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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. STEARNS].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 6, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable CLIFF STEARNS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LEACH] for 5 minutes.

REGARDING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS REDRESS ACT

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues legislation I introduced last week with the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] in support of international efforts to provide redress to victims of the Holocaust.

In the Judaic tradition, Rosh Hashanah, which commenced at sundown last Wednesday, initiated 10 days of spiritual introspection that concludes on Friday of this week with the Day of Atonement, a time of reconciliation of

man with God. The bill I have introduced, H.R. 2591, the Holocaust Victims Redress Act, represents national recognition of an aspect of the Holocaust for which the concept of reconciliation and introspection, in this case at the societal level, is profoundly appropriate.

The purpose of the legislation is to provide a measure of relief for the remaining victims of the greatest crime in man's memory, the Holocaust.

The bill would authorize up to \$25 million for a U.S. contribution to organizations serving survivors of the Holocaust who live in the United States. The genesis for this proposal dates back to hearings which the Committee on Banking and Financial Services held over the past year, chronicling how the Nazis looted gold from the central banks of Europe as well as from individual Holocaust victims.

As some of my colleagues may know, following World War II the Tripartite Gold Commission, consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, and France, was created to oversee the recovery and return of Nazi-looted gold. Most of the gold recovered during that period was long ago returned to claimant countries. However, a portion of that gold remains to be distributed. The gold in the custody of the Tripartite Gold Commission, amounting to 6 metric tons, is worth anywhere from \$50 to \$70 million. Fifteen nations hold claim to some portion of that gold.

The case for speedy final distribution of remaining gold to Holocaust survivors, which involves a donation by 15 claimant nations of their share, is compelling. The moral case for such a distribution has been increased by the horrific revelation in the recently released Eizenstat report that Nazi Germany commingled victim gold, taken from the personal property of Holocaust victims, including their dental fillings, with monetary gold, resmelt-

ing it into gold bars and ingots which the Nazis then traded for hard currency to help finance their war efforts.

This legislation would put Congress on record in strong support of the State Department's appeal to claimant nations to contribute their share of Tripartite gold to Holocaust survivors. It would also strengthen the department's hand in seeking further recompense from other nations by authorizing the President to commit the United States to a voluntary donation of up to \$25 million.

A voluntary contribution on our part could go a long way in facilitating a similar gesture of generosity from others who may be claimants of the gold pool or who may have reason to provide redress for actions taken during the dark night of the human soul we call the Holocaust. A contribution of this nature by the United States would also serve as an act of conscience on the part of this Nation.

A second aspect of the bill deals with the Nazi-looted art. Under international legal principles dating back to the Hague Convention of 1907, pillaging during war is forbidden, as is the seizure of works of art. In defiance of then extant international standards, the Nazis looted valuable works of art from their own citizens and institutions as well as from people and institutions in France and Holland and other occupied countries. This grand theft of art helped the Nazis finance their war efforts. Avarice served as an incentive to genocide with the ultimate in government censorship being reflected in the Aryan supremacist notion that certain modern art was degenerate and thus disposable.

Last Thursday in synagogues throughout the world, the shofar was sounded three times. The shrill blast of the ram's horn reminds us of many things, perhaps most importantly that God remembers the deeds of all. It is thus appropriate that as we begin the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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