

began. The follow-on OAS technical mission continues to nurture these important civil society groups in the most isolated and violent parts of Nicaragua.

Additionally, I want to take the opportunity to urge the Government of Nicaragua to move to name a professional, credible individual to serve as that country's human rights ombudsman. This is important, since the downsized successor to the OAS-CIAV has ceased providing independent human rights reporting.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 222 commends the Organization of American States for its role in successfully aiding the transition of Nicaragua from Civil War to democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the OAS role in Nicaragua has proven to be invaluable. The international support and verification commission has resettled former combatants; distributed food and humanitarian assistance; and investigated and documented human rights abuses. In addition, the OAS-CIAV brokered negotiations between the Government of Nicaragua and the re-armed groups; provided critically needed infrastructure; and established local peace commissions to provide an avenue for alternative dispute resolution.

Clearly, Santiago Murray and Sergio Caramagna are to be commended for their work as are all the members of the OAS-CIAV team and the follow-on OAS technical cooperation mission. These dedicated professionals have labored long and hard to ease the journey as Nicaragua consolidates its democracy.

I want to thank and commend the chairman for introducing the resolution and I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. GALLEGLY. 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 California (Mr. GALLEGLY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 222.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA FOR HOLDING MULTIPARTY ELECTIONS

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 215) congratulating the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for holding multiparty elections, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 215

Whereas the people of Guyana voted on December 15, 1997, to re-elect the ruling party, the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic);

Whereas the Guyanese people showed their strong belief in the democratic process by approximately an 88 percent voter turnout;

Whereas the main opposition party, the People's National Congress (PNC) has alleged that the elections were not free and fair; and

Whereas although international observers such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Commonwealth, and the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) have unanimously agreed, based on their observations on election day, that the polling process was free and fair, it has been alleged that violations occurred in the counting process, necessitating an audit of the elections by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM): Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) congratulates the people of Guyana for holding multiparty presidential elections by proportional representation;

(2) supports the audit of the elections by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an organization deemed acceptable to all parties;

(3) calls on all parties and opposition leaders to respect the outcome of the audit as the final decision and make a vow to peace and stability in Guyana; and

(4) calls on the newly elected president of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana to respect the rule of law and human rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LUTHER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY).

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

(Mr. GALLEGLY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 215. During the congressional recess from October of last year until February 1998, several nations in the Western Hemisphere, including Honduras, Columbia, Jamaica, Costa Rica and Chile, held important Presidential, congressional, or municipal elections. These elections represented another important step in the consolidation of democracy in the Americas. All of these nations deserve our congratulations and support.

One of those elections and subject to this bill was held on December 15 of last year when the people of Guyana went to the polls and elected their new President. H. Con. Res. 215 was introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and congratulates the 88 percent of the voters of Guyana who participated in their elections.

By all accounts, these elections were judged to be free and fair by a team of international election observers. Despite the fact that some ballot counting problems did arise which necessitated an international audit, the overall election process was a great success.

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Interestingly enough, the new president, Mrs. Janet Jagan, is a U.S.-born native of Chicago who succeeds her husband, the former president who passed away last year.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to congratulate all the peoples and the nations of the hemisphere who have held free and fair elections over the past few months, and commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) my good friend, for introducing this resolution, and I urge its adoption by the House.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution and I commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for introducing it. After the elections in December, the situation in Guyana looked grim. Many political actors threatened violence and threatened to ignore the outcome of the elections. The intervention of the Caribbean Community averted what could have been a very violent situation.

But, Mr. Speaker, democracy in Guyana has a long way to go and this resolution recognizes that. All parties in Guyana must recognize the rule of law and human rights if democracy is going to overcome years of ethnic and racially charged politics, and we are right to call on them to do that.

This resolution deserves our support, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting "yes" on this important measure.

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

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H. Con. Res. 215. First, I would like to thank the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LUTHER) who is managing the bill for the minority on this measure today.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) for submitting H. Con. Res. 215.

On December 15, 1997, Guyana held elections that were judged by international monitors to be free and fair elections. However, opposition parties alleged some serious irregularities. This resolution points out that an audit of the elections was requested of the Caribbean Community, CARICOM. This resolution also lends support to CARICOM's efforts and urges the competing political parties in Guyana to respect the outcome of the CARICOM audit.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to endorse, particularly, the resolution's call on the elected President of Guyana to respect the rule of law and human rights.

Accordingly, I support H. Con. Res. 215 and I thank the gentlemen for bringing it to our attention at this time.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the author of the resolution.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LUTHER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY), and also the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN) chairman of the full committee, for the outstanding work that they have done in this issue which is very important to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned, and have been, about events in Guyana, a wonderful place where the people deserve better.

