

rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENCOURAGING HUNGARY TO RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 915) encouraging the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly, and promote a free and independent press.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 915

Whereas, on October 23, 1956, some 100,000 Hungarian citizens began a nation-wide revolt against the Communist government of Hungary and its domination by the Soviet Union;

Whereas the Hungarian people fought bravely for freedom, democracy, and human rights;

Whereas, on March 12, 1999, the Government of Hungary, reflecting the will of the Hungarian people, formally became a member of NATO and on May 1, 2005, Hungary became a full member of the European Union;

Whereas the United States has invested over \$9,000,000,000 in Hungary since 1989 and the United States is the fourth-largest contributor and largest non-European contributor to foreign investment in Hungary according to the U.S. Department of Commerce;

Whereas the Hungarian Investment and Trade Development Agency reports that foreign direct investment has been crucial in boosting Hungary's economic performance and remains the driving force behind Hungary's economic success;

Whereas in 1997, the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board (ORTT) awarded licenses for two national radio stations, which are set to expire on November 19, 2009;

Whereas the two licenses are the only ones that allow for nationwide coverage by commercial, rather than state, radio-broadcast services in Hungary;

Whereas one of these licenses was awarded to a United States company and the other to a European company, each for a total of 12 years;

Whereas the Financial Times reported on November 6, 2009, that before the bids for renewal of their national licenses were due, these companies were approached by individuals claiming to represent the Socialist and Fidesz Parties in Hungary offering to extend their licenses if the parties received 50 percent of the companies' equity;

Whereas the Financial Times also reported on November 6, 2009, that both stations refused this alleged extortion attempt and the ORTT delegates from Fidesz and the ruling Socialist party voted to award the licenses to two politically-connected local bidders instead;

Whereas the Wall Street Journal reported on November 10, 2009, that Hungary's Prime Minister and the Chair of the ORTT have publicly decried the process by which these licenses were awarded;

Whereas the Economist reported on November 7, 2009, that the Chair of the ORTT resigned in protest and refused to sign the politically-motivated contracts;

Whereas United States investors are an important part of the Hungarian economy and deserve equitable treatment in accordance with United States and Hungarian laws;

Whereas unfair treatment of foreign companies will deter investment and hinder economic growth in Hungary; and

Whereas respect for the rule of law and a free and independent press will spur investor confidence in Hungary: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the recent action by the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board that awarded the national community radio licenses;

(2) encourages the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law and treat foreign investors fairly; and

(3) encourages the Republic of Hungary to maintain its commitment to a free and independent press.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I seek to claim time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman from Florida opposed to the resolution?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I do not oppose this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) for introducing this important resolution.

Let me just say in 1989 Hungary joined its Central and Eastern European neighbors in throwing off the mantle of communist rule. By taking the brave and unprecedented decision in that year to open its borders to Austria and to allow East Germans to travel freely to the West, Hungary played a decisive role in bringing about the end of the Cold War. In the 20 years since, Hungary has become a member of NATO, the European Union and a strong partner of the United States.

Hungary is working side-by-side with the U.S. in Afghanistan, where it leads the provincial reconstruction team in Baghlan Province, and it has been a partner in conflicts in Iraq and in the Balkans. We greatly appreciate Hungary's staunch support in these and many areas.

However, we have become concerned about recent reports of possible unfair treatment of foreign investors in Hungary and possible efforts to inject politically motivated demands into the commercial process. In particular, we are concerned by the actions of the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board, ORTT, in deciding not to

renew the national radio licenses for two foreign companies, one of which is American-owned, and to award them instead to two local bidders.

In 1997, the ORTT awarded to the foreign companies the only two licenses to provide commercial, rather than state-owned, nationwide broadcast services. Those licenses expired on November 19 of this year.

According to widespread media reporting, the two foreign companies have alleged that before their renewal bids were due, they were approached by representatives of Hungary's two leading political parties, offering to ensure their licenses would be extended if they agreed to the representatives' demands for a percentage of the company's equity and a say in editorial content.

