

In the process, we say to all Americans, We understand the injustice that was done. We will make sure it is never repeated again. We will work to make this country a better place now and in the future.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank our subcommittee chairman, and I thank our full committee chairman and subcommittee ranking member as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill. As it has been said, there exists in America an open sore that is yet to be remedied. I note that sometimes people see an amount of money that is being spent and say that is too much money. But in this case, there is an injustice that cries out for healing and for addressing.

When one American, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, when one is struck down, then all of us are struck down. We need to address this. Now, I am not one of those who believes that we need to run forward and apologize for the sins of others that we didn't commit. But in this case, this bill addresses an injustice.

We have the power. We have the wherewithal and the ability to address this wrongdoing and this injustice. If we were not to take action, then this body would owe an apology, and I do not want to see that become necessary.

There are times that we hear moving testimony, and our heart is moved. But we know for the greater good of the country we must do something else. This is one of those cases in which we heard testimony that was very moving, and the heart is aligned with the head. This requires action. I appreciate the leadership moving this forward so that this injustice, this open sore, can finally be addressed.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, this bill, partnered by the gentleman from Georgia, a Democrat, and the gentleman from Missouri, a Republican, shows what we can do when we just pause and take a breath from the partisanship, the finger pointing, the negative attacks by the press and even some Members of our own body against this great body and join together to move this country forward.

I want to thank all of the individuals who worked on this bill, especially the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

At this time I would like to yield to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member, Mr. FORBES. I think this is an important step forward. I have been amazed by the congeniality and the cooperation that has been extended to me by all of the members of the House Judiciary Committee.

Things come around. This is a historic moment. It has been expressed with great articulateness by Members

on your side of the aisle, Mr. FORBES, as well as mine. But the witnesses on that day in Judiciary, and Myrlie Evers Williams stands out more than anyone else, were so amazing that I want everyone to go back and read the testimony that just electrified us all.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, the chairman should have the last word on this, and so he has.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNYDER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 923, 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. FORBES. 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 923.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2764, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 498 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 498

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2764) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the

Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 2764 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, my good friend, Mr. DIAZ-BALART. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 498.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1115

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 498 is an open rule that provides for consideration of H.R. 2764, the fiscal year 2008 appropriations for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and related programs.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen 15 State and Foreign Operations measures go through the House of Representatives in almost 16 years of serving in this body. Some bills were well-intentioned, but fell short of meeting America's critical needs and objectives, while others missed the target altogether.

Regarding today's State and Foreign Operations bill, I must commend Chairwoman LOWEY, Ranking Member WOLF, their respective staffs and the rest of the committee for coming together in a bipartisan fashion to craft this meaningful piece of legislation. Despite critical budget constraints and critical concerns, the bill is fiscally responsible and begins to address our Nation's foreign policy initiatives as they relate to fulfilling our commitments abroad.

In my capacity as chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and as a senior member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I believe I can speak to our country's need to restore world stability after years of following misguided and shortsighted foreign policy.

This bill provides \$34.2 billion overall for foreign assistance and State Department operations, with much-needed emphasis placed on international AIDS programs, children's health care, basic education programs and targeted peacekeeping operations. By increasing funds for critical global health, basic education, refugee and disaster assistance programs, we are heightening world stability and rebuilding our image abroad as a nation builder, not divider.

In an effort to shift away from a Middle East foreign policy that focused a little too narrowly on Iraq, we are now reaching out to neighboring Mediterranean countries that need our attention and assistance. The escalating situation in Iraq has forced thousands, indeed millions, of refugees to flee into neighboring countries, Jordan being one of the most heavily affected.

During a trip to the region almost 2 weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I witnessed firsthand the heart-wrenching effects of people displaced. What I learned in Jordan and saw in Kosovo is that there are people in this world being forced to live in conditions so inhumane that even our wildest nightmares could not comprehend. As such, I am pleased to support the bill's allocation of \$830 million to provide refugees worldwide with food, water and shelter. As I spoke last evening during the testimony in the Rules Committee, I said to Mrs. LOWEY and to Mr. WOLF that I am hopeful in conference that they will be able to add funds specifically for Jordan for reasons that I perceive are necessary.

