Defense Authorization Act, which would require the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to improve their research into Persian Gulf war illnesses and their treatment of suffering Persian Gulf war veterans.

Our veterans, who have so bravely served our country in the Persian Gulf war, have been suffering for far too long. They have been waiting patiently for answers and we are letting them down.

As the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits, I have been holding hearings to look into the often frustrating claims process for Persian Gulf war veterans.

What I have detected is that there are far too many delays in the system. By working with the VA, claims processing has now been centralized which is expected to improve the chances of our veterans' receiving the proper benefits.

The lack of coordination of the various research programs conducted by the Government is presenting another obstacle. As Federal Representatives, I believe that it is our responsibility to insure that all research programs fit together to solve this issue of undiagnosed illnesses.

The Buyer-Kennedy amendment is a surefire way to bring us one step closer to resolving this problem by taking care of our ailing veterans.

The bottom line is that our veterans are sick and their families are suffering—they are due the health care they have earned.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the amendment.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of Mr. BUYER's amendment to provide for a series of initiatives to improve the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans' Affairs investigation of Persian Gulf illnesses, and the treatment of ill gulf war veterans.

This amendment first, authorizes $4.5 million to establish a cooperative DOD/VA program of clinical trials to evaluate treatments which might relieve the symptoms of gulf war illnesses; second, requires the Secretaries of both departments to develop a comprehensive plan for providing health care to all veterans, active-duty members and reserves who suffer from symptoms of gulf war illnesses.

This amendment is particularly important because it cuts to the heart of the matter regarding the DOD's response to this issue. Along with I'm sure many of my colleagues, I have heard numerous stories from my constituents about the poor initial response to veteran's concerns from both DOD and the VA.

Yet, when we in Congress raised these issues, time and time again, the CIA and DOD assured members of both the House and Senate that there was no evidence that any troops were exposed to chemical weapons in the gulf. Moreover, the VA was eager to accept these statements, so eager in fact, that VA officials did not feel exposure to chemical agents even merited consideration when ascertaining the causes behind the symptoms experienced by the affected personnel.

Then, last year, when faced with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, officials at the Pentagon reversed themselves and stated that 400 soldiers at the Khamisiyah ammunition site were exposed to chemical agents. This figure later grew to approximately 20,000.

Since this initial revelation, additional disturbing facts have come out as the CIA and DOD have engaged in a contest of finger-pointing and blame shifting over what was known at the time, and what was communicated.

To me, the most shocking fact is the revelation to subcommittee staff last January that 80 percent of the nuclear-biological-chemical logs from the theater of operations, 165 of the 200 total pages, are missing.

For one, I am losing patience with the DOD in this issue. It was troubling enough that Pentagon officials were categorically denying troop exposure to chemical agents despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Now, however, we find out that most of the record logs, which were intended to track these incidents, are missing. The charges of coverup no longer seems so farfetched.

These facts, as they have dribbled out over the past 6 years, point to the following conclusion. Simply put, we were not prepared to handle the contingency of widespread chemical use by Iraqi forces during the gulf war, and that it was only by the grace of God that Saddam Hussein did not resort to the use of such devices.

Mr. Chairman, we in Congress need some straight, honest answers from the DOD. For too long, we have been dealing with commanders who were more interested in protecting their career and reputations than in looking out for the welfare of the men under their command. It was bad enough to discount the thousands upon thousands of detections that occurred during the war.

What is worse is the pattern of deceit and misrepresentation they have waged with the Congress and the American people. If we had a problem in addressing widespread chemical exposures during the gulf, fine. Let's admit it and move on.

The hand-writing, doublespeak, and finger-pointing that has occurred over the last 12-months is pointless and counterproductive. More importantly, it does nothing to help the veteran who put his life, and now it appears both his and his family's future health, on the line for his country.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment which will hopefully provide answers and relief to our veterans suffering from gulf war syndrome.

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER].

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 169, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER] will be postponed.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore [MR. BUYER] having assumed the chair, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1119) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks, and to submit extraneous materials in the RECORD on the amendments to H.R. 1119 considered today.

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

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

□ 1736

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida) at 5 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.