The two foreign companies refused, and the ORTT awarded the licenses to the two local bidders instead, who had submitted tenders that many outside experts have said are not commercially viable.

The day following the award, the chairman of the ORTT resigned in protest, claiming that the two local bidders' contracts were flawed and economically unsound. Numerous commentators have indicated that on the face of it, the ORTT's decision clearly appears to have been politically motivated and have ignored the economic feasibility of the two local bidders' tenders.

Madam Speaker, American companies have invested over \$9 billion in Hungary since 1989. Hungary's economy, as with every other country, has been severely affected by the global economic downturn. We support U.S. companies' investment in Hungary, but we note that events such as this case give rise to questions about the fairness and transparency of doing business in Hungary.

We welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to investigate any complaint relating to foreign investments, and the decision by the Hungarian Parliament's Constitutional and Justice Committee to set up a body to examine the radio license transaction.

Hungary is a close friend and ally of the United States, and we urge the government to take all necessary steps to ensure that foreign investors are treated fairly. I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to split the time evenly in favor of the resolution with my colleague, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. KUCINICH. The gentleman asks for unanimous consent to split the time between himself and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I have already claimed time in opposition. What does the Chair rule on that?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio will control 20 minutes in opposition.

Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York that the gentlewoman from Florida control 10 minutes of the time in support?

Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida will control 10 minutes.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

□ 1115

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker and my colleagues, as Chair of the Hungarian American Caucus, I want to bring to the attention of this Congress the concerns that have been raised about H. Res. 915, legislation which "encourages the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly, and promote a free and independent press."

This legislation issues broad condemnation of the Republic of Hungary without regard to current legal proceedings that should receive more discussion. I urge my colleagues to consider the consequence of this legislation before casting a vote.

It's already been stated that the Hungarian Prime Minister has given statements questioning the award of the contract, that there is a parliamentary committee looking into it, that courts are reviewing it, and that, in fact, there's a prosecutorial investigation in the offing.

I have contacted the Hungarian Government, and in response to this congressional inquiry, the Hungarian Government pointed out that the licenses awarded to two national radio stations by the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board are under judicial review before the court: "A criminal procedure related to the issue was launched with the prosecutor's office."

Now, if this doesn't indicate a responsiveness by the government to the award of the contract, I don't know what does. The question then comes, Why is this even on the floor of the House as a suspension?

I stand by the right of every Member of this body to protect the interest of any business in any district. That's what we're here for. But I think that to put this resolution before the House for passage before any committee meetings have been held to review the actual extent of the Hungarian Government's involvement or lack thereof is really not consistent with our duties and due diligence on every piece of legislation.

Now, the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board awarded 12-year licenses to two national radio stations in 1997, to two companies, one based in the United States and another in Europe. The licenses expired last month and are the only licenses that allow for nationwide coverage by commercial rather than state-run radio broadcast services in Hungary. Following a national bidding process, the licenses were awarded to two Hungarian companies. Members across the political

spectrum in Hungary have raised concerns regarding the manner in which the licenses were issued, and a U.S.-based telecommunication company filed legal proceedings in Hungarian court.

Now, the legislation accurately states the importance of foreign investment and a need for equitable treatment in accordance with the United States and Hungarian laws. However, broad condemnation of the Republic of Hungary, charging the country, or implying, that there's widespread corruption without allowing legal processes to take place is more than problematic. This dispute should be resolved in Hungarian courts, which can render judgment and provide sufficient remedy to the injured party including, if they care to, revoke existing licenses, forcing a new round of competitive bidding, or awarding compensation. I mean, these are all things that the Republic of Hungary has the opportunity to do.

But I just want to go back to the legislation itself, which raises questions about the integrity of the government itself. And, frankly, I don't think that's appropriate given the scope of the legislation and the grievances that Members have about the contract-awarding procedure.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill before us, House Resolution 915, encourages the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly, and promote a free and independent press.