While we must remain vigilant and diligent on combating the evils of terrorism, we must also simultaneously seize opportunities to establish, maintain and strengthen diplomatic ties in every region of the world. I am pleased also to see that the bill provides \$365 million to enhance our public diplomacy efforts, and allocates \$501 million for cultural, educational and professional exchange programs globally.

The underlying legislation includes critical foreign aid to our allies in the world, including Israel. It also restores funding in many of the areas which the present administration sought to cut.

As I mentioned, I serve as chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and the President Emeritus of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I am fond of saying that if you can say all of that, you ought to be president of the assembly. I am deeply appreciative that this bill funds America's commitment to the OSCE and the Helsinki Commission, and I indeed thank the chairwoman and ranking member, especially the chairwoman, for her efforts toward this end.

Mr. Speaker, America has a responsibility in the world. We are, as is constantly reported, the last remaining Superpower. Contrary to what many might argue later in this debate, our power cannot and must not be flexed only in our military might. On the con-

trary, our power must be flexed in what we do to help repair many of the things that are broken in the world.

The underlying legislation is a critical component in this effort. I am pleased to support this open rule and the underlying legislation.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the gentleman from Florida, my good friend, Mr. HASTINGS, for the time. I would also like to thank Chairwoman LOWEY and Ranking Member WOLF for their efforts on this undeniably important piece of legislation.

This bill funds a number of U.S. Government programs and activities, including the State Department, the United States Agency for International Development, foreign, economic and military assistance, contributions to international organizations and international broadcasting programs.

Even though aspects of this bill have clearly bipartisan support, there are significant areas of concern with some of the priorities that the majority has set forth in this legislation.

Just over a year ago, the people of Colombia reelected President Uribe to a second term with over 62 percent of the vote. President Uribe is the first President in over 100 years to be reelected by the Colombian people. His reelection and his extraordinarily high current approval ratings are a testament to his efforts to curb terrorism, corruption and narcotrafficking in Colombia.

For years, designated terrorist organizations in Colombia have hampered efforts by the people of that great country to live in a peaceful democracy. Proactive action must continue to be taken to ensure that armed terrorists are not allowed to create social unrest through violence. With the current landscape in the world today, foreign assistance, Mr. Speaker, is as strategically important to our national interest as it is morally just.

I am concerned that the underlying legislation cuts funding for Plan Colombia \$59 million below the President's request and \$86.5 million below fiscal year 2007. Plan Colombia has achieved significant results. When it began, that country was facing a civil war that was tearing it apart. Now that the plan has had time to take effect, and with President Uribe's leadership, kidnappings have fallen by 75 percent and the gross domestic product of Colombia has increased to 7 percent annually.

We must not take progress in the Andean region for granted, however. If the United States turns its back on the region, it will falter and create a scenario that will require greater U.S. investment and sacrifice at a time when obviously we have significant responsibilities worldwide, not to mention that we would be spurning a democrat-

ically elected ally that has bravely fought corruption and narcotrafficking.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank President Bush for his continued support for a democratic transition in Cuba. Pursuant to the recommendations of his Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, the President requested \$45 million in economic support funds for Cuba pro-democracy activities. These funds would support efforts for a transition to democracy in the Western Hemisphere's only totalitarian dictatorship through support for dissidents, human rights activists, independent librarians and others who risk their lives each day for freedom in that enslaved island. Unfortunately, the bill brought forth by the majority is cutting the funds needed to support pro-democracy efforts in Cuba and funding less than 20 percent of the President's request.

I would note that under the bill, the other countries in the Western Hemisphere will receive over 95 percent of the funds requested by the President, and I think that is good. Yet funds to support a democratic transition in the Western Hemisphere's only totalitarian dictatorship constitute approximately 19 percent of the President's request.

Mr. Speaker, these acts include from staging a hunger strike; to demanded access to e-mail and the Internet and going to prison for it; to having the audacity of possessing books by Gandhi and Orwell and Martin Luther King in their homes and offering those books as an independent library to their neighbors, an act of great courage that is met by the dictatorship's goon squads with violence, confiscation of the books and often prison time; to the independent journalists who risk their lives and their families' safety by writing the truth about life under the totalitarian nightmare, and who need paper and typewriters and faxes and telephones to send their stories out; to the children of political prisoners who have received the only toys they have ever seen because of the solidarity of this United States program of assistance; to those from all walks of life who dare to join a human rights organization in a totalitarian police state; to the physicians who open their homes to their neighbors for the practice of medicine and dispense medicines, risking prison for breaking the rules of the totalitarian state, the only employer in the country, or the physicians who refuse to perform the forced abortions ordered by the state when there is any indication whatsoever of a problematic pregnancy, so the regime can keep its infant mortality statistics low.

