

be approved overwhelmingly by the House.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are counting on all of us to correct the Year 2000 computer problem. By working with the President and by passing this bill, I think we can begin to move toward achieving that goal. We only have 450 days left before January 1, 2000. So I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan, non-partisan House Year 2000 task force legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4756, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH TRAVEL REPORTS

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4805) to require reports on travel of Executive branch officers and employees to international conferences, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4805

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPORTS ON TRAVEL OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.

(a) REPORTS TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), each officer and employee of an Executive Branch agency who travels abroad to attend an international conference shall submit to the Director of the Office of International Conferences of the Department of State a report with respect to such travel under subsection (b) not later than 30 days after the completion of such travel.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in the case of travel by the following:

(A) The President.

(B) The Vice President.

(C) Any officer or employee who is—

(i) carrying out an intelligence or intelligence-related activity;

(ii) performing a protective function; or

(iii) engaged in a sensitive diplomatic mission.

(b) REPORT.—Each report under subsection (a) shall set forth the following:

(1) The name and agency of the officer or employee concerned.

(2) The duration and cost of the travel involved.

(3) The name of the official who authorized the travel.

(c) BIENNIAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—(1) Not later than April 1, 1999, and every six months thereafter, the Director shall submit to the Committees on Foreign Relations and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on International Relations and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report regarding the travel covered by the reports submitted to the Director under subsection (a) during the six-month period ending on the date of the report under this paragraph.

(2) Each report under paragraph (1) shall set forth with respect to the period covered by such report the following:

(A) The names and agencies of the officers and employees who traveled abroad to attend an international conference during such period.

(B) Each official who authorized the travel covered by subparagraph (A) and the total number of officers and employees whose travel was authorized by such official.

(C) The total cost of the travel covered by subparagraph (A).

(d) ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the President shall submit to the committees referred to in subsection (c) a report setting forth—

(1) the total expenditures by the Federal Government on all official travel abroad by each Executive Branch agency during the preceding fiscal year; and

(2) the total number of officials, officers, and employees of each such agency who engaged in such travel during that fiscal year.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "Executive Branch agency" has the meaning given the term "Executive agency" in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, except that the term also includes the Executive Office of the President but does not include the General Accounting Office.

(2) The term "international conference" means any meeting held under the auspices of an international organization or foreign government at which representatives of more than two foreign governments are expected to be in attendance and to which one or more Executive Branch agencies will send an aggregate of 10 or more representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in 1995 I traveled to Beijing, where I cochaired the Congressional delegation, along with my good friend and colleague the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

I had many reactions to the conference, but one of the most vivid impressions was how difficult it was to get straight answers to some of the most basic questions, such as who was running the conference and who was paying for it. One of the very hardest things to find out was the exact cost to the American taxpayer.

At the time of the Beijing conference itself, we knew only that the State Department's total annual budget for

international conferences that year was \$6 million, and most of the amount was budgeted for smaller and less extravagant international meetings. So our participation in Beijing should have cost perhaps \$1 million, certainly no more.

Yet the facts on the ground were very different. It took five months and a GAO report to Congress to learn the true extent of U.S. costs on the Beijing conference. It turned out to be \$5.9 million, spread out among the budgets of 13 different Federal agencies and the White House. The State Department's reported expenditures were just under \$1 million, but they comprised only about one-sixth of the total cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are considering today would ensure that Congress and the taxpayers have complete and accurate information on what it costs to send Federal officials and employees overseas to international conferences, no matter what the subject is. The bill is similar to an amendment introduced by Senator JOHN ASHCROFT which was ultimately included in H.R. 1757, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act.

The bill takes a moderate balanced approach to the problem. It imposes no unreasonable reporting requirements on the administration. In fact, the bill reflects many of the administration's own suggestions for improving the provision during the conference on H.R. 1757. For instance, the bill requires no reports on travel to international conferences by the President, the Vice President or Federal officials or employees carrying out intelligence-related activities or performing protective functions or engaged in sensitive diplomatic missions.

Other Federal officials and employees attending international conferences, and they comprise the vast majority, would be required to report their expenses, the duration of the travel and the name of the authorizing official. The reports will be submitted to the State Department's Office of International Conferences, and the department will file a report to the Congress every six months. So this legislation would help the State Department, as well as Congress and the American people, get a handle on who the various Federal agencies are sending to international conferences.

Mr. Speaker, U.S. participation in international conferences in many cases is useful and necessary, but it should not take a GAO report to Congress to find out who we are sending and how much it costs.

