

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2097

To recognize the Hmong, Khmer, Laotian, and other ethnic groups commonly referred to as Montagnards, who supported and defended the Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia, authorize assistance to support activities relating to clearance of unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 4, 2019

Mr. DUFFY (for himself, Mr. McCAUL, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Ms. SPEIER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To recognize the Hmong, Khmer, Laotian, and other ethnic groups commonly referred to as Montagnards, who supported and defended the Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia, authorize assistance to support activities relating to clearance of unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Legacies of War Rec-
3 ognition and Unexploded Ordnance Removal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. RECOGNITION OF HMONG, KHMER, LAOTIAN,**
5 **MONTAGNARDS, AND OTHER ETHNIC**
6 **GROUPS WHO SUPPORTED AND DEFENDED**
7 **THE ARMED FORCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

9 (1) Many Hmong, Khmer, Laotian, and
10 Montagnards—

11 (A) fought and died with United States
12 Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast
13 Asia in the 1960s and 1970s;

14 (B) rescued United States pilots shot down
15 in enemy-controlled territory and returned the
16 pilots to safety;

17 (C) captured and destroyed enemy supplies
18 and prevented enemy forces from using the sup-
19 plies to kill members of the United States
20 Armed Forces;

21 (D) gathered and provided to the United
22 States Armed Forces intelligence about enemy
23 troop positions, movement, and strength; and

24 (E) provided food, shelter, and support to
25 the United States Armed Forces.

1 (2) The National Armed Forces of Cambodia
2 facilitated the evacuation of the United States Em-
3 bassy in Phnom Penh on April 12, 1975, by con-
4 tinuing to fight Khmer Rouge forces as they ad-
5 vanced upon the capital.

6 (3) A tragic legacy of the conflict in Southeast
7 Asia is the lethal risk posed by unexploded ordnance
8 (UXO) in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia that still
9 litter forests, rice fields, villages, school grounds,
10 roads, and other populated areas—hindering devel-
11 opment and poverty reduction efforts.

12 (4) Vietnam remains one of the world’s most
13 contaminated countries, with an estimated 800,000
14 tons of UXO left over from the conflict in Southeast
15 Asia that ended more than 40 years ago. It has
16 caused more than 100,000 casualties, including
17 40,000 deaths.

18 (5) From 1964–1973, the United States
19 dropped more than 2,000,000 tons of bombs on
20 Laos during American operations to disrupt North
21 Vietnamese military supply routes. As a result, Laos
22 is the most heavily bombed country per capita in the
23 world. Much of the country’s land remains contami-
24 nated with more than 80,000,000 small, unexploded
25 cluster munitions. Since the end of the conflict,

1 UXO have injured or killed more than 25,000 civil-
2 ians in Laos.

3 (6) Cambodia suffers from one of the highest
4 rates of landmine and UXO accidents in the world.
5 Over 64,000 Cambodians have been killed or injured
6 by unexploded ordnance and other explosive rem-
7 nants of war since 1979, with an average of one cas-
8 ualty every week.

9 (7) The United States is the world's leading fi-
10 nancial supporter of conventional weapons destruc-
11 tion worldwide. Since 1993, the United States has
12 provided more than \$3,400,000,000 in assistance to
13 more than 100 countries, including more than
14 \$132,000,000 in Vietnam, \$200,000,000 in Laos,
15 and \$140,000,000 in Cambodia.

16 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
17 gress that—

18 (1) the Hmong, Khmer, Laotian, and
19 Montagnard Freedom Fighters deserve recognition
20 for their support and defense of the Armed Forces
21 and freedom during the conflict in Southeast Asia;
22 and

23 (2) the United States should continue to sup-
24 port activities to clear unexploded ordnance and
25 other explosive remnants of war in Vietnam, Laos,

1 and Cambodia, and strengthen people-to-people ties
2 and reaffirm America's long-standing commitment
3 to Southeast Asia.

4 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE IN VIETNAM,**
5 **LAOS, AND CAMBODIA.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to
7 provide humanitarian assistance for programs to support
8 the activities described in subsection (b).

9 (b) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Activities that may be
10 supported by assistance under subsection (a) include the
11 following:

12 (1) Developing national surveys of unexploded
13 ordnance and other explosive remnants of war in
14 Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

15 (2) Providing for clearance of such unexploded
16 ordnance.

17 (3) Providing assistance for capacity building,
18 risk education, and victims in Vietnam, Laos, and
19 Cambodia related to both unexploded ordnance and
20 other explosive remnants of war.

21 (c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this section, the
22 President shall seek to consult, partner, and coordinate
23 with international organizations, civil society, donor gov-
24 ernments through the Mine Action Support Group, and
25 other stakeholders, as appropriate, to leverage their exper-

1 tise, financial support, and resources to minimize duplica-
2 tion of efforts and maximize the efficient and effective pro-
3 vision of United States assistance.

4 (d) BRIEFING.—The President shall provide annual
5 briefings to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
6 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representa-
7 tives and the Committee on Foreign Relations and the
8 Committee on Appropriations of the Senate on activities
9 undertaken in accordance with this section.

10 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
11 authorized to be appropriated to the President to carry
12 out this section \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020
13 through 2024.

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