Mr. Speaker, that is how one of my heroes, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet began his heroic journey as a pro-democracy activist. He subsequently has become a great pro-democracy leader. I carry a card with his photograph with me at all times. He is currently in a dark and damp dungeon, sentenced to 25 years in the gulag for having the audacity of peacefully advocating for democracy and free elections in Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot send aid to him in prison. The regime will not allow it. But we can help his family and his colleagues in the struggle for freedom.

These are the acts of civic resistance that have grown exponentially in recent years, despite a tremendous increase in the dictatorship's brutal repression, and those are the people, the heroes that I have mentioned, that we help with this program, that we will seek to increase funding for through the President's requested level by an amendment that I will introduce with my friend and colleague Representative ALBIO SIREs of New Jersey, and that I will ask all freedom-loving Members of this House to support.

Last February, Mr. Speaker, the six Cuban American Members of this Congress, BOB MENENDEZ, MEL MARTINEZ, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, ALBIO SIREs, MARIO DIAZ-BALART and myself, received a letter from nine pro-democracy leaders in Cuba. They know the risks that they were and are taking by sending us that letter. They knew that it would be utilized publicly in forums such as today's.

In that letter, that group of dissidents and pro-democracy leaders, representing an extraordinarily wide spectrum of ideology and opinion, some with whom I have had disagreements in the past, came together and told us of the importance of this aid that we will be debating in this bill. They stated in their letter, "We can affirm that the aid that for years has flowed to the pro-democracy movement takes into account the vast range of needs, from medicine to keep a political prisoner or dissident from dying, to food, water filters, medical equipment, clothing, shoes, coats, toys for the children of political prisoners, who suffer doubly the loss of a loved one and social repression on the streets and in school, essential vitamins, office supplies, and the tools of democracy, computers, printers, phones, fax machines, among others, that account for a long list of articles and materials that have been made possible in Cuba."

Today, with the amendment that I have filed along with Representative SIREs, we reply to the letter sent in February by those pro-democracy leaders, and, as I stated, Mr. Speaker, we will ask all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the aid requested by those pro-democracy leaders in that letter, the assistance for the pro-democracy movement.

□ 1130

Mr. Speaker, on other subjects in this important legislation, the bill cuts by approximately 40 percent the President's request for the Millennium Challenge account. The Millennium Challenge, which President Bush called a new compact for global development, provides assistance through a competitive selection process to developing nations that are pursuing political and economic reforms in three areas: ruling

justly, investing in people, and fostering economic freedom. Contributions from that account are linked to greater responsibility from developing nations. The new responsibilities these nations accept in exchange for the funds ensure that the funds we provide do not go to waste and have the greatest possible impact on those who need the help the most.

That account encourages transparency, and it is a good aspect of our foreign policy, and it is very important that it be increased as this legislation moves forward.

Lastly, I would mention that this bill faces a veto threat by the President because of language which may undermine what is known as the Mexico City policy. The Mexico City policy currently in effect requires that foreign NGOs agree as a condition of receipt of Federal funds for family-planning activities that the organization will neither perform nor promote abortion as a method of family planning. The Mexico City policy applies only to family-planning programs and is designed to protect the integrity of U.S.-funded international family-planning programs by creating a bright line of separation between abortion and family planning.

There is concern by the President and many Members in this Congress that U.S. taxpayer family-planning funds could possibly go to NGOs that promote or provide abortions under the language in the underlying legislation.

I understand the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) will introduce an amendment to address this issue, and I urge Members to consider that very important amendment.

