

services. The Republican budget cutters have dug deep into initiatives that have proven track records of success. There is simply no reason to reduce our efforts to provide economic development for our towns and cities in the form of Brownfields monies and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds. By doing so, we will set our communities and our economies backwards, rather than spur them forward.

My colleagues, the VA/HUD Appropriations legislation cuts funding for key NASA programs. Specifically, the bill that passed the House reduces aerospace technologies by \$322 million as well as cutting \$60 million for Human Space Flight. This shortsighted action jeopardizes our country's leadership in space and our national security. Unless NASA funding is restored in conference, this legislation should not pass this Congress.

I supported this bill because it contains an increase of \$2.6 billion from last year funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The House-passed budget for the Department will go a long way toward helping our nation care for its veterans. For example, I am encouraged that the House provided \$20.3 billion in funding for veterans medical care in Fiscal Year 2001. This is an increase of \$1.3 billion over last year's funding. Funding totaling \$351 million for veterans medical and prosthetic research also increased by \$30 million from last year. Our veterans' cemeteries at the national and state levels were funded fairly as well. However, we need to do more for our veterans. There are a number of underfunded areas that require our attention. These include resources for veterans' extended care facilities and for the benefits they deserve. It is also essential that the Congress find additional funding to improve VA facilities across the country.

I supported the VA/HUD Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2001 because it restores badly needed funds for the Veterans Administration. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in working to reverse the housing, CDBG, economic development and NASA cuts in this bill. If this important funding is not restored, I reserve judgment on a Conference agreement on the final version of the bill. I urge you to do the same.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDI-
CIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 26, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and under consideration the bill (H.R. 4690) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes:

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, the Jackson amendment would restore funding for international peacekeeping in the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001.

The Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act cuts funding for international peacekeeping efforts by \$241 million below the President's request. That is a 33 percent cut in an essential international program. These funds must be restored.

Peacekeeping operations play an important role in the maintenance and establishment of peace and stability in many parts of the world. In Cyprus, United Nations peacekeepers prevented two NATO allies from going to war. In El Salvador, peacekeepers helped bring a long and bloody civil war to an end. In Israel, peacekeeping operations on the Golan Heights helped preserve the peace between Israel and Syria.

I am particularly concerned about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The war that erupted in the Congo in August of 1998 has been a widespread and destructive conflict, involving forces from several different countries. The peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations are essential to bring peace and stability to the Congo and the entire Great Lakes Region of Africa. Once peace and stability have been established, the Congo may begin to develop its natural resources, invest in health and education for its people, improve its infrastructure, pursue economic development and participate in mutually-beneficial trade with the United States.

There are conflicts all over the world that threaten peace and stability. These conflicts interfere with development and result in unimaginable suffering and countless violations of internationally recognized human rights. They also interfere with international trade and eliminate markets for American goods and services. They often cause significant increases in international refugee flows and illegal immigration into the United States. They threaten the lives of American citizens traveling abroad.

Peacekeeping allows the international community to attempt to restore peace, protect civilians and promote stability and development. Support for and participation in peacekeeping missions allow the United States to promote American values. In countries experiencing internal conflicts, peacekeeping is an essential ingredient in the restoration of democracy. Peacekeeping is a critical investment in our national security.

The cost of peacekeeping is small, and the benefits are tremendous. I urge my colleagues to support the Jackson amendment and restore funding for peacekeeping.

INVESTIGATION OF MURDERS IN
AL-KOSHEH, EGYPT

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today in a meeting of the House Appropriations Committee to consider the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2001, I added the following Report language to the paragraph about U.S. financial aid to Egypt: "Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about ongo-

ing violence experienced by the Christian minority in Egypt. The Committee urges Egypt to expedite the investigations of the murders of 2000 and 1998 in Al-Kosheh, and of the 1998 interrogations."

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that Egypt is a valuable ally and has greatly helped U.S. efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. It is also a fact that Christians in Egypt, especially Coptic Christians, face ongoing violence and are in need of full protection of the Egyptian Judicial system. The worst of these outbreaks is the murder of 21 persons in January, 2000 in the town of Al-Kosheh, just a few weeks after I visited Egypt with three other Members of Congress.

My report language expresses the concern of the Committee about this violence and urges Egypt to expedite investigations regarding this incident but also of events in 1998 in the same small town. There were two murders in 1998 and allegations of brutal interrogations by the Police, 1014 Christians were arrested and interrogated.

President Mubarak ordered an investigation of these arrests, and in August of 1999, 129 persons were interviewed within the course of two days. The interviewing process lapsed and then resumed in October of 1999. To date, only 400 of those 1014 persons have been interviewed. That figure includes the 129. A conclusion of the investigation likely would suggest the dismissal or prosecution of several members of the Egyptian police. There is precedent for such action.

When tourists were killed in Luxor, the reaction of Cairo was swift and decisive, including the appointment of a new Minister of the Interior, who oversees the police. That sent a powerful message throughout the country, and Egypt is currently a very safe country to visit. The great majority of Muslim citizens of Egypt are law-abiding and desire peace. I am afraid that because of concerns about possibly energizing extremist Muslim groups to the point of violence, Cairo is reluctant to prosecute Muslims when there are incidents of violence against Christians.

Christians face a range of legal challenges and are in need of protection from violence. Since there is no stated government policy of discrimination, it is reasonable for Christian citizens to expect full justice from their courts, just as Muslim citizens do.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the taxpayers of the United States would be more than happy to see some of their aid to Egypt used to pay for additional personnel or equipment which would expedite these investigations and lead to the prosecution of any found persons found guilty of torture or other violations of civil rights. I am especially concerned that Shayboub William Arsal has been falsely accused and sentenced to 15 years hard labor even though the only two witnesses recanted their testimony and stated that their original accusations were coerced.

In accordance with Egypt's strategic alliance with the United States, the Foreign Operations Subcommittee agreed to the President's request to expedite a portion of Egypt's military aid. The adoption of these two sentences by the Full Committee in the Report expresses the expectation of the Appropriations Committee that Egypt will make progress on these important human rights matters.