

seem to know no bounds. The year began with the aftermath of the horrendous tsunami in Southeast Asia, only to be followed by a brutal hurricane season which included hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

While we in the United States have rightly come to associate these hurricanes with the apocalyptic destruction that they inflicted on our Gulf Coast States, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita also tore through much of Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Some of the worse loss of life as a result of these storms occurred in Guatemala, where more than a thousand men, women and children were killed and where more than 120,000 people had the normalcy of their lives shredded to bits by the avalanches of mud and debris.

The hurricanes brought similar havoc in Mexico and Central American countries. In Mexico, some 400 people in southern states like Oaxaca were forced to evacuate to shelters and up to 40 percent of the homes in popular tourist destinations like Cancun were severely damaged.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to contribute to the rebuilding and recovery efforts in Mexico and in affected Central American countries, we must ensure that our joint efforts to reconstruct homes, health facilities, schools and other buildings increase the likelihood that these structures will withstand similar natural disasters which are sure to come in the future.

Working with volunteers from two organizations based in my congressional district, I believe twin strategies are necessary to help guarantee that these structures are safe and strong. A friend and neighbor of mine, David Rivard, created an organization called Codes and Safety for the Americas, CASA, while his wife created an organization called Airline Ambassadors International. David and Nancy Rivard are extraordinary and exemplary citizens, giving of their own time, energy, effort, and resources to help our neighbors in this hemisphere.

Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that reconstruction which is financed by the United States taxpayer is less likely to succumb to hurricane-force winds or be built in mudslide-prone areas. Building projects funded by USAID must be models of quality construction. We also must cultivate a culture of code compliance in developing countries through exchanges of building professionals, educational seminars, and other expertise-sharing programs.

I look forward to working with the administration and these two organizations in making the strategies a reality in our rebuilding efforts around the globe. In the meantime, today's resolution achieves the objective of building safe and sturdy dwellings by supporting the adoption and implementation of disaster-mitigation techniques by the governments and construction sectors of countries which are prone to natural disasters. I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Congressman BURTON, for sponsoring this important legislation mourning the loss of life resulting from hurricanes and flooding in Central America.

We are discussing this resolution as the record fourteenth hurricane of the season, Hurricane Epsilon, still rages. Although Hurricane Epsilon has moved out to the Atlantic where it poses no threat to land, we were not so lucky with Hurricane Beta. This hurricane slammed into Nicaragua in late October and caused a great deal of damage, flooding and forced evacuations in both Nicaragua and neighboring Honduras. And Hurricane Wilma left its imprint not only on Mexico but on our own state of Florida, just one week before Hurricane Beta hit.

This has been a difficult and trying hurricane season throughout our hemisphere. And it has been made even more difficult by the fact that many Central American countries are still trying to rebuild after hurricanes from previous years, such as 1998's devastating Hurricane Mitch.

So I strongly support this resolution, which expresses our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the victims of flooding and mudslides caused by the various hurricanes. It also pledges our support to the countries of Central America that have been hit hardest by multiple hurricanes this year, and our help in rebuilding their infrastructure and economies.

And let's be clear—the region will need not only our help, but the help of the entire international community. Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, Cuba and Costa Rica were all hit by damaging winds and drenching rains this hurricane season, causing widespread destruction and flooding.

The magnitude of this devastation is staggering. In Guatemala alone, the official death toll is just over 670, although other sources estimate that more than 2,000 people may have perished and that hundreds are missing. Across the region, tens of thousands of families have been affected by these natural disasters. Thousands of Central American families have lost everything. They are in need of food, clean water, clothes and shelter.

Just as Mexico and the countries of Central America contributed to us during our time of need after Hurricane Katrina, we should now contribute to them.

So I am pleased that the US government, particularly through USAID and the US Armed Forces, has responded quickly with both initial monetary and technical aid during this crisis. While I encourage these efforts, we must be sure to provide relief and long-term reconstruction assistance to the affected communities.

Many of us on the Subcommittee were already concerned about poverty and inequality in Central America and about proposed cuts to core development funding for Central America. I was pleased by the strong bipartisan support the Subcommittee showed when almost every Subcommittee Member joined me in sending a letter in late October to the conferees on the Foreign Operations bill urging them to restore this funding.

While we continue the long-term fight to reduce poverty and inequality in Central America, we must also offer our condolences to the victims of this most recent natural disaster.

And I know that many of the victims' families live here in the United States. So I would also like to acknowledge the actions of the US Latino communities in DC, New Jersey, and around the country, who quickly mobilized to send money and aid to help the survivors. Our diversity is our greatest strength and connects us to almost every country in the world. When tragedy strikes anywhere in the world, it also is directly felt in the homes of US citizens who still have family and friends in their countries of origin.

Personally, I am deeply saddened by the devastation and loss of life caused by massive flooding, landslides, and hurricanes in Guatemala and throughout Central America. I would like to express my deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims and their families and friends, both in Central America and here at home.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 280, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 479) recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution that began on October 23, 1956 and reaffirming the friendship between the people and governments of the United States and Hungary, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 479

Whereas on October 23, 1956, university students marching through the streets of Budapest were joined by workers and others until their numbers reached some 100,000 Hungarian citizens protesting against the communist government of Hungary and its domination by the Soviet Union, whereupon the Hungarian Security Police opened fire on the crowd and killed hundreds;

Whereas the Hungarian government under Prime Minister Imre Nagy released political prisoners, including major church leaders, took steps to establish a multi-party democracy, called for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary, announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, and requested United Nations assistance in establishing Hungarian neutrality;

Whereas the Soviet Union launched a massive military counteroffensive against the revolt on November 4, 1956, sending tens of thousands of additional troops from the Soviet Union and launched air strikes, artillery