The majority correctly currently brings this important legislation to the floor under an open rule. The House has traditionally considered appropriations bills under open rules in order to allow each Member an opportunity to offer germane amendments without having to preprint their amendments or receive approval from the Rules Committee. I hope that the majority will live up to their campaign promise of running a transparent House and will continue our tradition of open rules with the rest of the appropriations bills this year.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the second-ranking member on the majority side on the Rules Committee, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this open rule and the underlying bill, H.R. 2764, the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008. There is so much to praise in this bill: its emphasis on funding our core bilat-

eral development programs; its emphasis on funding basic education, child survival and global health initiatives. And most importantly, its emphasis on providing for our national security and our global economic interests.

I would like to praise Subcommittee Chairwoman LOWEY and Ranking Member WOLF and the Foreign Operations Subcommittee in particular for the work they have done on aid to Colombia. This bill makes some badly needed and long overdue changes to our aid program for Colombia. The results of the past several years, particularly where illegal drugs are concerned, made clear that it is time to try a different and more comprehensive approach.

The 2008 bill rebalances our priorities in Colombia. It recognizes that the response to violence, narcotrafficking and instability in our South American neighbor must be multifaceted, helping to guarantee lasting security through good governance.

Colombia is an important friend of the United States and it is the largest recipient of U.S. assistance outside the troubled Middle East region. Colombia deserves our support; and even though I have been a critic of many of our past policies, I have never and I will never advocate walking away from Colombia or its people.

The new approach in this bill will make our counternarcotics policy more effective by helping small farmers transition permanently away from illegal drug production, increasing funds to investigate and prosecute major drug traffickers, and continuing drug interdiction programs. Aerial fumigation and sporadic military offenses are no substitute for helping Colombia to govern its own territory. The results make that clear: 7 years and \$5.4 billion later, the old policy has resulted in more coca growing in Colombia, and the price of cocaine on the streets of America is actually lower than before we started.

It is time for a change, for a new more balanced direction, and this bill provides more funding for judges and prosecutors, roads, clean water, jobs and aid for vulnerable people. It looks to fund the need of today's Colombia, not yesterday's. Many Colombians are working today to clean house in Colombia, going after politically powerful criminals who send drugs to our shores and wreak violence and mayhem in Colombia. The aid in this bill will help them. Success hinges on Colombia's judicial system which faces serious challenges. This bill provides them with new resources to meet those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, unless Colombia deals with the overriding issue of impunity, many of us are going to continue to fight for even more changes in our policy, restricting security assistance to the Colombian military which is responsible for a lot of the human rights

violations, and we are going to continue to insist that no free trade agreement move forward until the human rights situation improves in Colombia.

If the United States of America stands for anything, it should stand out loud and foursquare for human rights. And for too many years, we have turned our backs on the harsh reality in Colombia where thousands of trade unionists have disappeared or been murdered, thousands of people have been victimized by security forces and their allies in the paramilitary forces.

We should not be sending money in a way that does not acknowledge that those security forces need to do better. Mr. Speaker, success also depends on Colombia's ability to govern and create employment, especially in the lawless zones where drug traffickers and paramilitary groups still operate. This bill allows USAID to expand badly needed efforts to those communities in coca-growing areas that up until now have been beyond our reach due to lack of funds.

Finally, success depends on Colombia's ability to care for and reintegrate victims of violence. This includes helping Colombia's internally displaced population which is second in the world only to Sudan. That is not a list you want to be on, Mr. Speaker. It means protecting people coming forward to testify who are seeking redress. It also means helping people recover stolen land through violence and helping Afro-Colombian and indigenous people who have been disproportionately hit by violence.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does a good job of achieving balance between economic development and security aid for Colombia. It demonstrates a level of support for Colombia's democratic future that we have not been able to articulate before now. I support this new balanced direction for Colombia, and I applaud the work of the Appropriations Committee for not only these provisions but for its judicious approach of supporting what works best in our global development programs.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida for yielding me this time.

I also join in the praise for the bipartisan work of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, the excellent work of Chairwoman LOWEY and Ranking Member WOLF.

Mr. Speaker, the job of the next President of the United States, whoever that may be, whatever party that person may represent, is very straightforward. They are going to have to reintroduce America to the world. They are going to have to reintroduce the America of cooperation, of working together, of multilateralism rather than

unilateralism, of diplomacy rather than force, and strength through persuasion and cooperation.