MAKING IN ORDER ON TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1997, CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 79, DISAPPROVAL OF MOST-FAVORED-NATION TREATMENT FOR CHINA

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time on June 24, 1997, to consider in the House the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 79, disapproving the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment—most-favored-nation treatment—to the products of the People's Republic of China; that the joint resolution be considered as read for amendment; that all points of order against the joint resolution and against its consideration be waived; that the joint resolution be debatable for 3½ hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, in opposition to the joint resolution, and a Member in support of the joint resolution; that pursuant to sections 152 and 153 of the Trade Act of 1974, the previous question be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion; and that the provisions of section 152 and 153 of the Trade Act of 1974 shall not otherwise apply to any joint resolution disapproving the extension of most-favored-nation treatment to the People's Republic of China for the

remainder of the first session of the 105th Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I do not intend to object, but I just seek clarification in the unanimous-consent request from the distinguished gentleman from New York [MR. SOLOMON], chairman of the Committee on Rules, that in the paragraph about who controls the time that the Member in support of the joint resolution be designated as the gentleman from California [MR. STARK] of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. PELOSI. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire of the gentlewoman, a Member in opposition to the amendment?

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, no, in support of the joint resolution. The gentleman from California [Mr. STARK] is in support of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution be debatable for 3½ hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means in opposition to the joint resolution and a Member in support of the joint resolution.

I am just seeking clarification that that be designated as the gentleman from California [Mr. STARK].

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman would yield once again, it is intended that that Member be a member of the minority of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from California [Mr. STARK], and it is understood that he would yield half of his time to the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. BUNNING], also a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, from this side of the aisle.

I might just say to the gentlewoman, since she and I have been the leaders in this effort to disapprove most-favored-nation treatment for China, that the gentlewoman and I both would seek time from the gentleman from California [Mr. STARK] and the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. BUNNING] respectively, but that is the intent of this unanimous consent request.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, hopefully we can divide the time in half.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] for his leadership in reaching this arrangement to bring his important resolution of disapproval to the floor. I will say, though, with great regret that we will be debating this resolution tomorrow morning, depriving the American people of the opportunity over the break next week to have office visits with Members, depriving the grassroots from weighing in. I think it is an attempt to keep this a Beltway business deal.

I do not know what the administration is afraid of on this issue, if they are afraid that the figures about the trade deficit that were just announced, 41-percent higher trade deficit with China for the first few months of this year than last year; whether they are afraid of the report on religious persecution which the State Department is holding until after this vote, which is highly critical of Beijing; or whether they are concerned about the report in Time magazine today about the secret missile deal,

The CIA has discovered that China is helping Pakistan build a missile plant, will the U.S. object?

Whether it is trade proliferation or human rights, the American people have a message: 77 to 27 they support conditioning most-favored-nation status on improvement in human rights. It is unfortunate that they will not have an opportunity to weigh in, and I am afraid that the administration and the leadership in the House is afraid of the truth.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Pursuant to House Resolution 169 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1119.

□ 1740

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1119) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes, with Mr. YOUNG of Florida in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, further proceedings were postponed on amendment No. 11 printed in part 1 of House Report 105–137 by the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER].

SEQUENTIAL VOTES POSTPONED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 169, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed in the following order: Part 2, amendment No. 15 offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK]; part 2 Amendment No. 1 offered by the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS]; part 1, Amendment No. 10 offered by the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. TALENT]; and part 1, Amendment No. 11 offered by the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER].

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MR. FRANK OF MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. The pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK], as modified by section 8(b) of House Resolution 169, on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the ordering of a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

So the amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BACHUS

The CHAIRMAN. The pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by a voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I ask to withdraw my request for a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman may withdraw his request for a recorded vote.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 416, noes 0, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 225]

AYES—416

Abercrombie	Bartlett	Boehlert
Ackerman	Barton	Boehner
Aderholt	Bass	Bonilla
Allen	Bateman	Bonior
Andrews	Becerra	Bono
Archer	Bentsen	Borski
Armey	Bereuter	Boswell
Bachus	Berman	Boucher
Baesler	Berry	Boyd
Baker	Bilbray	Brady
Baldacci	Bilirakis	Brown (CA)
Ballenger	Bishop	Brown (FL)
Barcia	Blagojevich	Brown (OH)
Barr	Bliley	Bryant
Barrett (NE)	Blumenauer	Bunning