

again thank him for his leadership in this very important area of the law.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio not only for his work on this, which was a yeoman's effort to bring up, but all the work that he has done on behalf of missing and exploited children. The Congressional Caucus is very proud to have him as one of its members; and many other Members, about 147 of us, have worked diligently to bring this issue to the absolute forefront of the American people. We are making progress.

As the gentleman said, he and I will be attending the Fourth Special Commission on The Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. It is imperative that we demonstrate a level of commitment by the United States House of Representatives on this issue. Should this resolution pass, the gentleman from Ohio and I will present it to the 60 member countries represented at The Hague and urge their delegations to support a best-practices guide.

This resolution urges that all contracting states to The Hague Convention adopt a resolution drafted by the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children as well as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that would recommend that the Permanent Bureau of The Hague produce and promote practice guides to assist in the implementation and operation of the Convention.

As travel becomes faster and easier and as multinational marriages become more frequent, The Hague Convention is more significant today than ever before. The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children and the National Center have convened professionals and experts in international child abduction to examine their experiences with The Hague Convention.

Participants in both of these forums affirmed their overwhelming commitment to the Convention but were also unified in the conclusion that there are serious shortcomings in its implementation, including the lack of awareness of the Convention and the problem of international child abduction by policymakers and the general public. In too many instances, the processes are too slow; there is a lack of uniformity from country to country; there is growing concern that key exceptions provided within the treaty to ensure reason and common sense have in some cases ceased to be viewed as exceptions and instead have become the rule; there is great concern about the growing difficulty involved with enforcing access rights for parents; and in many instances, even where courts order returns, the enforcement of those orders is lacking or nonexistent.

We do not believe that the treaty itself should be modified, but practice guides would build upon recognized best practices under the Convention and provide a framework for applying the Convention. The practices identified and included in the guides would

not be legally binding upon signatory countries but would serve as guidance to countries based upon research and the advice of experts in order to help ensure the most effective process possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Members of the House of Representatives to vote for H. Con. Res. 69.

I want to also recognize and thank so very much those Members who signed on to this resolution as a cosponsor when we needed them. I introduced the bill on Tuesday with the hope that my colleagues would recognize the importance of this statement and rush it to the floor by the end of the week. My colleagues stepped up to the plate.

I want to especially recognize those Members of Congress and staff who worked to move this along. After the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) obviously, it is the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), Tom Mooney, David Abramowitz, Dan Turton, Tim Friedman, Kirk Boyle, Nisha Desai and Hillel Weinberg.

I know it was not easy, but I sincerely appreciate the efforts put forth by Members and staff on both sides of the aisle to bring this to the floor. It is indeed a nonpartisan issue and one that we can all embrace.

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

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. CHABOT

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. CHABOT:

In the text after the resolving clause, in paragraph (1)(F) and paragraph (2)(A), insert "Conference on Private International Law" after "The Hague".

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the concurrent resolution, as amended.

The concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT TO THE PREAMBLE OFFERED BY MR. CHABOT

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the preamble.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment to the preamble offered by Mr. CHABOT:

In the preamble, at the end of paragraph (8) of the seventh clause, strike "and" and insert after such clause the following new clause:

Whereas the Permanent Bureau of The Hague Conference on Private International Law has made significant contributions to the implementation of the Convention but recognizes that more needs to be done; and

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment to the preamble offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ON THE ARMY'S DECISION REGARDING ISSUANCE OF BLACK BERETS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week the Pentagon announced that an agreement had been reached regarding the Army Chief of Staff's decision to issue black berets for all Army personnel. After months of discord caused by what can only be called a gross error in judgment, it was decided that the Rangers would change from the honored black beret which they had been wearing since 1951 to a tan beret and the regular Army personnel would now wear the black beret.

Once again the Rangers, among the most elite soldiers that the Army has to offer, took a back seat to political correctness and social engineering within, and I quote, "the Army of one."

Mr. Speaker, I want to read for Members some of the letters that I have received from citizens regarding this issue.

This letter is from Mr. Harold Westerholm, a World War II Ranger from Oxford, North Carolina:

The Rangers fought hard to gain the respect and to be bestowed the honor of wearing a black beret. Merely giving the ordinary soldier the privilege of wearing a black beret will not improve his morale. Morale is gained through respect, respect which is earned through deed.

Let me also quote a letter from Mr. James Roe:

I strongly disagree with the United States Army ignoring the Made in America Act for the purchase of the black berets. It is unbelievable to me that you would allow our military to purchase the new headgear from China. North Carolina is a major textile-producing State, which has been devastated by low-cost Chinese imports. How did you let this happen? How can our brave men and women be forced to wear Chinese-manufactured berets?

My answer to Mr. Roe and to the millions of other Americans who have asked that question is that it happened because the Congress was not consulted

or informed of the decision to bypass the Buy American Act. I spoke with a small business owner yesterday who would have gladly bid on the order for the berets if she had only been given the opportunity. What is more, she could have made the berets for almost \$3 less than it is costing you and me and every taxpayer to import them from Communist China.