This Foreign Operations appropriations bill is the introduction to a new relationship that America will have with the world and a new relationship that our appropriations bill will have with the taxpayers of this country. It really does two things. One, it restores accountability. That is best seen in the fact that it does not give a blank check on more money to Iraq that will go down the sink hole. Number two, it recognizes that we have to be a participant in cooperating with other countries in order to solve global problems.

Mr. Speaker, our Appropriations Committee is to be commended for this strong bipartisan work. Our image in the world has been tarnished by the foreign policies of this administration, from the war in Iraq to the rejection of multilateral agreements such to the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, to human rights abuses at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. Through this appropriations measure, we have the opportunity to send the world a different message about America's priorities. We do that in this bill by allocating \$6.5 billion to combat global health crises, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. We have provided needed help to those suffering from genocide in Darfur by investing \$949 million in development assistance.

We offer needed food, water and shelter for refugees around the world, and we make good on our obligations to international organizations investing \$334 million in multilateral programs to address the global challenges, and we pay \$1.3 billion in U.N. peace-keeping operations. The bill also helps protect the American taxpayer and brings needed accountability from the administration.

I would also like to commend the committee for restoring funding for a small but extremely important initiative, the Middle East Regional Cooperation, or MERC program. Established in 1979 by my colleague from California, MERC provides grants for collaborative scientific research projects between Israel and its Arab neighbors. MERC grants have made it possible for many Vermont students to travel to the Middle East to conduct environmental research at an innovative program called the Arava Institute.

This incredible program, working together on difficult environmental problems, has allowed Vermonters and others to live and work alongside Israeli and Arab colleagues, working together on environmental problems that affect the entire region. MERC grants have made this experience possible, and I applaud the committee for working to make sure this invaluable program receives the funding it deserves.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to supporting important work in the Middle East, this bill implements needed

changes to our policy in another conflicted region, Colombia, as was eloquently described by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN). This bill recognizes that it is time for change in our Colombia policy.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, again I thank my dear friend for yielding me the time initially.

I would like to, with regard to the issue of the amendment that I made reference to previously, note that I will be bringing to the floor along with my friend and colleague, Representative SIREs, to restore to the President's request by offsetting funds from the administration account billions of dollars of the State Department, approximately \$30 million, to bring to the President's request level the assistance for Cuban democracy programs.

Not today on the floor in the context of the rule but last night in the Rules Committee, a colleague who previously spoke made reference to a GAO report to impugn and to impeach the program of assistance to the Cuban pro-democracy movement and oppose efforts to restore the level to the President's request.

I have in my office and I highly recommend to all colleagues precisely that GAO report. We would inform colleagues where to download it. It is a very important report, and there are a couple of things I would like to point out from the report that is used to impeach or attempt to impeach the program and impugn the program, criticize the program, of assistance to the dissidents in Cuba.

□ 1145

The GAO report found that from 1996 to 2006, the Cuba program provided the following assistance:

385,000 pounds of medicine, food, and clothing to the pro-democracy movement.

More than 23,000 shortwave radios.

Millions of books, newsletters and other informational materials.

U.S. assistance, the GAO found, supported journalism correspondence courses for more than 200 Cuban journalists.

The publication of approximately 23,000 reports by independent journalists in Cuba.

And with regard to the recommendations of the GAO report, as you know, Mr. Speaker, the GAO often when it reviews in-depth, as it does, a government program or agency, it often recommends cuts in that program, and the GAO makes no recommendation of a cut. It makes recommendations for the more efficient running of the Cuban democracy programs.

And in response to the GAO report, and I have this letter in my office and it's available to any Member who would like to read it and I highly recommend it, the agency that administers these programs, the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, in a letter dated January 16 of this

year, responding to the GAO report, informs specifically, with specificity, how all of the recommendations of the GAO report have been implemented.

And so I highly recommend the reading of the GAO report and also the response by the administrating agency with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the GAO report, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that we help those who risk their lives and the safety of their families day in and day out to achieve freedom, a democratic transition in our closest neighbor, 90 miles away, that at this time is a state sponsor of terrorism and an anti-American totalitarian regime. And what those heroes of the pro-democracy movement are risking their lives and their families' freedom for is a democratic transition to a reality with the rule of law, obviously a democratically elected government that will no longer be allied with state sponsors of terrorism, anti-American state sponsors of terrorism but that will, rather, be worried and working for the needs to better the lives of the long oppressed people within Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, again I thank my good friend Mr. HASTINGS for yielding the time. I thank any of my colleagues who may have been listening to this debate for their attention. Once again I would plead that they join from both sides of the aisle to bring up to the President's request the assistance for the Cuba pro-democracy movement.

