

**EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE VICTIMS OF
THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKES THAT
STRUCK EL SALVADOR ON JANUARY 13, 2001,
AND FEBRUARY 13, 2001, AND SUPPORTING
ONGOING AID EFFORTS**

MARKUP

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H. Con. Res. 41

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2001

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2 p.m. in Room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Cass Ballenger, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. BALLENGER. The Subcommittee will come to order. Having notice of a quorum, we will begin.

Good afternoon. Before proceeding with hearing testimony from today's witnesses, we will, as notified, mark up H. Con. Res. 41, Expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquakes that struck El Salvador on January 13, 2001, and February 13, 2001, and supporting ongoing aid efforts.

Like I say, pursuant to the call I call up the resolution for the purpose of markup, and without objection the resolution will be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Today we have before us H. Con. Res. 41, which expresses sympathy for the victims of the two devastating earthquakes on January 13, 2001, and February 13, 2001, and supporting ongoing aid efforts. The first of these quakes measured 7.6 on the Richter Scale and was responsible for the death of over 800 people, injuring 100,000 and destroying over 278,000 homes. Over 1,300,000 of the nation's 6,000,000 people were left homeless.

The second earthquake measured 6.6 on the Richter Scale and was centered just 15 miles east-southeast of San Salvador, the capital. While this quake was smaller in scale, over 255 Salvadorans lost their lives, 2,261 more were injured, and more homes and work places were destroyed or damaged. There were more than 2,000 after shocks related to these quakes.

These quakes could not have come at a worse time. Since the end of the brutal civil war, El Salvador has been developing a thriving economy and instituting democratic reforms, making it one of the most promising nations in the region. However, the damage and human suffering caused by the earthquakes now threatens the future stability and economic success of this nation. Without imme-

diate help from the U.S. and elsewhere, the efforts made by El Salvador and its people may have been in vain.

The Department of State and USAID have informed Congress that the Bush Administration intends to provide the U.S. contribution from current monies and next year's budget of some \$110 million. In addition, U.S. Attorney General Ashcroft has approved the temporary protected status for some 100,000 undocumented Salvadorans in the United States.

I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this.

Now I would like to recognize our Ranking Member, the gentleman from New Jersey, for his statement on the resolution.

[The resolution, H. Con. Res. 41, follows:]

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 41

Expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquakes that struck El Salvador on January 13, 2001, and February 13, 2001, and supporting ongoing aid efforts.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 27, 2001

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia (for himself, Mr. BALLENGER, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MOAKLEY, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. FRANK, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquakes that struck El Salvador on January 13, 2001, and February 13, 2001, and supporting ongoing aid efforts.

Whereas on the morning of January 13, 2001, a devastating and deadly earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter Scale and a depth of 36 miles occurred off the coast of El Salvador, southwest of San Miguel, killing hundreds of people, injuring thousands of people, and displacing approximately 1,000,000 people;

Whereas the earthquake has left damage throughout the country, having caused significant landslides and destruction in 12 of El Salvador's 14 provinces;

Whereas almost 2,000 aftershocks and tremors have been recorded, and they continue to occur;

Whereas on the morning of February 13, 2001, a second devastating and deadly earthquake occurred with a magnitude of 6.6 on the Richter Scale and an epicenter located 15 miles east-southeast of San Salvador, El Salvador, killing more than 250 people, injuring thousands of people, and leaving thousands of other people homeless;

Whereas the people of El Salvador have displayed strength, courage, and determination in the aftermath of these earthquakes;

Whereas the people of the United States and El Salvador have developed a strong friendship based on mutual interests and respect;

Whereas El Salvador has appealed to the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the international community generally for economic assistance to meet the substantial relief and reconstruction needs of that nation in the aftermath of these earthquakes; and

Whereas the United States has offered technical and monetary assistance through the United States Agency for International Development: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
- 2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—
- 3 (1) expresses—

1 (A) deep sympathy for the people of El
2 Salvador for the tragic losses suffered as a re-
3 sult of the earthquakes of January 13, 2001,
4 and February 13, 2001; and

5 (B) support for the efforts of the people of
6 El Salvador to rebuild their homes and lives;

