around the world. It is difficult because we need to determine what group, what size, how many do you need for self-determination. Does it need to be an identifiable, geographic area? If so, how large? It is an issue that we deal with in Yugoslavia.

Always, always, always the United States is on the side of those who aspire to make their own decisions. On this floor we have heard some very articulate expressions on both sides of this issue, from people who know the politics of Puerto Rico far more than I. But I know that those articulate people will debate this issue vigorously, and it will be the people of Puerto Rico who make this decision, as it should be. But it is important that this Congress express at home, within our own Nation, that same conviction on behalf of self-determination that we express around the world.

I would hope that we would overwhelmingly, in a bipartisan way, pass this legislation. I want to commend the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) for his leadership on this issue, and the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), and indeed, the delegate from Puerto Rico, and all of those who participate in this debate.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN).

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Puerto Rico for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the bill before us today. I rise in opposition to the Solomon amendment. I rise in support of the bipartisan substitute.

Mr. Chairman, the essence of the bill before us today is to allow the people of Puerto Rico to make the decisions about their own destiny, what we like to refer to as self-determination.

For the last few decades we have talked long and often hard about the importance of self-determination in all parts of the world: in Russia, in Cuba, around the globe. It is now time to talk about self-determination for one of our nearest neighbors.

This is not that complicated. That is the beauty of democratic elections. Members have heard here today that there are lots of points of view about this issue within Puerto Rico. Those differences can be resolved by democratic elections. That is what we are here today to do, not to impose any particular form of government, be it statehood, independence, or Commonwealth status, but rather, to let the people, the people themselves decide what form of government they believe is most desirable.

The point is that today Puerto Ricans can fight in our wars but cannot elect the Commander in Chief. They can contribute to Social Security, and they do, but they cannot receive Social Security benefits. We need to change this, and we need to use our time-honored democratic processes to do that.

Mr. Chairman, let me talk for a moment about this notion embodied in the Solomon amendment of English only. We all recognize that English is the common language of our country. It is the dominant language of our country. But who was it that decided that to be an American you had to speak the language of the British Isles? I am not sure that makes sense.

We were a country founded on tolerance, multiculturalism. It seems to me we can make room for those people who speak other languages. We left the Old World to create the New World for precisely this reason, to leave the conformities and traditions of the Old World behind. I think it is time we move forward to true multiculturalism and accept the fact that we do not have to have an ordered language in our society. I urge the adoption of the bill before us.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA).

(Mr. BONILLA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, the debate we are hearing today reminds me of the demagoguing we heard back when the new majority took over in January of 1995. We tried to do some things that were right for the country, and we were demagogued as those who were trying to end the school lunch program, as those who were trying to eliminate Medicare, and as those who were trying to hurt the environment. We all knew that was not true, but yet the demagoguing continued.

The demagoguing continues today by those who are opposed to this bill, who say that it is going to somehow create a State, a new State, instantly. That is false. That is demagoguing.

There is also demagoguing about how this bill might be promoting bilingualism. That is not true at all, but nonetheless the arguments continue. They say this is anti-Commonwealth. That is also not true. The demagogues know it but they continue to make these arguments, in spite of the truth and substance of what we are trying to accomplish here today.

For those who think somehow that this is going to end the official language of the world, it is also a case of demagoguing. English is the official language of the world. One hundred fifty seven of 168 airlines have English as their official language. There are 3,000 newspapers printed in English in the country of India. Six members of the European Free Trade Association all conduct their business in English, despite the fact that none of the six members are from English-speaking nations. Three hundred thousand Chinese speak English in their own country. Forty-four countries have English as their official language.

The size of the English language, the number of words in the English language, is about 1 million. If we count the insects, and entomologists say there are a million known insects that could also become words, if we added them to our language, you could make 2 million words that would be part of the English language, compared to other languages, like German, that has about 184,000, and French, that has about 100,000 words.

For those fear-mongers who think we need some kind of amendment on this bill to help us promote English, English is already the official language of the world. We do not need an amendment to tell us that. It is going to continue to be the official language of the world. We should support H.R. 856, and all proudly, because of what it stands for, and not be fear-mongering about what it might do to the great language of English that is used worldwide.