With that, Mr. Speaker, and acknowledging the complexities and yet the importance of the underlying legislation brought to the floor today by this rule, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, America's leadership role is not limited to the Presidency. Nor does it solely fall upon the shoulders of this body. Branches of our government must share responsibility.

During this critical time in world history, when America's image as a global leader is tarnished and questioned, we must lead from this Chamber. We must take it upon ourselves to make it possible for America's image in the world to be restored. We must make it our business to try and make all that is wrong right.

When America leads in a constructive, inclusive and thoughtful manner, others in the world follow. This approach toward global leadership is not, as some have charged, a soft approach to conducting the war on terrorism. On the contrary, it is a clear recognition that America cannot do this alone.

If we have learned anything in the last 6 years, it is that no one in this world is safe from the directions of terrorism. It will take a global effort to curb the efforts of those who are seeking to destroy us and others in the world.

But if we have learned anything else during the last 6 years, it is that the policies of the present administration

have failed and America's standing in the world is in dire need of restoration.

Parts of the Middle East, from Iraq to Gaza, are living in a civil war. People are dying in Darfur as we and others around the world do nothing. And children throughout the world are starving to death and dying of malnourishment and lack of potable fresh water.

The underlying legislation, the first Foreign Operations appropriations bill of this new Democratic majority, sends a clear message to our friends and enemies alike that America's priorities in the world are making must-needed changes.

I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1429. An act to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 277. An act to modify the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park to include certain land within the GT Park Subdivision, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 1429) "An Act to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DODD, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GREGG, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ALLARD, and Mr. COBURN, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 105 (adopted April 13, 1989), as amended by S. Res. 149 (adopted October 5, 1993), as amended by Public Law 105-275, further amended by S. Res. 75 (adopted March 25, 1999), amended by S. Res. 383 (adopted October 27, 2000), and amended by S. Res. 355 (adopted November 13, 2002), and further amended by S. Res. 480 (adopted November 20, 2004), the Chair, on behalf of the Republican Leader, announces the appointment of the following Senators to serve as

members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the One Hundred Tenth Congress:

The Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR).

The Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER).

The Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS).

The Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI).

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER).

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 923, by the yeas and nays;

H. Con. Res. 21, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2359, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2284, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

EMMETT TILL UNSOLVED CIVIL RIGHTS CRIME ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 923, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 923, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 2, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 512]

YEAS—422

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Abercrombie | Blunt | Cardoza |
| Ackerman | Boehner | Carnahan |
| Aderholt | Bonner | Carney |
| Akin | Bono | Carson |
| Alexander | Boozman | Carter |
| Allen | Boren | Castle |
| Altmire | Boswell | Castor |
| Andrews | Boucher | Chabot |
| Arcuri | Boustany | Chandler |
| Baca | Boyd (FL) | Clarke |
| Bachmann | Boyd (KS) | Clay |
| Bachus | Brady (PA) | Cleaver |
| Baird | Brady (TX) | Clyburn |
| Baker | Braley (IA) | Coble |
| Baldwin | Brown (SC) | Cohen |
| Barrett (SC) | Brown, Corrine | Cole (OK) |
| Barrow | Brown-Waite, | Conaway |
| Bartlett (MD) | Ginny | Conyers |
| Barton (TX) | Buchanan | Cooper |
| Bean | Burgess | Costa |
| Berkley | Burton (IN) | Costello |
| Berman | Butterfield | Courtney |
| Berry | Buyer | Cramer |
| Biggart | Calvert | Crenshaw |
| Bilbray | Camp (MI) | Crowley |
| Bilirakis | Campbell (CA) | Cuellar |
| Bishop (GA) | Cannon | Culberson |
| Bishop (NY) | Cantor | Cummings |
| Bishop (UT) | Capito | Davis (AL) |
| Blackburn | Capps | Davis (CA) |
| Blumenauer | Capuano | Davis (IL) |