

account for assistance to support the African Union Mission in Sudan. While the conference agreement does not include additional funds for this Mission in Sudan, the Administration should expeditiously submit a request for any necessary funding.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6120), "Support for Democracy and Governance Activities in Zimbabwe". This issue is addressed under the heading "Economic Support Fund". The House did not address this matter.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6121) regarding assistance for Venezuela. This issue is addressed under the heading "Democracy Fund" in title II of this Act. The House did not address this matter.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6123) regarding the Export-Import Bank. The conferees direct that the Inspector General shall provide a written analysis to the Committees on Appropriations and other appropriate committees, including the Senate Finance Committee, within 90 days of appointment as to whether loan guarantees provided to an ethanol dehydration plant in Trinidad and Tobago met the conditions of section 2(e)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945 or any provision in the Bank's charter. The analysis shall include whether "value added" methodology is routinely used by the Bank to determine whether or not a proposed loan guarantee or export credit meets the statutory test found in section 2(e)(4). The Inspector General shall also make recommendations as to whether it is appropriate to use such methodology in making a determination of substantial injury.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6126) regarding "Report on Small Arms Programs" that required the Secretary of State to submit a report describing activities and progress by the State Department on the destruction of small arms and light weapons. The House did not address this matter. The conferees direct the Secretary of State to submit, within 180 days of enactment of the Act, the report required by the Senate provision.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6127) regarding democracy programs in Iraq. This issue is addressed under the heading "Economic Support Funds" in title II of this Act. The House did not address this matter.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6128) that addressed orphans and displaced and abandoned children. The House did not address this matter.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6130) regarding a "Report on Reciprocity". The House did not address this issue.

The conference agreement does not include a provision proposed by the Senate (section 6135) regarding police training activities conducted by the State Department's INCLE bureau. The House did not address this matter. The conferees direct the Secretary of State to ensure that: (1) training is provided by instructors with proven records of experience; (2) the bureau has established procedures to ensure vetting of trainees for criminal or terrorist backgrounds and minimum age and experience requirements; (3) the bureau has established procedures that set standards for training and provide certification to meet such standards. The conferees further direct the Secretary to submit the report required by the Senate provision within 180 days of enactment of the Act.

The conference agreement adopts the title of the bill as proposed by the House.

CONFERENCE TOTAL—WITH COMPARISONS

The total new budget (obligational) authority for the fiscal year 2006 recommended by the Committee of Conference, with comparisons to the fiscal year 2005 amount, the 2006 budget estimates, and the House and Senate bills for 2006 follow:

[In thousands of dollars]	
New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2005	22,310,592
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2006	22,867,945
House bill, fiscal year 2006	20,311,677
Senate bill, fiscal year 2006	22,122,189
Conference agreement, fiscal year 2006	20,978,490
Conference agreement compared with	
New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2005	-1,332,102
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 2006	-1,889,455
House bill, fiscal year 2006	+666,813
Senate bill, fiscal year 2006	-1,143,699
JIM KOLBE, JERRY LEWIS, JOE KNOLLENBERG, MARK STEVEN KIRK, ANDER CRENSHAW, DON SHERWOOD, JOHN E. SWEENEY, DENNIS REHBERG, JOHN CARTER, NITA M. LOWEY, DAVID R. OBEY, JESSE L. JACKSON, Jr., CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK, STEVEN R. ROTHMAN CHAKA FATTAH.	

Managers on the Part of the House.

MITCH McCONNELL,
ARLEN SPECTER,
JUDD GREGG,
RICHARD SHELBY,
ROBERT F. BENNETT,
CHRISTOPHER BOND,
MIKE DEWINE,
SAM BROWNBACK,
THAD COCHRAN,
PATRICK J. LEAHY,
DANIEL INOUYE,
TONY HARKIN,
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI,
DICK DURBIN,
TIM JOHNSON,
MARY L. LANDRIEU,
ROBERT C. BYRD,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

REAPPOINTMENT AS MEMBER TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 491 of the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1098(c)), the order of the House of January 4, 2005, and upon the recommendation of the majority leader, the Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment of the following member on the part of the House to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance for a 3-year term:

Ms. Judith Flink, Morton Grove, Illinois

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the remaining motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken tomorrow.

CONGRATULATING THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX ON WINNING THE 2005 WORLD SERIES

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 281) congratulating the Chicago White Sox on winning the 2005 World Series.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 281

Whereas the Chicago White Sox won 99 games during the regular season and compiled the best record in the American League;

Whereas the White Sox, through great pitching, hitting, and superb defense dominated the playoffs with an impressive 11-1 record, beating the former world champion Boston Red Sox, the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, and the Houston Astros;

Whereas the White Sox have the distinction of participating in the longest game during World Series history of 5 hours and 41 minutes;

Whereas the White Sox, formed in 1901, earn the distinction of being world champions for the first time since 1917, ending an 88 year drought;

Whereas the White Sox swept the Houston Astros by winning 4 straight games in the World Series;

Whereas Jerry Reinsdorf, Chairman of the Chicago White Sox, has become only the third owner to win championships in two major sports; and

Whereas the White Sox organization, from Jerry Reinsdorf, General Manager Ken Williams, manager Ozzie Guillen, and all the players have reinvigorated America's pastime and made Chicagoans proud: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress joins with all Americans in congratulating the 2005 World Series Champion Chicago White Sox.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 281.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 281, offered by the distinguished gentleman

from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS). This bill would honor the dedication of the Chicago White Sox in winning the 2005 World Series.

