

that many Members hold for the direction Bolivia and Ecuador are heading. It is my hope that ten months from now, when we again address the issue of preferences for the Andean countries, we will be witnessing a renewed commitment in these two countries for the reform and liberalization that are essential to eliminating poverty and improving the standard of living for every Bolivian and Ecuadorian.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the H.R. 5264, the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), a program meant to assist the Andean countries in their economic development. The ATPA provides duty free treatment for 94 percent of imports from the four Andean nations—Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

The original Andean Trade Preferences Act was passed in 1991 and extended and expanded in 2002 with the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), and again extended last June 2007. This program is fundamental in our mission to foster trade-based economic relations between the United States and the Andean region and stimulate legitimate economic alternatives to narcotics production and trafficking in the Andean region.

If Congress does not pass the Andean Trade Preference Act, the previous extension of the program will expire on February 29, 2008. Renewing ATPA will continue to build on the program's success and help us achieve our larger policy goals for the Andean region. At a time of increasing economic uncertainty, it will help sustain critical U.S. jobs that are dependent on stable trade with and investments in the Andean region.

From 2003 to 2006, U.S. textile exports to the Andean region increased by more than \$50 million signifying a 40 percent increase. However, with the uncertainty the constant renewal brings, last year it was extended for 8 months 2 hours before it was set to expire, it has discouraged companies from continuing their investment in the Andean region.

Our current regional partnership is grounded on the joint struggle to eradicate the narcotics menace that terrorizes both the Andean region and the United States and to provide economic stability through trade. As the Andean region currently enjoys duty-free treatment, an expansion of these trade policies, like the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement, would allow us to enter into a full partnership with the remaining Andean countries instead of just a one way trading benefit.

While free trade agreements are not on the immediate agenda of Congress, I urge a vote in favor of H.R. 5264, to extend trade preferences for Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia and continue to show our support for our Andean neighbors and allow U.S. companies to continue investing in that region.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5264, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to extend the Andean

Trade Preference Act, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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COMMENDING ELDER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR SUPPORTING ELDER HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI SERVING OUR NATION OVERSEAS

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, a few years ago, I had the honor of coming to the floor of this House to congratulate Cincinnati's Elder High School for winning the Ohio State Division 1 football championship 2 years in a row, quite an accomplishment.

Today, I want to recognize and commend Elder High school seniors Matt Brannon and Ben Combs and a group of about a dozen fellow Elder students for doing something every bit as worthy of recognition. These young men, on their own initiative, raised the necessary funds to ship care packages to Elder alumni who are serving our Nation in uniform overseas. In the words of Matt Brannon, "I want to help people who are risking their lives for us."

Such patriotism should be an inspiration to us all, and Elder High School can be proud that they are educating and instilling in their students the highest values.

Thank you, Elder Panthers. Well done.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, 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 Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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WHO SEEKS INDEPENDENCE?

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, it is written that governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that when any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new government.

Madam Speaker, this eternal statement from the Declaration of Independence clearly states the United

States' right to self-determination. We used this natural right to break away from Great Britain.

Last week Kosovo unilaterally declared itself an independent and sovereign state, and the announcement has ushered violence in the region and opposition from the country it broke from, Serbia. Following Kosovo's declaration of independence, the United States was one of the first world powers to grant official recognition to the self-declared independent Kosovo. Since then, several other countries have followed. Of course, not everyone agrees that Kosovo may unilaterally declare its independence from Serbia. Certainly Serbia objects.

At the same time, Russia, China and Spain have shared their strong opposition to the declaration. Each of these countries is struggling with its own separatist communities. They are afraid that Kosovo's unilateral declaration will encourage secessionist groups in their own country to rebel and declare themselves independent and sovereign states.

When we start meddling in the internal affairs of international nations like Serbia, consequences are sure to follow. Let me be clear, I am not talking about a people rising up and overthrowing a civil government, but a people separating themselves from a civil government and forming a new nation.

The question is, do all peoples have this right of separation, and does the United States support that? What position will the United States take as other peoples may decide self-determination, separation and independence? By recognizing Kosovo, the United States is setting a precedent, and it needs to take that position very seriously, because there are consequences.

Is the United States willing to offer recognition to the Basque and Catalan people of Spain if they declare independence or to Chechnya if they break away from Russia? Or how about Tibet if they decide to leave China? Separatist communities across the world are interpreting the actions of the United States in Kosovo to suggest that America supports movements of self-determination.

A columnist for an African newspaper recently wrote a newspaper article titled "Kosovo—the precedent that will enflame Africa." This journalist predicts that the Kosovo recognition will ignite a revival of secessionist groups across the African continent. Will the United States be prepared to deal with that if it happens? And what will we do? Will we send troops? Will we send aid to these movements?

We've even got folks from the State of Montana here in the United States saying they are going to secede from the Union if the Supreme Court rules a certain way on gun ownership. Is self-determination allowed in Montana?

Looking at our country's history, it is pretty clear that the right of self-determination of a people is expensive,