Since breaking the chains of communist dictatorship and Soviet domination, Hungary has made significant progress in implementing democracy and economic reforms. I congratulate the Hungarian people and its government for these significant steps. It has also become a full member of the Trans-Atlantic community, having joined both the NATO alliance and the European Union.

In light of how far Hungary has come in just two decades since the fall of the Iron Curtain in integrating itself in Western institutions and embracing basic freedoms, some recent developments in that country regarding the freedom of the press and the rule of law have raised some concern.

Specifically, political appointees to a government body that administers Hungary's airwaves have reportedly taken away two radio licenses from foreign-owned stations, one of them an American company, and have given the licenses to local firms that have links to Hungary's major political parties. The chairman of that government body administering the airwaves has resigned as a result, stating that the decision to take the licenses away from the foreign firms violated the law.

Madam Speaker, the manner in which this Hungarian Government body reportedly treated these foreign

companies also may raise concerns about Hungary's full commitment to a free and independent press. Political cronyism, corruption, and restriction on the media are relics of the old communist system and the old parties. The Hungarian people do not wish to resurrect these harmful policies. Not just foreign investors in Hungary but the Hungarian people deserve much better. They have worked too hard. They have gone through too much to make their beautiful country, Hungary, a free and democratic nation.

The sponsors of this measure, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. PENCE and Mr. BURTON, have introduced this resolution which condemns the recent action by the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board. It encourages the Republic of Hungary to continue to promote and respect the rule of law and treat foreign investors fairly. And, lastly, it encourages the Republic of Hungary to maintain its strong and vibrant commitment to a free and independent press.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY).

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 915, a resolution that encourages Hungary to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly, and to promote a free and independent press.

I appreciate the words of my good friend from Ohio, but I would just like to say that this resolution expresses our concern and condemns the Hungarian Radio and Television Board's process in granting these licenses. It does not question the Government of Hungary's efforts and it does not question our full confidence in their ability to resolve this matter. We welcome the government's steps in moving this forward.

For decades the Hungarian people fought against communist rule for the chance at freedom and democracy. They have been our ally, they joined NATO in 1999, and the country of Hungary is a good and dear friend of the United States of America. We must ensure that this friendship continues to maintain in a healthy and engaged way and that it continues to foster economic growth for our countries.

In 1997 the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board, ORTT, awarded licenses for two national radio stations. One of these licenses was awarded to an American company, the other to a European company, each for a total of 12 years. These terms ended on November 19 of this year. The Financial Times reported on November 6 that shortly before these bids of renewal for the national licenses were due that the companies were approached by individuals claiming to represent various parties in Hungary.

They offered to extend these companies' licenses if they received 50 percent of the equity. Both companies refused this attempt, and the ORTT voted to award these licenses to two connected local bidders instead.

We want to ensure the fullness and fairness that will be provided by the Government of Hungary's review, and we want to make sure that this resolution expresses our concern and condemns the actions of the ORTT.

U.S. investors are an important part of the Hungarian economy and deserve equitable treatment. We have invested over \$9 billion in Hungary since 1989. The friendship is strong, the friendship is unbreakable, and we are the fourth largest contributor to direct foreign investment in Hungary.

This resolution, as indicated, expresses our concerns and condemns the ORTT's actions, and we ask the Government of Hungary to treat foreign investors fairly and fully respect the rule of law, as we know they will. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, to pass House Resolution 915.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, this resolution encourages the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law. Now, if you're encouraging someone to respect the law, the underlying assumption is that they don't.

I think that to look at the action of a single agency and to put a broad brush on an entire national government is really grossly unfair. To imply that Hungary does not respect the law is actually an insult to the people of Hungary, who put their lives on the line in 1956 fighting to break free of domination by the Soviet Union, who put their lives on the line to be able to establish a democracy and self-determination.