I say to my friends, let us stop the demagoguing, let us stop the fear-mongering that we have injected into this debate. Lighten up and support H.R. 856.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, this is truly a historic debate in this Congress. This is my sixth year as a Member of this Congress. It is the first time we are really talking about an issue about the fundamental union of our States. That is really what we are talking about.

In this Chamber over the last 100 years, and before that in the other Chamber just down the hall for 100 years before that, or just about, this is the kind of debates that went on. Unless it was one of the first original 13 colonies, each State went through a process. There were different debates and different things that went through that process. But that is where we are now.

I think part of the acknowledgment of this bill is something that obviously is controversial, but I think the fact, and people can debate it, is that the status of Commonwealth is an unstable equilibrium. In a sense, the bill acknowledges that. It can continue, but it cannot continue indefinitely. The process of the legislation specifically puts that into statute, and that is why it is critical that this legislation pass.

I would mention that the amendment by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), I think we should acknowledge what the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) attempts to do. We need to be direct about this.

This amendment is really not germane to this bill. It is an issue that in and of itself can be discussed and debated, but to turn English into the official language of the United States is not about this bill. It does not deserve to be on this bill, and it is inappropriately on this bill. I think we have to understand the reason it is on this bill is to kill the bill.

However anyone in this Chamber feels about that particular issue, and I know it is a passionate issue, I urge the

defeat of the Solomon amendment and the support of the substitute offered by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) and others to assure that this historic opportunity is taken advantage of.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 856 will enable Congress to administer and determine the status of Puerto Rico in the same manner this institution has been administering and decolonizing territories since the Northwest Ordinance of 1789. The historical constitutional practice of the United States has been to decolonize nonstate territories which come under U.S. sovereignty by either full incorporation leading to statehood (as in the case of Alaska and Hawaii) or separate nationhood (Philippines).

For too long Puerto Rico has been diverted from the historical process of decolonization. Because local self-government was established under P.L. 81–600 in 1952, Congress has pretended that Puerto Rico could be administered permanently as a territory with internal constitutional self-government. However, the local constitution did not create a separate nation as the pro-commonwealth party in Puerto Rico argues. Puerto Rican born Americans are still disenfranchised in the federal political system which is supreme in the territory as long as the U.S. flag flies over the island.

Puerto Rico is not a "free associated state" in the U.S. constitutional sense or under international law as recognized by the United States. Puerto Rico remains a colony. That is not my choice of words, that is the term used by the McKinley Administration to describe Puerto Rico. It is also the term used by the former chief justice of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court who was one of the architects of the commonwealth constitution.

Because H.R. 856 will define the real and true options that the Congress and the people in Puerto Rico have to resolve the status question, I strongly support this bill. Informing the voters in the territory of the real definition of commonwealth, statehood and separate sovereignty including free association is necessary because of the misleading adoption in 1952 of the Spanish words for "free association" by the pro-commonwealth party to describe the current commonwealth status. No wonder people are confused!

Only when people understand the real options can there be informed self-determination, and only when there has been informed self-determination can Congress then decide what status is in the national interest. Then the status of Puerto Rico can be resolved if there is agreement on the terms for status change. If not the status quo continues, but the process to decolonize Puerto Rico will exist. Then Puerto Rico's colonial status will continue only as long as the people of Puerto Rico are unable to choose between statehood and independence on terms acceptable to Congress.

To promote a better understanding of the nature of free association, I would like to share the following background paper on free association written by the U.S. Ambassador who negotiated free association treaties for President Reagan. The U.S. has a free association relationship with three Pacific island nations, and this status is very different from the free association espoused by the so-called "autonomists in Puerto Rico"—who want to be a separate sovereign nation but also keep U.S. nationally and citizenship.

That "have it both ways" approach to free association was attempted in the case of the Micronesian Compact of Free Association, but the State Department, Justice Department and Congress rejected that model as unconstitutional and unwise. It was an attempt to "perfect" the legal theory of the Puerto Rican commonwealth as a form of permanent self-government, a nation-within-a-nation concept that has always failed and always will because the U.S. constitution does not allow a Quebec-like problem in our Federal system.

Ambassador Zeder's explanation of free association as an option for Puerto Rico makes the ground rules for this form of separate sovereignty very clear and easy to understand. I include his statement for the RECORD.