For the first time since 1917, the Chicago White Sox have had the opportunity to bask in the national spotlight that accompanies winning the Major League Baseball world title. Not only did the title belong to them, but the entire post season did as well.

They swept the Boston Red Sox in three games, defeated the Anaheim Angels four games to one to become the American League Champions, and finally swept the Houston Astros in four games to clinch the World Series.

□ 2030

The Sox completed an 11-1 postseason run, showing the world their perseverance and teamwork.

The White Sox motto of “Win or Die Trying” was certainly observed throughout the entire season, not just in the postseason. The Sox showed that they were a force to be reckoned with by winning 99 games during the course of the regular season. They were 66-35 in games decided by two runs or less as well as 38-20 in one-run contests.

The celebration continues for the proud fans of the Chicago White Sox. The team kicked off their victory celebration by riding triumphantly into the heart of Chicago. Hundreds of thousands of fans lined the streets of the downtown area to catch a glimpse of the champion White Sox. Even Oprah Winfrey cleared a segment of her show to honor the team. According to first baseman Paul Konerko, “Chicago is second city no more.”

I urge all Members to join me in commemorating this momentous event for the city of Chicago by adopting H. Con. Res. 281.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I represent one of the most interestingly diverse congressional districts in America. It is home to the Chicago White Sox, home to the Chicago Bulls, home to the Bears. It is home to Oprah Winfrey. It is home to the Magnificent Mile and all of the great downtown Chicago, and so I rise today as a proud Member representing the area from which the 2005 world champion Chicago White Sox hail.

First of all, I want to thank Representative JOHN SHIMKUS and the entire Illinois delegation for supporting this resolution. I also want to thank Speaker HASTERT. He has to be a White Sox fan for getting this resolution to the floor in such a timely manner.

The White Sox organization, led by Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf, a constituent of mine, Vice Chairman Eddie Einhorn, and General Manager Ken Williams, has managed to do what has not been done since 1917. They assembled a team led by former player and now coach Ozzie Guillen that won 99

games during the regular season and had the best record in the American League.

There are a number of amazing things about the 2005 White Sox that stand out. First of all, they led their division throughout the season. They have an outstanding group of young pitchers who dominated the regular season and the playoffs. They have great hitters who come through in the clutch. Perhaps the most impressive thing about them is the fact that they believed in themselves throughout the year and played as a team.

When you look at the line-up, there are no big-name superstars. As a matter of fact, they remind me of Chicago: blue collar workers getting the job done.

We will never forget the great starting rotation of Contreras, Buehrle, Garland, and Garcia who pitched four straight complete games during the championship run. Nor will we forget the great bullpen led by Politte, Jenks, Cotts, Marte, Hermanson, Hernandez and Vizcaino, which helped secure 11 victories throughout the playoffs. The bats of Konerko, the American League Championship Series Most Valuable Player; Jermaine Dye, the World Series Most Valuable Player; Crede, Iguchi, Uribe, Podsednik, Rowand, Everett, Pierzynski, and others keyed an offense that delivered in the clutch.

That offense and defense swept the defending world champion Boston Red Sox in three games. They ousted the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in five games; and in the World Series, they swept the Houston Astros, winning four straight games.

I would think that people like Luis Aparicio, Nellie Fox, Al Smith, Minnie Minoso, Bill Skowron and others have to look back in retrospect and say how proud they are of this new bunch.

I also want to commend Houston for being great competitors and for their fine season. The Chicago White Sox have brought a championship to Chicago, and for that we are all proud.

The championship, though, really pays tribute to all of those who struggled to get to this point. The great teams of the past and their players all cheered.

I also want to commend Frank Thomas who got hurt midway through the season, but he never gave up on his teammates; and he was right there all along cheering them on.

We also are, even as we celebrate this year, looking forward to next year because we expect them to be back. So, again, to Mr. Reinsdorf, Mr. Einhorn, the front office, all of the coaches and players, we salute you for an outstanding season. We also salute you for being a good neighbor and a good corporate citizen.

One of the things that many people do not know about the White Sox is their ownership and how civically and community involved they are, how relevant they are to the whole city of Chicago and to the State of Illinois. So, as

we savor this sweet victory, we will be back next year.

To my friends from Houston, let me just say that I am looking forward to eating high on the hog. We had a couple of bets out there, one with Representative POE. I am looking forward to the barbecue. And also I want Representative AL GREEN to know that I eat a hearty lunch. So I thank you all.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), my distinguished colleague, who I am told is a Chicago Cubs fan.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for the time.