□ 1130

Is this what they deserve? Do the people of Hungary really deserve to be treated this way? This should have been handled diplomatically. This should have been handled at a committee level before bringing it to the floor of the House of Representatives. And with respect to foreign investors, since the Government of Hungary has itself launched an investigation into the award of this contract, doesn't that show that they want foreign investors to be treated fairly? Doesn't it show that they respect the rule of law by going forward to raise the potential of prosecution of people involved in the award of this contract? Don't we already have what it is that this legislation supposedly aspires to, evidence of respect for the law and fair treatment of foreign investors?

There is no evidence that the Republic of Hungary has suddenly taken a tilt towards Soviet-type control of the press; I hope that no one is seriously

asserting that. Hungary is a proud and free society, and we should be very careful about moving forward with resolutions that in any way imply otherwise, not to say simultaneously, well, Hungary is a law-abiding nation, and then say, well, they ought to respect the law.

So again, I wish that the sponsors of this legislation, who I deeply respect and who I know are working very hard for their constituents and the business community as well as for all the people in their districts. I would say take another look at this and maybe send it to committee so that we could have the opportunity to have a deeper discussion about the advisability of the legislation, and maybe to tailor it even more firmly. I mean, I could agree with questioning the action by the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board—the Hungarian Government is questioning that action, but to challenge the entire government's integrity when the government has already taken action to raise questions itself about the award of a contract, really we have to ask what we're doing here.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and I thank the gentleman from New York.

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

I just want to answer the gentleman from Ohio, for whom I have profound respect. And I want to do it by just reading what this resolution says because I don't think it implies what he thinks it implies.

First of all, at the start of the resolution we talk about the brave people of Hungary and how they rose up against domination, Communist domination, Soviet domination in 1956, and whereas the Hungarian people fought bravely for freedom, democracy and human rights. And we talk about celebrating the fact that they have become a member of NATO and a member of the European Union. And at the end the bill simply says, and let me read it, "Resolved, that the House of Representatives (1) condemns the recent action by the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board that awarded the national community radio licenses; (2) encourages the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law and treat foreign investors fairly; and (3) encourages the Republic of Hungary to maintain its commitment to a free and independent press." I don't think that implies anything; I think that it encourages them.

And obviously this resolution is bipartisan. It was a company from Indiana that was wronged, and that is why you have Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. BURTON and Mr. PENCE from different parties, but all from Indiana, very concerned about this as well. So I don't think this casts any aspersions on Hungary, its people, or its government; quite the opposite, I think clearly in the resolution

it celebrates the great partnership and alliance that we have with Hungary and all the brave things that the Hungarian people did during the past 50 years. I just wanted to point that out.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. May I inquire as to how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio controls 11½ minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. I question why this resolution was brought before this House under suspension. I question why an effort by the proponents of the legislation wasn't made to contact the Hungarian Government and to learn that their position is in fact that there is a judicial review and that there is a criminal procedure related to the issue that was launched with the prosecutor's office because that would clearly indicate action being taken on the part of the government to look at this particular contract.

Why is this matter on the floor of the House of Representatives? Why are we taking this time to look at something that is already under review by the Hungarian Government and doing it in the context of urging the Hungarian Government to have respect for law? That's what they're doing, they are showing respect for law by taking this forward. Why do they need to be encouraged? Everyone here understands what that means; we're implying that they don't respect the law unless their judicial response is a certain way. That is not an appropriate way to proceed here. And again, it is very difficult when you have a colleague who you want to agree with on everything present a resolution with which you don't agree.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the author of this resolution, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY).

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. And I, too, have the greatest respect and friendship for my colleague from Ohio, but I did want to comment that we, in fact, did meet with the Hungarian Ambassador and did meet with him in my office here at the Capitol. And there is no implication in any way that Hungary does not respect the rule of law; in fact, we are very, very proud of the partnership and friendship that has been built with Hungary. What we are trying to do is express our concern about the conduct of the Hungarian Radio and Television Board, a concern we also expressed to the Hungarian Ambassador. And we are hopeful that this will be resolved in the near future.

