

sheep. The exchange will also have the benefit of protecting view-shed lands along the scenic Little Missouri River. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and Burlington Resources concerning exploration and development of Burlington's mineral rights is also intended to provide additional protection to sensitive lands.

I have not had the privilege of visiting this area, but it is my understanding that President Theodore Roosevelt is among the many Americans who have appreciated the stark beauty of these North Dakota lands. In this bill, we are providing the opportunity for future generations to use and enjoy these lands as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration supports the objectives of this exchange but did raise concerns in hearing testimony about procedural language in the bill. We, too, would have preferred it had the Forest Service prepared a legislative environmental impact statement for Congress to consider and ratify. And we urge the Forest Service to do so in the future.

But in this case, the Forest Service has engaged in a thorough process with extensive public outreach in negotiating this exchange. Major stakeholders in North Dakota, including environmental groups, support the exchange and the bill. There appears nothing to be gained by undue delay in its implementation.

Again, I compliment the gentleman from North Dakota for his dedication and work on this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 750.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 750, the Senate bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wyoming?

There was no objection.

URGING THE PRESIDENT TO PROVIDE HELICOPTERS TO THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H.Res. 398) urging the President to expeditiously procure and provide three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters to the Colombian National Police solely for the purpose of assisting the Colombian National Police to per-

form their responsibilities to reduce and eliminate the production of illicit drugs in Colombia and the trafficking of such illicit drugs, including the trafficking of drugs such as heroin and cocaine to the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 398

Whereas Colombia is the leading illicit drug producing country in the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas 80 percent of the world's cocaine originates in Colombia;

Whereas based on the most recent data of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), more than 60 percent of the heroin seized in the United States originates in Colombia;

Whereas the Colombian National Police is led by the legendary and incorruptible Director General Jose Serrano, who has dedicated his life to fighting drugs;

Whereas the elite anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police ("DANTI"), under the direction of Colonel Leonardo Gallego, is one of the best and most effective anti-narcotics police forces in the region and the world;

Whereas in the last 10 years more than 4,000 officers of the Colombian National Police have died fighting the scourge of drugs;

Whereas in one recent year alone, according to data of the United States Government, the United States had 141,000 new heroin users and the United States faces historic levels of heroin use among teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17;

Whereas once Colombian heroin is in the stream of commerce it is nearly impossible to interdict because it is concealed and trafficked in very small quantities;

Whereas heroin does not require the traditional large quantities of precursor chemicals and large laboratories to produce and therefore there are fewer opportunities to disrupt its production and distribution;

Whereas the best and most cost efficient method of preventing Colombian heroin from entering the United States is to destroy the opium poppies in the high Andes mountains where Colombian heroin is produced;

Whereas the elite anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police has the responsibility to eradicate both coca and opium in Colombia, including the reduction and elimination of cocaine and heroin production, and they have done a remarkably effective job with the limited and outdated equipment at their disposal;

Whereas more than 40 percent of the anti-narcotics operations of the Colombian National Police involve hostile ground fire from narco-terrorists and 90 percent of such operations involve the use of helicopters;

Whereas the need for better high performance helicopters by the Colombian National Police, especially for use in the high Andes mountains, is essential for more effective eradication of opium in Colombia;

Whereas on December 23, 1997, one of the antiquated Vietnam-era UH-1H Huey helicopters used by the Colombian National Police in an opium eradication mission crashed in the high Andes mountains due to high winds and because it was flying above the safety level recommended by the original manufacturer;

Whereas in the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1998 (Public Law 105-118), amounts were appropriated for the procurement by the United States for the Colombian National Police of three UH-60L Blackhawk utility helicopters that can operate safely and more effectively at the high altitudes of

the Andes mountains where Colombian opium grows at altitudes as high as 12,000 feet;

Whereas the Blackhawk helicopter is a high performance utility helicopter that can perform at the high altitudes of the Andes mountains, as well as survive crashes and sustain ground fire, much better than any other utility helicopter now available to the Colombian National Police in the war on drugs;

Whereas because the Vietnam-era Huey helicopters that the United States has provided the Colombian National Police are outdated and have been developing numerous stress cracks, a sufficient number should be upgraded to Huey IIs, and the remainder should be phased-out as soon as possible;

Whereas these Huey helicopters are much older than most of the pilots who fly them, do not have the range due to limited fuel capacity to reach many of the expanding locations of the coca fields or cocaine labs in southern Colombia, nor do they have the lift capacity to carry enough armed officers to reach and secure the opium fields in the high Andes mountains prior to eradication;

Whereas the elite anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police has a stellar record in promoting respect for human rights and has received the seal of approval of a leading international human rights group in their operations to reduce and eradicate illicit drugs in Colombia;

Whereas the Congress also would support assistance to the Colombian military if the military demonstrates the will to fight effectively while respecting civilian non-combatants in the same way the anti-narcotics unit of the Colombian National Police has;

Whereas the narco-terrorists of Colombia have announced that they will now target United States citizens, particularly those United States citizens working with their Colombian counterparts in the fight against illicit drugs in Colombia;

Whereas a leading commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia ("FARC") announced recently that the objective of these narco-terrorists, in light of recent successes, will be "to defeat the Americans";

Whereas United States Government personnel in Colombia occasionally fly in these helicopters with the Colombian National Police on their missions are now at even greater risk from these narco-terrorists and their drug trafficking allies;

Whereas in the last six months four anti-narcotics helicopters of the Colombian National Police have been downed in operations;

Whereas the Congress intends to provide the necessary support and assistance to wage an effective war on illicit drugs in Colombia and provide the equipment and assistance needed to protect all of the men and women of the Colombian National Police as well as those Americans who work side by side with the Colombian National Police in this common struggle against illicit drugs; and

Whereas the Administration, in a letter to the Miami Herald from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) concerning the issue of anti-narcotics assistance to Colombia, stated that the strategy of the "source country", such as the strategy of Colombia, is the best and most effective methods to fight the war on illicit drugs;

Whereas the new Government of Bolivia has made a commitment to eradicate coca/cocaine production in that country within 5 years;

Whereas the United States should support any country that is interested in removing the scourge of drugs from its citizens;