The statement referred to is as follows:

UNDERSTANDING FREE ASSOCIATION AS A FORM OF SEPARATE SOVEREIGNTY AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE IN THE CASE OF DECOLONIZATION OF PUERTO RICO

(By Ambassador Fred M. Zeder, II)

Consistent with relevant resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly, Puerto Rico's options for full self-government are: Independence (Example: Philippines); Free Association (Example: Republic of the Marshall Islands); Integration (Example: Hawaii). See, G.A. Resolution 1514 (1960); G.A. Resolution 1541 (1960); G.A. Resolution 2625 (1970).

For purposes of international law including the relevant U.N. resolutions international conventions to which the U.S. is a party, the current status of Puerto Rico is best described as substantial but incomplete integration. This means that the decolonization process that commenced in 1952 has not been fulfilled.

As a matter of U.S. domestic constitutional law, a territory within U.S. sovereignty which has internal constitutional self-government but is not fully integrated into the national system of political union on the basis of equality remains an unincorporated territory, and can be referred to as a "commonwealth." (Example: Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands).

For purposes of U.S. constitutional law, independence and free association are status options which are created and exist on the international plane. Thus, instead of the sovereign primacy of Congress under the territorial clause, the sources of constitutional authority with respect to nations with separate sovereignty include the article II, section 2 treaty-making power and the applicable article I, section 8 powers of Congress such as that relating to nationality and immigration law.

Relations between the U.S. and a nation which is independent or in free association are conducted on the basis of international law. Thus, independence and free association are status options which would remove Puerto Rico from its present existence within the sphere of sovereignty of the United States and establish a separate Puerto Rican sovereignty outside the political union and federal constitutional system of the United States.

Instead of completing the integration process through full incorporation and statehood, either independence or free association would "dis-integrate" Puerto Rico from the United States. This would terminate U.S. sovereignty, nationality and citizenship and end application of the U.S. Constitution in Puerto Rico. In other words, the process of gradual integration which began in 1898, and which was advanced by statutory U.S. citizenship in 1917 and establishment of constitutional arrangements approved by the people in 1952, would be terminated in favor of either independence or free association.

Under either independence or free association, the U.S. and Puerto Rico could enter into treaties to define relations on a sovereign-to-sovereign basis. Free association as practiced by the U.S. is simply a form of independence in which two sovereign nations agree to a special close relationship that involves delegations of the sovereign powers of the associated to the United States in such areas as defense and other governmental functions to the extent both parties to the treaty-based relationship agree to continue such arrangements.

The specific features of free association and balance between autonomy and interdependence can vary within well-defined limits based on negotiated terms to which both parties to the arrangement have agreed, but all such features must be consistent with the structure of the agreement as a treaty-based sovereign-to-sovereign relationship. In U.S. experience and practice, even where free association has many features of a dependent territorial status the sources and allocation of constitutional authority triggered by the underlying separation of sovereignty, nationality and citizenship causes the relationship to evolve in the direction of full independence rather than functional re-integration.

Free association is essentially a transitional status for peoples who do not seek full integration, but rather seek to maintain close political, economic and security relations with another nation during the period after separate sovereignty is achieved. Again, this could be accomplished by treaty between independent nations as well. Thus, free association is a form of separate sovereignty that usually arises from the relationship between a colonial power and a people formerly in a colonial status who at least temporarily want close ties with the former colonial power for so long as both parties agree to the arrangements.

Free association is recognized as a distinct form of separate sovereignty, even though legally it also is consistent with independence. Specifically, free association is consistent with independence because, as explained below, the special and close bilateral relationship created by a free association treaty or pact can be terminated in favor of conventional independence at any time by either party.

In addition, the U.S. and the international community have recognized that a separate nation can be a party to a bilateral pact of free association and be an independent nation in the conventional sense at the same time. For example, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is party to the Compact of Free Association with the United States, but has been admitted to the United Nations as an independent nation.

Thus, the international practice regarding free association actually is best understood as a method of facilitating the decolonization process leading to simple and absolute independence. Essentially, it allows new nations not prepared economically, socially or strategically for emergence into conventional independence to achieve separate nationhood in cooperation with a former colonial power or another existing nation.

Under international law and practice including the relevant U.N. resolutions and existing free association precedents, free association must be terminable at will by either party in order to establish that the relationship is consistent with separate sovereignty and the right of self-determination is preserved. This international standard, also recognized by the U.S., is based on the requirement that free association not be allowed to become merely a new form of internationally accepted colonialism.