Also, I heard from retired Lieutenant Colonel William Luther. Colonel Luther wrote:

Those who can act on this matter need to wake up and understand that what they are about to let happen will cost the Army and our country far more than money can ever buy.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the letters that I have received on this issue, but these letters represent the feelings and sentiment of thousands who are sickened by this original decision and by the bogus resolution that the Rangers were forced to agree to. I am still greatly perplexed and extremely disappointed that this decision and the series of bad decisions that followed were allowed to stand. I hope that it is not too late for this Congress to intervene on behalf of the Rangers, small business owners and U.S. manufacturing companies before it is too late.

I along with many of my colleagues will not let this matter simply drop. We will continue to encourage the committees of jurisdiction to hold hearings so the American people can know the truth once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I close by saying, God bless our men and women in uniform, and God bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### REGARDING THE BUDGET FOR DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is quite familiar to me to stand here and address the subject of military budgets. For many years, under administrations of both parties, I have pointed out where we believe the House as a body and America as a Nation were failing to set appropriate priorities in the de-

fense budget. Often, indeed far too often, I and other Members noted that we were trying to do too much with too little. In fact, last year I asked the Budget Committee to add \$12 billion for the Department of Defense.

That is why I was glad to see both candidates for President advocate increases in the defense budget. It was good news. That is the right step, regardless of one's party. If we can keep our promises to the troops and maintain an effective defense, I do not care if the money comes from Democrats, Republicans or Martians.

That is why I have to say I am disappointed with the result. President Bush's defense budget for 2002 provides about \$325 billion for national security activities, nearly \$311 billion of that for the Department of Defense. That is a whole lot of money, to be sure. But then you have to take out the retiree health care provisions that the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) and I initiated and which were passed into law last year; and then you have to adjust for inflation. When you do that, guess what? The actual increase in the defense budget is \$100 million from what President Clinton proposed. \$100 million.

If any of us won that much in a lottery, we would be rich. But in the Department of Defense, what does \$100 million do? \$100 million is a pay increase for every soldier of \$1.85 per pay period. Or it is one-forty-fifth of an aircraft carrier. Or it fixes the gymnasium at West Point. Or it runs the ballistic missile defense program for 6 days. Or it is 1½ F-15 fighters. You pick whichever you like, because for that money you get only one. A \$100 million increase in the defense budget is not really too much to write home about. When the President during his campaign said that help is on the way, he must have meant spiritual help, because \$1.85 does not help anybody very much.

But let us be fair. President Bush wants to increase pay by more than \$1.85. On February 12, he told soldiers at Fort Stewart that he would increase pay by \$400 million and add in other benefits for a total of \$5.7 billion. And there is \$100 million to pay for that.

□ 1445

Well, let us not forget the budget included a \$2.6 billion increase in research and development. Not a bad idea, as such. But add that to the pay increase of \$5.7 billion, and that is \$8.3 billion; and you have to get that out of a \$100 million stone.

I am just a country lawyer, but it seems to me if you increase spending by \$8.3 billion, but have only \$100 million more to do it, you have to cut something else to make the numbers work out. We do not know what is going to get cut yet. The department has not finished the first of a series of defense reviews. But what do the choices look like?

You could cut procurement, if you can find a way to keep planes designed in the 1960s and built in the 1970s in the air safely; and if you are willing to let the Navy slide below 300 ships; and if you are ready to stop the Army's acquisition of armored vehicles for its current dismounted infantry. I am not willing to do any of these things, and I hope the Pentagon is not either.

How about operations and maintenance costs? Well, if you are willing to train even less, and let your ammunition shortages grow, and cut flying hours more, and stop repairing the U.S.S. Cole, and live with the health care shortfalls, then you could cut operations and maintenance. I do not want to be the one to tell the troops that they are not going to get help to get them off food stamps, and I hope none of my colleagues would either.

Then you could cut military construction. You could, if you were ready to give up on repairing dilapidated military housing, and stop adding protection against terrorist strikes. You get the idea. There just are not any easy choices when you have only \$100 million to pay a \$8.3 billion bill.

That is before our tax cut. That is before increasing the budget for missile defense.

It seems to me that part of the solution would be to enact a supplemental spending bill that recognizes just how hard our troops have been working. It would at least help close the gap. But that, too, has been ruled off the table for now.

Mr. Speaker, I will admit, I was one of those who believed that whoever won the Presidency, the military would begin to get the relief it needs; and I know some of my Republican friends believed the same. I am sorry to say that it looks as if we were given false hope.

#### JUMP-STARTING VALUE-ADDED INITIATIVES FOR AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. REHBERG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, this week, March 18 through March 24, is National Agriculture Week. Agriculture is the number one industry in my State and last week I introduced, along with the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON), two pieces of legislation that I believe will be very important in ag country.

The past few years have brought widespread disasters and record low prices to the agriculture economy. These harsh conditions have prompted some farmers to call for a debate on current farm policy and others to demand a better safety net for producers. While a safety net is important to producers, especially in lean years, America's farmers and ranchers do not want