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

Mr. KUCINICH. As my colleague has stated, this resolution is intended to address the actions of the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board; they are the ones who awarded the contract. But yet, in the same breath, we're asking the Hungarian Government to respect the rule of law. Is

there any other example, other than the action of a single board, that any proponent of this legislation can point to which indicates that the Republic of Hungary does not respect the rule of law? Or are we simply talking about one agency? Because if we're talking about one agency, then the resolution should have been written in a different way. Because the impact of this resolution is not going to be just to talk about the decision of one agency, it is going to imply, very broadly, that the Government of Hungary does not respect the rule of law. That passage should have been struck from this legislation.

I ask my colleague, Mr. ENGEL, if you look at the second part of the enactment clause, if he would consider striking that.

I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, let me say to my friend that it is not my resolution; it is Mr. DONNELLY's resolution. I don't think it is appropriate for me to strike anything.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. KUCINICH. Parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. KUCINICH. Is a motion to strike in order by the manager of the bill, or would the sponsor of the bill have to ask for such a motion?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A motion to suspend the rules is not amendable.

Mr. KUCINICH. So since this legislation is being offered under suspension, then no motion to strike would be in order; is that right?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct. A motion to suspend the rules is not amendable.

Mr. KUCINICH. Okay. I withdraw my request for a colloquy with my friend from New York.

I just think if it was so important to bring this to the floor, it should have been tailored quite narrowly to talk about the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board and not to take a broad brush with which we paint the Government of Hungary.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 1½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Ohio controls 7 minutes.

The gentleman from New York has the right to close.

Mr. KUCINICH. I think that in the time that I had allotted, I had an opportunity to present my point here. And I just hope that when my colleagues vote on this later on in the day that they will consider the diplomatic implications of voting for this resolution.

And I will say again, and this is really a concern that I have that I want to express to the leaders of the House of Representatives, we have a lot of bills that come to this floor under suspen-

sion that appropriately should be discussed in committee before they come to the floor of the House. I think this is a good example of such a bill. And I would ask our leadership to please pay more careful attention to these issues because this House has very valuable time, and while we have the freedom of speech on this floor, the speech gets very expensive when there are so many other issues waiting for discussion on the floor.

I appreciate the opportunity here. I want to thank my colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for what she has expressed and for the concerns that Mr. DONNELLY and Mr. ENGEL have expressed.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I would just urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill. This really is not a controversial bill. This is really, with all due respect, a tempest in a teapot. I think that simply, again, I will read the first sentence—

Mr. KUCINICH. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ENGEL. Let me just finish and I will be happy to yield. I would read the first sentence in this resolution, which says, "Encouraging the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly, and promote a free and independent press." I don't think anyone can disagree with that, not even my friend from Ohio. And I will now yield to him.

Mr. KUCINICH. With all due respect to my good friend, Mr. ENGEL, you have compared this to a tempest in a teapot. It's your teapot and it's your tempest.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, let me say to my friend, it's not my tempest and it's not my teapot. I wish the gentleman had come to us earlier before we were having the vote scheduled. We did not know of his objections prior to this debate. And perhaps if he had come to us a little bit earlier we might have been willing to accommodate him, but not knowing about it and being blindsided by his objection, I think it's kind of a little bit difficult to change it.

Mr. KUCINICH. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ENGEL. No, I have yielded enough.

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 915, a resolution of the House of Representatives encouraging the Republic of Hungary to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly, and promote a free and independent press.

I would like to thank my Indiana colleagues, especially Congressmen JOE DONNELLY and BARON HILL, for their yeoman's work on this issue. Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN also were instrumental in bringing this important resolution to the floor.

