Air Force drone, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 240

Whereas United States European Command released footage confirming that 2 Russian Su-27 fighter jets acted unprofessionally and in a reckless manner when intercepting and downing a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone on March 14, 2023;

Whereas a United States Air Force drone was acting safely and responsibly in international airspace and in accordance with international law; and

Whereas the 2 fighter jets released fuel and bumped into the drone, resulting in the drone crash-landing in the Black Sea: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the reckless actions of the Russian military; and

(2) reaffirms the United States will not be deterred from operating U.S. drones in inter-

national airspace in the Black Sea region due to Russia's reckless behavior.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 240 to condemn Russia's blatantly hostile actions last month downing a United States Air Force drone, downing one of our United States military aircraft.

Think about the seriousness of that.

On March 14, while flying in international airspace over the Black Sea, a U.S. Air Force Reaper drone was attacked by two Russian fighter jets. Yes, it was attacked. The two jets flew in front of it, and at one point, even dumped fuel onto the drone. Eventually, one of the Russian jets hit the drone's propeller and sent it crashing into the Black Sea.

Let's talk about what this really was. Was this an American aircraft?

Yes, it was.

Was this an American aircraft flying in international airspace?

Yes, it was.

Was this an American aircraft flying in international airspace that was taken down as a result of Russian pilots' purposeful actions?

Yes, it was.

There is no version of the world in which this can be deemed acceptable. Unless that's in Joe Biden's world, apparently.

Let's compare and contrast the response of the Kremlin to the response of the White House on this attack.

Vladimir Putin rewarded the two fighter pilots with medals for a job well done. Think about that.

President Biden ordered altered flight patterns to avoid future conflicts with Russia.

That is the difference between the two responses.

We are having a lot of conversations about America being violated by foreign adversaries, the last bill and now this one.

The Kremlin sent a clear message about what took place, that this type of behavior, they deemed it commendable. They have pinned medals on the chests of their fighter pilots. They rewarded them.

The White House sent a clear signal that they are going to be bullied and they are going to be backing away. They responded with weakness and

compromised our intelligence operations by moving us further from what we wanted to observe, when we were just debating a bill about China surveying us over our own territory with their balloon.

These are the differences in what is going on in the world right now.

By altering flight patterns and sending drones in the Black Sea further to the south, the Biden administration has degraded our ability to collect intelligence on Russian forces in the region. To put it simply, Putin lashed out, and very unfortunately, Biden backed down, and now America is less safe.

Vladimir Putin does not get a veto over U.S. operations of military operations in international airspace or sovereign Ukrainian airspace. Yet, President Biden seems determined to give him one.

This is just the next domino to fall, in my opinion.

How would the President respond if China took similar action against our aircraft in the South China Sea or in Taiwan?

President Biden is telegraphing to our adversaries that the U.S. will back down in the face of the slightest provocation. He is giving Vladimir Putin the validation that he needs: that he can simply threaten escalation in order to intimidate others into backing down. He draws no red lines.

This resolution condemns Russia's attack. It reaffirms that the U.S. will not be intimidated—something that we have to reaffirm in this body given what is going on—certainly not when it comes to operating drones in international airspace.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, Putin's Russia has abandoned the international systems that help countries interact and help build good faith and greater security. As someone who believes in the power of diplomacy and dialogue as a path to peace, the state of today's Russia is tragic and testing the international community's resolve, but I am so thankful that President Biden is indeed more responsible than Mr. Putin.

It is that kind of responsibility that is truly important and that we make sure that we are utilizing diplomacy along with our allies together, not America alone, not America by itself, but America and its friends. That is restraint.

I can recall if you have a red line, it is easy to draw a line, but the person that is most reserved steps back and if someone truly crosses that line, the United States is ready.

That Russia ignores the rules and standards is really not new. It is not surprising, but it has become more consequential and detrimental. We have

seen Russia's ill-advised and criminal behavior in Ukraine. That is why the United States under President Biden's leadership has created the strong bond with our NATO and European allies and others all across the world.

