

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2647, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2647) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees: Messrs. TAYLOR of North Carolina, WAMP, LEWIS of California, LAHOOD, SHERWOOD, YOUNG of Florida, MORAN of Virginia, HOYER, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. OBEY.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees: Messrs. WALSH, DELAY, HOBSON, KNOLLENBERG, FRELINGHUYSEN, Ms. NORTHUP, Messrs. SUNUNU, GOODE, ADERHOLT, YOUNG of Florida, MOLLOHAN, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, and Messrs. PRICE of North Carolina, CRAMER, FATTAH, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2311, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2311) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate

amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees: Messrs. CALLAHAN, ROGERS, FRELINGHUYSEN, LATHAM, WICKER, WAMP, Mrs. EMERSON, Messrs. DOOLITTLE, YOUNG of Florida, VISCOSKY, EDWARDS, PASTOR, CLYBURN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. OBEY.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2217, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2217) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees: Messrs. SKEEN, REGULA, KOLBE, TAYLOR of North Carolina, NETHERCUTT, WAMP, KINGSTON, PETERSON of Pennsylvania, YOUNG of Florida, DICKS, MURTHA, MORAN of Virginia, HINCHEY, SABO, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to make an announcement.

After consultation with the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent and approval, the Chair announces that tonight when the two Houses meet in joint session to hear an address by the President of the United States, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those on his left and right will be opened.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House.

Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the Chair feels that the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly adhered to.

Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor and the cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint session by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

□ 1530

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for approximately 5 minutes.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess for approximately 5 minutes.

□ 1554

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE) at 3 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.

PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE—RETURNING TO SENATE H.R. 2500, DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House, and I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 240) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 240

Resolved, That the amendment of the Senate to the bill H.R. 2500 entitled the "Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002", in the opinion of this House, contravenes the first clause of the seventh section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States and is an infringement of the privileges of this House and that such bill be respectfully returned to the Senate with a message communicating this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution raises a question of the privileges of the House.

The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS).

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

As was indicated by the content of the resolution, the resolution is necessary to return to the Senate, unfortunately, the Commerce-State-Justice appropriations bill because there is a provision, section 404 of the Senate amendments, that is an import ban. This, therefore, is a revenue measure and contravenes the Constitution, article 1, section 7, clause 1.

Notwithstanding the meritorious nature of the amendment, the idea of trying to deal with importation bans on diamonds from certain African countries that are used to finance rebel causes, the underlying constitutional question of the Constitution's statement that all bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives transcends any particular issue, no matter the merits of a particular issue. Therefore, I am asking

the House that it insist on its constitutional prerogative as the sole originator of revenue measures, notwithstanding the meritorious aspects of any particular desired piece of legislation.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that this is not necessarily, unfortunately, a novel or new conflict between the House and the Senate. As recently as July 14, and then again on August 12, 1994, on the Treasury-Postal, appropriation bill and then on the Agriculture appropriation bill, just such a blue slip was requested and granted. This is another indication of the difficulty of wanting to move legislation but understanding that there is a process constitutionally required.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means that this is an important piece of legislation, but there are constitutional prerogatives that provide that the Committee on Ways and Means originate this type of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the merits of the legislation, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), one of the original sponsors in the House of the legislation such as myself and other Members.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for yielding me the time. I do not intend to oppose the resolution. The reason why the chairman of the committee has opposed it, as I understand it, is more technical and procedural. It does not prejudice, I think, the vote of the House on this issue because he does not oppose the substantive part of it.

The substantive part of the bill which they are sending back to the Senate has to do with blood diamonds. That is a part that I have been working on along with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON), the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and a lot of Members in a bipartisan way, as well as Senator FEINGOLD, Senator DURBIN, Senator GREGG, and Senator DEWINE have been very supportive of this legislation.

Blood diamonds are diamonds that are used to really fund wars in Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone, in Angola, and in the Congo. For years they have been using diamonds, either through the smuggled ways, or through a lot of different ways that they find themselves coming into America to fund the kind of wars that are going on; particularly in Sierra Leone, where a group of 500 ragtag rebels were able to increase their small little army to about 25,000 with very sophisticated training, drugs, guns, et cetera. They terrorized all of Sierra Leone. They have done the same thing in Angola. It has been used in Liberia in many different ways.

Why should we be interested in this as Americans? The reason why we should be interested in it is that Americans buy 65 percent of all the diamonds in the world every year. A lot of these blood diamonds are coming into our country. We essentially are funding wars in Africa. It is my understanding just in the last couple of days, I have been told through press accounts and through intelligence services, that even bin Laden has used the services of conflict diamonds to fund some of his activities in the world.

We have great bipartisan support on this, both Republicans and Democrats, in both the House and the Senate. We have 100 of the top human rights organizations that are firmly behind this legislation. And, for the first time, the diamond merchants, the diamond industry, is 100 percent behind this bill.