First, let me congratulate the people of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for holding multiparty elections on December 15, 1997. I was saddened to learn about the violence that erupted post-election. Although the Guyanese people showed their strong belief in the democratic process, as shown by the 88 percent voter turnout, factions in the country called for civil disobedience and there was looting and rioting for many days following the elections.

In January between 15,000 and 20,000 people were rioting in the streets. I know that Janet Jagan of the People's Progressive Party/Civic, PPP/C, won by a small majority. Nevertheless, a win is a win, and the majority has a right to rule with minority having the right to participate.

Opposition political parties and international observers invited to monitor the elections concluded that while the voting on election day was fair and free, there were some concerns with the counting of the votes. The results have since been challenged and an audit of the votes and the process have been started by the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, an organization deemed acceptable to all parties in that country.

However suspicious the confusion in the election commission, however wrong the opposition feels, mob violence does not address any of these issues. I will be anxious, as I am sure all of us will be, to hear of the results of the audit. At that time I believe we can move forward with the president on a number of issues.

In conclusion, I would hope that all parties, along with the newly elected president of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, will respect the rule of law and human rights. I know that in Africa the newly elected president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, has appointed members of the opposition faction in his country to create a human rights organization. I would hope that President Janet Jagan would extend her government offices to all of the people of Guyana, and in particular the African-Guyanese descent that felt that the election did not go right.

Mr. Speaker, I think that if she brings in all of the political parties, op-

position as well as majority, I think that the country will move forward in the right direction. I am hopeful that it will happen. I wish the new President success once there is the conclusion of the audit.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 215 is a straightforward resolution which commends the people of Guyana for conducting what were, by all accounts, free and fair elections.

An assessment of the voting by the International Foundation for Election Systems indicates that election day went very smoothly, that poll workers were professional, that relations between the poll workers and poll watchers from the major parties were cordial, and turnout was very high.

The problems began after the polls closed when it became apparent that the poll workers were not as well trained in the mechanics of counting the votes as they were in actually administering the polls. In some instances, the elections commission had to reject incomplete tally sheets because they could not determine where the votes had been cast. In addition, the reporting of the returns took several days and caused public unease and suspicion which in turn led to unrest and violence.

The resolution makes note of these issues; commends the Caribbean community for its offer to audit the results; and urges all parties to respect the outcome of the audit, and to work for peace and stability in Guyana by supporting the rule of law and respecting human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and commend our colleagues Congressmen PAYNE and BISHOP, for introducing the resolution, and Chairman GALLEGLY for moving forward with the bill.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 215, and join its sponsors in congratulating the people of Guyana for holding multiparty elections.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the Caribbean have long led the way in Latin America in the practice of free and fair elections. Even before Jamaica and Trinidad gained their independence from Great Britain in the early 1960's, the islands, for the most part, generally were engaged in the practice of freely electing their local political leaders.

In addition to Guyana, 1997 also saw free and fair elections in Jamaica and in St. Lucia. In my District, the U.S. Virgin Islands, we have been electing our Governors since 1970 and our local Legislative council since the early 1900's.

While I support the resolution before us, I must caution that the process of the 1997 Guyana election is still ongoing.

I commend the people of Guyana and the other Caribbean governments for their decision to let representatives of CARICOM conduct an audit of the 97 Guyana Presidential elections and I call on all concerned to await the outcome of the audit.

Last Friday, my colleagues DONALD PAYNE, the prime sponsor of this resolution, Representative MAJOR OWENS and our newest colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, hosted a breakfast meeting with the Secretary General of CARICOM. It was a very informative meeting and I believe, will serve as the basis for a closer relationship between members of this body and CARICOM.

Mr. Speaker I applaud efforts of the authors of this resolution and the people of Guyana in the struggle for greater democracy and urge my colleagues to vote yes on H. Con. Res. 215.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 215, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF CONGRESS ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING OF MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 102

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine, and through that vote, to create the State of Israel;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is the outgrowth of the existence of the historic Kingdom of Israel established three thousand years ago in the city of Jerusalem and in the land of Israel;

Whereas one century ago at the First Zionist Congress on August 29 to 31, 1897, in Basel, Switzerland, participants under the leadership of Theodore Herzl affirmed the desire to reestablish a Jewish homeland in the historic land of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jews followed the slaughter of more than six million European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment fifty years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of six wars, terrorism, international ostracism, and economic boycotts;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant and functioning pluralistic democratic political system including freedom of speech, a free press, free and fair and open elections, the rule of law, and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas, at great social and financial costs, Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jews from countries throughout the