What could and should have been a fair competition to rebid Hungary's only two national, commercial FM radio broadcast licenses is now mired in allegations of political corruption. As nine embassies in Hungary including the United States warned in a joint letter last month, we are concerned that such in-

stances of non-transparent behavior affecting investors could discourage foreign investment and hamper economic growth in Hungary. This concern is underscored by a report commissioned by the Public Procurement Council in Hungary, which recently found that between 70 and 90 percent of all public procurements in Hungary are tainted by corruption.

The broadcast licenses previously held by Slager Radio (owned by an Indianapolis-based company) and Danubius Radio (owned by a Vienna-based private equity firm) were recently awarded by the Hungarian National Radio and Television Board (ORTT) to other bidders despite unrealistic business plans and irregularities in those bids that I am told should have disqualified them under Hungarian media law. Not only that, but prior to the ORTT's highly controversial decision, Slager and Danubius were reportedly approached by agents of the Fidesz and Socialist parties seeking to acquire partial control of the stations to ensure their licenses would be renewed. Although the ORTT chairman resigned in protest and refused to sign the contracts, the delegates appointed to the ORTT by the Fidesz and Socialist parties all voted in favor of the two new stations. A poll of Hungarians suggested that six of out ten agreed that the decision to end the broadcast rights of Slager Radio and Danubius was "outrageous."

Slager and Danubius have appealed the ORTT decision, but litigation could drag on for years, while their popular broadcasts were forced off the air on November 18 of this year, the same day we introduced this resolution. In addition, the Hungarian parliament voted to investigate the matter and a prosecutor is looking into whether criminal charges are warranted. I am encouraged by these steps and it is certainly my hope that the matter will be expeditiously resolved.

U.S. and other foreign investors deserve equitable treatment in accordance with Hungarian law. It bears mentioning that the United States is the fourth-largest contributor to foreign investment in Hungary and the largest non-European source of investment. The United States has invested over nine billion dollars in Hungary since 1989.

Unfair treatment of foreign companies will deter investment and hinder economic growth, while upholding the rule of law and promoting a free and independent press—as we urge in this resolution—would instead spur investor confidence.

In conclusion, we bring this resolution to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives today in solidarity with all Hungarians demanding a thorough and expeditious investigation into the highly questionable circumstances surrounding the awarding of these radio licenses and fair competitions in public procurements that will demonstrate Hungary's commitment to respect the rule of law, treat foreign investors fairly and promote a free and independent press.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 915.

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. KUCINICH. Madam 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 motion will be postponed.

□ 1145

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH EL SALVADOR

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 213) expressing the sense of Congress for and solidarity with the people of El Salvador as they persevere through the aftermath of torrential rains which caused devastating flooding and deadly mudslides, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 213

Whereas, on November 9, 2009, parts of El Salvador were decimated by floods brought on by Hurricane Ida;

Whereas Hurricane Ida caused the death of over 190 people in El Salvador, and made over 14,000 homeless, with both of those numbers likely to rise;

Whereas over 1,800 homes have been destroyed by the mudslides;

Whereas the small coffee growing town of Verapaz, population 7,000, has almost been completely destroyed;

Whereas reports have stated that up to 10,000 Salvadorians may need emergency food assistance;

Whereas Hurricane Ida also left about 13,000 people homeless in Nicaragua and damaged about 100 homes in Guatemala;

Whereas neighboring nations of El Salvador have provided relief to the people of El Salvador;

Whereas the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Southern Command, has provided significant emergency relief and assistance to the people of El Salvador in the wake of Hurricane Ida; and

Whereas El Salvador has begun the process of recovering from this natural disaster: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) expresses solidarity with all people affected by Hurricane Ida;

(2) commends the brave efforts of the people of El Salvador and Central America as they recover from Hurricane Ida;

(3) applauds the coordination between the countries of Central America during the relief effort in providing relief to the people of El Salvador;

(4) acknowledges the efforts of the government of El Salvador to work closely and promptly with the United States to assist the affected population;