I think Senator ASHCROFT should be thanked for this very important initiative, and I also want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the full Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), the ranking member of the full committee, Senator HELMS, Senator GRAMM and Senator BIDEN and others for their contributions and their staffs as this was

being shaped during the conference on H.R. 1757.

This a good resolution. Hopefully it will have the full support of the body.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill. I want to commend the gentleman from New Jersey for bringing the bill forward. I think it is a worthy initiative.

Every year Executive Branch officials and employees attend international conferences all over the world. Attendance at these conferences is important to the interests of the United States. At this time we have no comprehensive system in place for keeping track of who goes where, for how long, what they learned and how much they spent.

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This bill sets out a travel reporting system that would require three sets of reports. First, an individual or official attending an international conference would file a report with the State Department. Second, the State Department files a biennial report with the Congress. Finally, the President submits an annual report to Congress on travel by executive branch officials.

All of us, I think, agree that transparency is laudable. Nonetheless, we should recognize that the bill imposes a considerable administrative cost and burden. I would have favored getting a cost estimate on the bill. Despite this reservation, I think this is a good bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 4085. I want to commend the sponsor of this measure, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights. This worthy bill is designed to obtain important data on the widespread attendance of executive branch employees at numerous international conferences.

Excessive attendance at overseas conferences is well-known, and it is also costly. This measure requires the administering office at the State Department to be formally notified by any agency expecting to send an employee to an international conference. It also will provide the agencies, and particularly our State Department, with information to better manage ex-

cessive attendance at such conferences, and to be able to receive extensive information on what occurred at the conference.

A one-time report to Congress will also assure that we have an accounting of this kind of travel. Accordingly, I urge support for this measure.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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 gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4805.

The question was taken.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CONCERNING PROPERTIES WRONGFULLY EXPROPRIATED BY FORMERLY TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENTS

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 562) concerning properties wrongfully expropriated by formerly totalitarian governments.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 562

Whereas totalitarian regimes, including Fascist and Communist dictatorships, have caused immeasurable human suffering and loss, degrading not only every conceivable human right, but the human spirit itself;

Whereas the villainy of communism was dedicated, in particular, to the organized and systematic destruction of private property ownership, including ownership of real, personal, business, and financial property, by individuals and communities;

Whereas the confiscation of property without compensation by totalitarian regimes was often designed to victimize people because of religion, ethnicity, national or social origin, or opposition to such regimes;

Whereas certain individuals and communities twice suffered the taking of their properties without compensation, first by the Nazis and their collaborators and next by subsequent Communist regimes;

Whereas churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious properties, as well as

properties such as hospitals, schools and orphanages owned by religious communities, were destroyed or confiscated as a means of breaking the spiritual devotion and allegiance of religious people and dismantling religious communities;

Whereas refugees from communism, in addition to being wrongfully deprived of their property, were often forced to relinquish their citizenship in order to protect themselves and their families from reprisals by the Communists who ruled their countries;

Whereas the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have agreed to achieve or maintain full recognition and protection of all types of property, including private property, and the right to prompt, just and effective compensation in the event private property is taken for public use;

Whereas the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, have entered a post-Communist period of transition and democratic development, and many countries have begun the difficult and wrenching process of trying to right the wrongs of previous totalitarian regimes;

Whereas many countries in Central and Eastern Europe have enacted laws providing for the restitution of properties that were illegally or unjustly seized, nationalized, confiscated, or otherwise expropriated by totalitarian regimes;

Whereas legal or administrative restrictions that require claimants to reside in, or be a citizen of, the country from which they seek restitution of, or compensation for, wrongfully expropriated property are arbitrary, discriminatory, and in violation of international law; and

Whereas the rule of law and democratic norms require that the activity of governments and their administrative agencies be exercised in accordance with the laws passed by their parliaments or legislatures, and such laws themselves must be consistent with international human rights standards: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) welcomes the efforts of many formerly totalitarian countries to address the complex and difficult question of the status of wrongfully expropriated properties;

(2) urges countries which have not already done so to return wrongfully expropriated properties to their rightful owners or, when actual return is not possible, to pay prompt, just and effective compensation, in accordance with principles of justice and in a manner that is just, transparent and fair;

(3) calls for the return of wrongfully expropriated properties to religious communities;

(4) calls on Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and any other nation whose laws or regulations limit restitution or compensation for wrongfully expropriated properties to persons who reside in, or are citizens of, the country from which restitution or compensation is sought, to remove such restrictions; and

(5) urges formerly totalitarian countries to pass and effectively implement laws that provide for restitution of, or compensation for, wrongfully expropriated property.

SEC. 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).