□ 1600

We were hoping that this would be accepted in this particular way. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, he does not want to deal with it in this way. He wants to deal with it in another way, as I understand.

I hope that he and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and I can have a colloquy on it from the standpoint of what they intend to do with this bill in their committee; and with that, I would urge the House to take up this issue soon, in a manner which is acceptable to the Committee on Ways and Means. And I would ask the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, what his intentions are with the substance of the bill that he objects to.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I thank the gentleman for the question, and the substance of the bill has been under discussion at the United Nations level on an international discussion. The United States Trade Representative has indicated that a unilateral sanction by any particular country is in violation of the World Trade Organization rules, but an ability to move under the United Nations' auspices is not.

We would obviously all like to see an international agreement under which these kinds of diamonds could be banned. If, in fact, observing that process it does not appear that it is going to reach any reasonable or positive conclusion in the timeframe within which we could act legislatively, I will tell the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) as well, that we would then bring up legislation.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON) already has a bill in the hopper. We would examine that bill, if necessary, make the appropriate changes and look forward to moving that bill out of committee in a timely fashion.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, when the chairman says a timely fashion, I hope that he is meaning before the end of the year or before we adjourn.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, definitely a timely fashion means before the session of Congress ends; and it seems to me that if, in fact, the committee moves, it should not be difficult to deal with the scheduling to bring it to the floor, if that is the appropriate thing to do on the basis of leadership's decision.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's answer. I think it is a good answer. I look forward to seeing it on the bill soon. I think the longer that we keep this piece of legislation from passing in this Congress the more kinds of civil wars we are going to see in Africa; and it is just horrendous, when you see these people, how they have had their lives terrorized.

Americans can help Africa, it is very interesting, through a piece of legislation, by being very careful through the kind of diamonds they buy in America.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF).

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for agreeing to bring this up.

The reason this is so important is that many of these groups who are being funded from these diamonds are really connected to all of the disreputable groups that are around the world.

The passage of this legislation, one, will save the diamond industry, because if this does not pass the diamond industry, particularly in New York City and other places, may very well collapse because I think there may be a boycott against it.

Secondly, the opportunity to bring about a lot of good whereby people will no longer have their arms cut off or limbs cut off. There are indications that the RUF in Sierra Leone, Charles Taylor in Liberia, have been connected with many of the other terrorist groups around the world and were even together earlier this year meeting and agreeing and talking, and the resources of this may very well be used by terrorists and many others around the world.

I called Senator GREGG from New Hampshire, and he was very gracious and said he would attempt to work this out. He is committed to doing this. Hopefully we can resolve this issue whereby it will be worked out, the conferees on Commerce, State, Justice can be appointed, which has a lot of counterterrorism money, lot of money with regard to the Justice Department and other areas, INS, money with regard to the State Department, embassy security, diplomatic security, we can move ahead.

So with the gentleman from Ohio's (Mr. HALL) promise to move it as a freestanding bill, hopefully the Senate can resolve that issue; and I want to thank my friend from Ohio (Mr. HALL)

for his faithfulness on this issue and thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) for his commitment.

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

I just want to give assurances to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) that I will be working with Mr. HOUGHTON and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, not only on the legislation but on our trade ambassador to make certain that he is giving this a priority.

When it reaches the point that we can meet together, see where we are and then if we do not get the type of response that we believe is adequate, then you can depend on me working with the committee and the chairman to see that this is done.

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), the chairman of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Bakersfield, California (Mr. THOMAS), for yielding me time; and I would like to congratulate the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the ranking minority member.

This concern was first raised to my attention by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) of the Committee on Rules late one night; and we have been trying since that time when he, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), and I discussed this, to move ahead.

I would simply like to congratulate the leadership of the committee on Ways and Means for addressing this very important human rights issue, which I believe can see successful resolution, and will look forward to the progress that is made.

I thank my friends for bringing this to our attention and for the work they have done on it.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 8:40 p.m. for the purpose of receiving in joint session the President of the United States.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 8:40 p.m.

□ 2041

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 8 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2590. An act making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 2590) "An Act making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes," and requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints, Mr. DORGAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. REED, Mr. BYRD, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. DEWINE, and Mr. STEVENS to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

□ 2042

JOINT SESSION OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE HELD PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 231 TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The Speaker of the House presided. The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms, Mr. Bill Sims, announced the President pro tempore and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the President pro tempore taking the chair at the left of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY);

The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT); and

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The President pro tempore of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to

escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE);

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT); and

The Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES).

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Royal Highness Prince Bandar Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

□ 2102

At 9 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, Mr. Wilson Livingood, announced the President of the United States.

The President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDENT. Thank you all. Please be seated.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tempore, Members of Congress, and fellow Americans:

In the normal course of events, Presidents come to this Chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people. We have seen it in the courage of passengers who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground, passengers like an exceptional man named Todd Beamer. Would you please help me welcome his wife, Lisa Beamer, here tonight.

We have seen the state of our Union in the endurance of rescuers working