

from very large metropolitan areas to small communities, further congesting roads. This has certainly been the case in my community. According to a Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment survey, 17 of 18 BRAC growth communities identified transportation as one of their top challenges. The priority is most clear for us around Joint Base Andrews. Traffic entering and exiting the installation contributes to regional congestion, resulting in the average Washington metropolitan region driver wasting almost 70 hours in traffic per year not just at Andrews, but throughout the region.

The Federal Government has provided very limited direct assistance to help communities address BRAC transportation impacts, and State and local governments have adopted strategies to expedite projects within the time frame allowed by BRAC. In years past, this has happened through the earmark process, a process that is no longer available. In other areas, the Department of Defense's Defense Access Roads program has certified transportation projects for funding at three affected communities.

OEA has also provided planning grants and funded traffic studies and local planning positions. And while Federal highway and transit programs can be used for many BRAC-related transportation needs, dedicated funds are not available. Instead, BRAC-related transportation projects must compete with other proposed transportation projects in a given State or community.

By 2009, communities that identified funding for about only \$500 million of the estimated \$2 billion needed to address their near-term project needs. In fact, some States and local governments have adopted strategies to expedite highway projects, such as prioritizing short-term high-impact projects because the time frames for completing BRAC personnel moves are much shorter than the time frames for such projects.

While legislation mandates that BRAC growth be completed by 2011, major highway and transit projects typically take anywhere from 9 to 19 years to complete, and near-term transportation projects to address these challenges could cost about \$2 billion, of which \$1.1 billion is related to projects solely in the Washington metropolitan area.

BRAC-related transportation infrastructure costs are subject to a number of uncertainties. According to the GAO, and I quote: "Not all potential projects are included in the estimate. Military staffing levels at some growth installations are in flux, and location decisions of military and civilian personnel have not yet been made. And preexisting, nonmilitary community growth makes a direct link between transportation projects to military growth very difficult."

To complete some critical projects before BRAC growth occurs, State and

local officials are reprioritizing planned projects and implementing those projects that can be completed quickly. GAO, in fact, cited projects from Maryland to Texas and all across the country where the States prioritized certain lower cost intersection projects to improve traffic. This takes away from other planned priorities that States may have had on the books.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. EDWARDS. I ask for consideration of the amendment.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. MCKEON. When I conclude my remarks, Madam Chair, this will conclude our work for the day. We will come in and, my understanding is, start at 10 in the morning. We have seven more amendments to address in the morning plus four en bloc amendments.

I would just like to, at this time, thank all of those Members who have participated. Especially I want to thank Ranking Member SMITH and all of our staff. They have put in long, hard hours and great work. I think we have come out with, so far, a very good bill. I look forward to finishing it up tomorrow morning.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THORBERRY) having assumed the chair, Ms. FOXX, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1540) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2012 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

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#### HOURLY MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE MAYORS OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS

(Mr. SABLAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, in the Northern Mariana Islands, modern-day mayors represent a proud tradition that dates back thousands of years to the maga'lahi who led families, clans, and villages of ancient Chamorro society. These individuals, and their forebears, represent an enduring line of local self-government in our islands. They deserve recognition for the important role they have filled, particularly during the return to local self-government after World War II, which was essential to regaining and preserving our cultural identity. This process began soon after American troops freed our islands in the 1944 Battle for Saipan.

Chamorro and Carolinian survivors of the war elected a high chief, roughly the equivalent of a mayor, in their first exercise of American democracy. The mayor in those days served in a role now customarily identified with the office of the governor. Today, mayors are charged with more traditional responsibilities such as administering government programs, public services, and appropriations in their respective municipalities.

Please join me in honoring the past and present mayors of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, who have contributed greatly to the quality of life in our community.

Mr. Speaker, in the Northern Mariana Islands, the modern-day mayors of our far-flung community represent the democratic embodiment of a proud tradition of local leadership that dates back thousands of years to the maga 'lahi who led families, clans, and villages in ancient Chamorro society. These individuals, and their forebears, represent the most enduring line of local government in our islands and merit recognition for the important roles they have filled historically, and particularly during the return to local self-government during the past 65 years.

Over 3,500 years ago, the Mariana Islands were first discovered by intrepid sailors from elsewhere in Asia. They organized a society at harmony with nature on our islands that thrived for millennia. Beginning in the early 1500s, however, with the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan, the Marianas lost their independence to successive colonizing forces from all corners of the globe. Spanish forces were followed in the Northern Marianas by Germans, then by the Japanese, and finally—under a United Nations trusteeship—by the United States, until the people of our islands were given the opportunity for self-determination and voted overwhelmingly to adopt a Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.

During these four centuries of colonialism, our ancestors were told where they could live or not live, their traditional latte stone homes were destroyed, they were forced to adopt foreign customs and religions, and their populations were decimated by foreign diseases