7 (2) expresses support for continuing and sub-
8 stantially increasing, in connection with these earth-
9 quakes, relief and reconstruction assistance provided
10 by relief agencies and the international community,
11 including the World Bank, the Inter-American De-
12 velopment Bank, and the United States Agency for
13 International Development;

14 (3) urges the President to encourage such enti-
15 ties to expedite such assistance; and

16 (4) encourages assistance by other nations and
17 organizations to alleviate the suffering of the people
18 of El Salvador and to assist them in rebuilding their
19 homes and lives.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to have this resolution come before the Committee, of which I am an original co-sponsor. The resolution does the right thing. It offers sympathy and vows to provide help, but I hope it precipitates actually offering more help.

Salvador, as you have said, is reeling. One in every four Salvadorans have been affected by the earthquake in the past 2 months. This, Mr. Chairman, would be the equivalent in the United States of affecting every man, woman and child living west of Kansas or every single person living in California, Texas, New Jersey and North Carolina combined.

On top of two massive earthquakes, Salvadorans are coping with scores of smaller quakes and more than 5,000 aftershocks. This level of natural disaster hardly seems natural. Of course, this follows Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and before that years of civil war.

The United States now must respond on a scale befitting both the disaster and the respect, friendship and partnership that exists between our two nations. As Secretary Powell has said, "A guiding principle of the Bush foreign policy will be that America stands ready to help any country that seeks peace and prosperity and a place in the sun." Salvador qualifies.

Yet, to date, the Bush Administration has announced no new funds for the country's recovery. I am pleased to see the President has recently announced some assistance for earthquake relief for El Salvador. Many of us believe that that amount is not nearly enough.

We are even more concerned that this assistance comes at the expense of other important programs in El Salvador and in Latin America at a time when the region has been suffering from a state of natural disasters. The economies of the affected countries are strained, and much of the progress we have made over the past two decades has been reversed.

We spent billions during the 1980's to promote democracy in these countries. Now is the time to help them move forward. The President declared our relationships in the Western Hemisphere to be a foreign policy priority, yet what real commitment in terms of economic and development assistance do we intend to put toward this region?

I have signed on to and authored numerous resolutions and letters to the President, but now it is time to act. Moving some money from other existing accounts does too little for El Salvador and hurts other important development programs in areas and countries that may later get hit with natural disasters themselves and be less prepared to deal with them.

Let's not be a penny wise and a pound foolish here. President Flores has asked for help. He is facing upwards of \$2 billion to \$3 billion in reconstruction costs. I hope to introduce a bill soon that will seek to authorize emergency supplemental appropriations for El Salvador. We will work with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to assure that it is a good bill and represents an appropriate response to El Salvador's needs, the meeting of which is in our national interest.

I hope I can count on your support, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and I support the passage of the resolution before us.

Mr. BALLENGER. Thank you. Are there others that would like to make a statement? The gentleman from Massachusetts?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me congratulate you for bringing up this particular resolution before the Subcommittee, when unfortunately many presumably have forgotten that El Salvador has been beset by two earthquakes. You and the Ranking Member have appropriately described the consequences.

As Mr. Menendez indicated, this nation has made such a substantial investment in El Salvador and other Central American countries that it is really important now to match the commitment that we have made in the past to nurture democracy by assisting in the reconstruction effort.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, when we visited El Salvador back after the first earthquake what impressed us most was the response of the government of El Salvador to this disaster. The government should be praised for a quick response for their consultations with local authority, and for coordination that was truly impressive. I know both you and myself gave kudos when we were in El Salvador to the appropriate government officials, but this particular resolution I think is important at many levels.

I would also echo the sentiments expressed by Mr. Menendez that a supplemental is an appropriate vehicle to assist El Salvador back to where it was prior to January 13. We ought not to be in a situation where we are minimizing our investment in those efforts that have truly brought El Salvador and other countries to the point where we can say that they are fledgling democracies and are on the road to being solid, responsive democratic neighbors in our hemisphere.

I yield back my time.

Mr. BALLENGER. Any others? Mr. Faleomavaega?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to offer my support for this resolution and commend you and our Ranking Democrat, Mr. Menendez, and your leadership in taking this before the Committee.