Again, when I think of March 14 and the Russian pilots' decision to release jet fuel upon an American surveillance drone and clip the aircraft, it indeed was a reckless move that caused the drone to crash into the Black Sea. It was an unprofessional and dangerous maneuver, and it marked the first time since the Cold War that Russia has downed a U.S. aircraft.

This incident added to the already heightened tensions between the United States and Russia as Vladimir Putin continues his war of aggression in Ukraine. While our pilots and military work carefully to avoid such incidents—again, prudence, responsibility—I don't want to be like Vladimir Putin or the Russians. I don't want to imitate them, but Russia is about to play with fire.

Thankfully, we have a professional military that knows the power of restraint. This resolution rightfully condemns the March 14 incident and will let them know that we are watching, and we will not be silent about it, especially here in the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WILLIAMS), the author of this resolution, and a submarine driver, who colleagues affectionately refer to as "bubbleheads."

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am equally honored to stand here with the gentleman and fellow veteran, Mr. MAST, as well as my New York colleague, Mr. MEEKS.

Mr. Speaker, America has always stood up to bullies. I am a veteran of the Cold War. For half a century, our Nation stood against the tyranny of the Soviet Union.

I volunteered to serve in the Navy, making six strategic deterrent patrols in the Pacific aboard a nuclear submarine.

The mission was clear: to project strength, to stand ready to defend our Nation and our allies, and to deter the aggression of our enemies.

Today, we are reminded what happens if American leaders fail in that mission. The Russian military, emboldened by their invasion of Ukraine, making veiled threats of nuclear escalation, suppressing the voices even of their own people, they have deliberately provoked this Nation—you and me.

On March 14, 2023, one of our MQ-9 Reaper drones, flying safely in international airspace and in accordance with international law, was attacked by two Russian Su-27 fighter jets.

These lawless pilots dumped their fuel, hitting our aircraft in mid-flight,

forcing an American reconnaissance asset to ditch in international waters.

I remain shocked not only at the unprofessional and reckless nature of the Russian pilots, but also of the Russian Government's accolades and awards that it heaped upon them.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded from my naval service that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing. That is exactly why I have proposed H. Res. 240, a resolution condemning the reckless actions of the Russian military resulting in a loss of a U.S. aircraft.

The resolution is simple. It recognizes the events that took place, highlighted by the declassified video from European Command. It resolves that the House of Representatives condemns the Russian military's actions and reaffirms that the United States will not be deterred from operating our drones in the Black Sea. This resolution speaks not for a single political ideology but on behalf of all Americans who desire peace.

I would take a moment to thank Representative COSTA, who has joined me in this bipartisan effort of standing up to tyranny and the direct act of aggression against our military.

At this time of escalating tensions around the world, we must speak out against brazen provocation. Today, the world can see that Americans across the political spectrum speak with one voice in condemnation of this act.

By standing together here on the floor of the House of Representatives, we project strength by standing together, we reassure our allies that we are committed to defend ourselves and our friends, and together, we will ensure the peace through deterrence in unity.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me thank Congressman WILLIAMS for this resolution, along with Mr. COSTA, again working in a strong, bipartisan way.

Congressman WILLIAMS' resolution appropriately condemns Russia's irresponsible and provocative downing of a U.S. surveillance drone over the Black Sea. It lets Russia and the entire world know that the United States House of Representatives stands strongly together in condemning the actions of the pilot that downed the U.S. surveillance drone.

It says unequivocally that the United States of America will stand and stand together and work together with our friends and allies against the provocative and, I believe, criminal actions of Vladimir Putin.

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

In closing, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. WILLIAMS) for introducing this important resolution. I believe that this Chamber has to stand firmly against Russian aggression. I

believe very firmly that the United States of America has to have big, giant, brass stones. If our aggressors show us that they have bigger brass stones than what we do, then we will not be the leader of the free world.

I very much fear what is taking place right now. I will just say it like that. I very much fear what is taking place and is allowed to take place in this world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 240, 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. MAST. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1832

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MCCLAIN) at 6 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motions to suspend the rules with respect to:

H.R. 1151;

H. Res. 240; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

UPHOLDING SOVEREIGNTY OF AIRSPACE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1151) to hold the People's Republic of China accountable for the violation of United States airspace and sovereignty with its high-altitude surveillance balloon, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.