(5) recognizes the progress made by El Salvador on disaster preparedness capacity and their efforts to invest in disaster risk reduction; and

(6) urges the President to continue to make available assistance to help mitigate the effects of the recent natural disasters that have devastated El Salvador.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentle-

woman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 213, a resolution expressing our support for the people of El Salvador as they persevere through the aftermath of floods brought on by Hurricane Ida. I am the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and I feel especially strongly about a resolution like this. I want to thank the ranking member of my subcommittee, CONNIE MACK, the gentleman from Florida, for introducing this important resolution.

On November 9, a large portion of El Salvador was devastated by floods brought on by Hurricane Ida; 196 people were killed, 78 people are missing, and nearly 14,000 individuals are displaced from their homes. Our thoughts are with the people and Government of El Salvador as they cope with these difficult losses.

The United States, through USAID and the U.S. Southern Command, has provided significant emergency relief and assistance to the people of El Salvador in the wake of Hurricane Ida. The President of El Salvador, Mauricio Funes, and his government have worked closely with the United States to assist the affected populations.

Let me add that I attended the inauguration of President Funes in El Salvador with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton just a few months ago, and I am glad that our governments are working so closely together. And let me say that I have great confidence in President Funes as he takes on these crucial disaster relief efforts. I had the pleasure, when I attended the inauguration of Mr. Funes with Secretary Clinton, of meeting with then President-elect Funes at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad as well, so I have discussed things with him twice.

As I have said, the U.S. and other countries have already done a great deal to assist El Salvador during this difficult time, but I believe much more remains to be done. I urge my colleagues to support this crucial legislation, and I again thank Representative MACK for his important initiative.

I encourage the Obama administration to also support disaster relief efforts in Nicaragua and Guatemala, and we need to continue to assist the government and people of El Salvador and prevent future disasters by investing in the country's infrastructure. And I want to, again, say that Hurricane

Ida's damages were not limited to El Salvador. Guatemala and Nicaragua were impacted as well.

So I want to thank my friend, Congressman MACK, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I'd like to yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in support for the people of El Salvador and, specifically, the bill before us, H. Con. Res. 213, a resolution introduced by my colleague from Florida, my good friend, Mr. CONNIE MACK, the ranking member of our important Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.

Last month, as we have heard, the torrential rains of Hurricane Ida took a devastating toll on the people of El Salvador. Nearly 200 people lost their lives, and more than 14,000 were left homeless. Up to 10,000 Salvadorans were left in reported need of emergency food supplies. The devastation did not stop at the borders of El Salvador, however. Hurricane Ida also left about 13,000 people homeless in Nicaragua and damaged about 100 homes in Guatemala.

This important resolution expresses our solidarity with all of the people impacted by this horrendous storm, and it commends the brave efforts of all who helped to contribute in the relief efforts in its aftermath. Specifically, I would like to recognize and commend the significant and immediate efforts undertaken by our most generous country, the United States of America, in the wake of this horrific storm. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and the U.S. Southern Command, the United States was able to help airlift emergency relief supplies, finance humanitarian assistance projects, support medical evacuations, assess infrastructure repair projects, and deliver emergency and food supplies to the worst-hit and isolated communities in El Salvador.

This resolution also recognizes the coordination among the countries of Central America in the relief efforts following the storm. It is critical that responsible nations continue to work together to better prepare ourselves and our democratic partners for natural disasters such as this one.

Again, I would like to commend the brave efforts of the people of El Salvador and, in fact, all of Central America as they recover from Hurricane Ida and to express our strong support during this most difficult time.

Specifically, I would like to congratulate my friend from Florida (Mr. MACK) for his authorship of this important resolution, and I would like to recognize him at this time, Madam Speaker, to speak on this resolution. And I would ask him if he would also speak on the Drug Commission on the Western Hemisphere of which he and Mr. ENGEL were the authors.