I sincerely hope that we will pursue this and add my additional support for Mr. Menendez's recommendation that we should request a supplemental to assist El Salvador as we did for the Russians, as we did for others. The least we could do is to help the Salvadorans with this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BALLENGER. Thank you. One thing I would like to say, and I think Mr. Menendez has belonged to this Committee as long as I have. This is the first time I think I have ever seen where everybody on the Committee was here.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is your leadership, Mr. Ballenger. Let me assure you.

Mr. BALLENGER. Yes, ma'am? Go right ahead.

Ms. NAPOLITANO. Thank you. I would just like to associate myself with the comments of the rest of my colleagues in that this is an important issue for many residents in my area, as well as the rest of the United States.

I think that if we help the fledgling countries, we will reap the results in the end. It is just the right thing to do. I thank you and congratulate both of you for your support.

Mr. BALLENGER. I think I have a constituent, a fellow that will back me up in the audience here and say the night we spent in the hotel there, we all found out the next morning at 10:33 that night because we all looked at our watches. We had I think a 5.2. On the seventh floor of the hotel, it was a very nervous time to have a 5.2 earthquake.

Are there any amendments? Excuse me. I am sorry. One more? Yes, sir?

Mr. SMITH. Just very briefly, Mr. Chairman. I happen to chair the Science Subcommittee on Research that has oversight on earthquakes. We are having a hearing next week on what we've learned from the earthquakes that have been happening around the world, and in the United States, looking at technology to give advance warning.

We are looking at the kind of technology that some think has the potential of adding to our warning time by additional seconds, and so with the advent of new technology and satellite monitoring, we have the potential of doing a much better job than we have in the past.

Our hearing, in case anybody wanted to attend, is on March 21 at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. BALLENGER. I wish you luck.

Are there any amendments?

Mr. PAUL. Amendment.

Mr. BALLENGER. The clerk will report the amendment.

Ms. BAUMGARTEN. Amendment to House Concurrent Resolution—

Mr. BALLENGER. I ask unanimous consent that we waive the reading of the amendment.

The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you personally for bringing this resolution to the Subcommittee. So often this type of resolution arrives on the House Floor 1 or 2 hours after it has been written, and very rarely do we get to discuss it.

Quite often on many of these resolutions I will oppose it not because of the thrust of the resolution, but because of some of the details. I have an amendment that I want to make some points about the details that I object to in this.

I certainly have no objection to expressing our deep sympathy to the victims. That goes without saying. I have no problem at all with urging support. I think we all should support. It is the vehicle and the technique on how we do it that I have more of a question of, and my amendment addresses those concerns.

Too often what we do is we express sympathy, which is okay, and urge support, but then we conclude and say well, somebody here has to be further taxed to do it. We must use force and coercion to accomplish it. That is the part that I object to because traditionally in this country at one time we followed the Constitution much more strictly. We did not have authority to do good around the world, so-called good.

Sometimes when we give these things out they do not always end up in the hands of the people doing the most good, and that is just the way it is sometimes no matter how well intended it is, so I object to the coerciveness and the taxation that is required to do this, but to express deep sympathy I think is certainly all right and certainly to use and urge support.

The organizations that already have funding I have no qualms about using those funds, speeding up the funds, transferring the funds for an emergency like this because those funds are already made available, but we do a little bit more than that here. We ask for substantial increase. We plan to budget more, which means we have to tax some other people, and there may be a victim somewhere along the way through this taxation.

My amendment does not deal with number one in the resolution in the Resolved portion, but it does deal with the number two part, and it strikes the naming of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, just believing that we do not need to specifically mention that and just say we should support and we should increase it through the Red Cross or whatever and give tax credits or do something to encourage the voluntary sector to do this. Corporations could get benefits, and we could still achieve the goals that we would like.

It also strikes the number three part of it to encourage such entities to expedite assistance, but this says to use this assistance where funds have been appropriated for this purpose because there is no harm in that. Obviously we should do that, and we could help out in this emergency.

In number four I strike a couple words. It says, "by other nations and organizations." This is good, but should it be our responsibility? Do we have authority to instruct and encourage and tell the people? This is very, very mild. This does not necessarily make a tremendous point other than the fact that other people in the world sometimes resent us always telling them what to do and instructing and saying you do more. You do more.

We have a responsibility. We have personal responsibilities. We have religious responsibilities, and the private sector is able to help a whole lot. The responsibilities are there, but delegating and designating other countries to do such things I think is just a little bit too much.

In this case we are limiting it. It is a very mild type of resolution, not something that is going to bankrupt us obviously. The taxation is rather vague when you talk about how many dollars it is going to cost, but this type of resolution when it comes to the Floor so often without at least a debate, and that is why I do appreciate the chance to at least talk about this because many times these resolutions have a commitment to send troops certain places around the world.

That one really bothers me because the commitment is we express, you know, either congratulations or sorrow about some tragedy in the world, and we will do anything. We will spend any amount of money and will send any troops around the world to accomplish these things, so these conclusions are very, very important.

That is why I do make these points. I try to make this point on the House Floor through my votes. I take it very seriously, and that is why I am very pleased that I have had the opportunity to at least offer this amendment to the Committee.

[The amendment referred to follows:]

AMENDMENT TO H. CON. RES. 41

OFFERED BY MR. PAUL

Page 3, beginning on line 10, strike "and the international community" and all that follows through line 13.

Page 3, beginning on line 14, strike "to encourage such entities".

Page 3, line 15, after "assistance" insert "if amounts have been appropriated for the provision of such assistance".

Page 3, beginning on line 16, strike "by other nations and organizations".

Mr. BALENGER. Does the gentleman withdraw his amendment?

Mr. PAUL. I would be glad to withdraw it. I was interested in case anybody had any discussion whatsoever.

Mr. BALENGER. No, sir. One thing I would like to say is I just heard today that some of the money that we appropriated for Hurricane Mitch has not been released yet.

Mr. PAUL. That is not very efficient.

Mr. BALENGER. No, definitely not.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. BALENGER. The amendment is withdrawn.

Yes, sir?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think that the gentleman wishes to hear different opinions. I would just make the observation that the language—there is a marked distinction between instructing and encouraging assistance from the international community.

I think the United States, we proclaim a certain moral authority, and I think what we do is we recognize that there are interconnections, if you will, on a very human level among all of us that inhabit this planet. I do not see this language in any way instructing, attempting to present the United States in any coercive way whatsoever, but imploring our friends, our neighbors, and all everywhere to help when a disaster strikes.

I think often times a disaster prompts an unusual response, one that brings people together in a human way, such as what occurred in Turkey in the aftermath of that particular earthquake where we

saw, remarkably, Greece responding in a very favorable way, providing assistance and hopefully improving and enhancing in the long term the relationship between two nations that have seen themselves as enemies and adversaries over an extended period of time.

Mr. PAUL. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield.

Mr. PAUL. I certainly think you make a good point, and I do not think this is the strongest case I can have to make my point, and I acknowledge that, but there are times when we get involved in the military aspects of it. I think we become a little more authoritarian.

I am only encouraging us on the Committee to be less aggressive with our power and our influence, but I think I certainly concede a lot of your argument that this is not really as threatening as some others.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And I can reassure you that when we start to introduce resolutions that suggest military intervention, you will find yourselves with a number of allies on this Committee.

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. BALLENGER. Nick?

Mr. SMITH. A question. I think, Ron, I might agree with your last amendment. Maybe I do not understand it, Mr. Chairman.

It does seem a little bit pompous or egotistical to say that we are going to encourage assistance by other nations and organizations. Maybe we should just make sure we do our own part. Quite often we go around trying to tell the rest of the world what to do. But maybe I do not understand the intent of (4).

Mr. BALLENGER. I might just add into the debate and just kind of mess it up a bit.

The European Union is noted for making commitments and never delivering. I think that is who we are writing to right there. We would greatly appreciate it if they would follow through on the commitments they have made in the past.

Now, the question is on the passage of the resolution. All those in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Mr. BALLENGER. Those opposed say nay.

[No response.]

Mr. BALLENGER. In the opinion of the Chair, the majority having voted in the affirmative, the resolution is agreed to.

[Whereupon, at 2:17 p.m. the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