I want to recognize my two colleagues and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) from the relevant district and to say as a die-hard Cubs fan, Congratulations.

We all know that had we seen the Chicago Cubs in the World Series, and I can speak from the heart as a Northsider, it would have been a quasi-religious experience; but, nonetheless, to see a Chicago team, especially the White Sox, who had gone without a World Series victory since 1917, this was quite an event.

We all know where the sympathies of our mayor lie. No question that he is a White Sox fan primarily, and they definitely prevailed.

I will take a point of personal privilege to congratulate two of my constituents, Jerry Reinsdorf, manager of the White Sox organization; and Bob Mazer, the principal shareholder who after many years of patient management and attending to this team pulled off a great victory.

If you lived in the Chicagoland area for the last couple of weeks, you would have not been able to find any oxygen in the system. We were all White Sox all the time, as well as it could be, and we only look forward, as a die-hard Cubs fan, to say maybe next year we will have a series on the El, between the South side and the North side, with an eventual, someday Cubs victory.

Anyway to my colleagues, congratulations. The South side has prevailed, and we congratulate you.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, of course Dusty Baker likes to come to my district to eat catfish at Wallace's Catfish Corner, so we look forward to that and hope that it would happen. I want to thank the gentleman for his remarks.

It is my pleasure to yield as much time as he would consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH), who shares the White Sox stadium. As a matter of fact, our districts come together right at the White Sox stadium. So I do not know if they are more Rush than Davis.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank sponsor of this resolution, my friend from the Chicago City Council, my friend in the civil rights movement,

my colleague here in the Congress, the Congressman from the Seventh Congressional District, Congressman DANNY K. DAVIS, for the lead that he took in terms of this particular resolution, the sponsoring of this resolution; and I want to thank him for all the work that he does on behalf of not only his constituents but the constituents of Chicago and the constituents of the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, it is proper that I would follow a Cubs fan because for a long time the Cubs have been known throughout the Nation as being Chicago's team, and that moniker was earned because the entire Nation sympathized with the Cubs. They have lost so much and they have lost for such a long time that they have really kind of endeared themselves in their losing manner to the Nation; and so, therefore, the Nation has responded to them accordingly.

But I stand here now to say to the Cubs fans and to all of the Nation really that there is a team in Chicago now that has earned the respect and the love and the endearment of all the citizens of the City of Chicago. We are not Chicago's team because of sympathy. We are Chicago's team because the Chicago White Sox have instilled a sense of pride in Chicago. Indeed, the Chicago White Sox are now the pride of Chicago.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the White Sox for their dominant, excellent performance in the World Series and the playoffs, how they conducted themselves, both as professionals and how they conducted themselves as superior and supreme athletes. They made us all proud, particularly those of my constituents who share, as Congressman DAVIS said, share the ethos and share the pride and share the workman mentality of the City of Chicago with the Chicago White Sox.

The Chicago White Sox team epitomizes the lunch-pail approach, the lunch-pail mentality that I would like to think all of my constituents represent. This is the team of the little guy. This is the team of the unheralded heroes. This is the team that fights based on heart. They have got big hearts, not big names, but they have got big hearts, and their big hearts won the World Series.

Mr. Speaker, this win that we were able to experience over the last few days really united the City of Chicago unlike it has been united in recent memory.

I remember back in 1959 I was a 13-year-old lad, living in Cubs territory; and although all of my friends and my teachers and everybody, all those who I was associated with, they all were die-hard Cubs fans, but Chicago, the White Sox, kind of captured my imagination. I became a Chicago White Sox fan at 13 years old when they were in the American League pennant race, and since that time I have been following the team closely.

I have become friends with Jerry Reinsdorf and Eddie Einhorn and Kenny Williams; and it just gives me a sense of pride, gives my constituents a sense of pride just to know that within the neighborhood that we all reside in that we have a world championship team there. We have a World Series team there.

Mr. Speaker, the black and the white is all over the City of Chicago.

□ 2045

When I got off the plane last week from Washington here, the whole entire airport was an avalanche of black and white all over the airport, and people from far and near were coming trying to buy some of the White Sox logos and some of the White Sox t-shirts and some of their paraphernalia.

I am just so proud of this particular team. It is really a shot in the arm for those of us who work hard every day, those of us who do the right thing, those of us who really just put our hearts and our minds and our spirit out on the field. Sometimes we come back victorious and sometimes we do not come back victorious, but we still go out and approach our day-to-day activities with the kind of zeal and with the kind of understanding that this is fair. This is fair. We go and put everything, our guts on the ground, and if we do that, then sometimes we are able to be victorious.

The Chicago White Sox have really cemented the fact that if you just work hard you do not have to be the big names, you do not have to have the dazzling system. All you have to have is an organization of people from the elevator operator to the janitor all the way up to the president of the company, the owners of the company. If you have that kind of organization and you really, really have a single focus, you have the power of a made-up mind, you can accomplish and you can be victorious. The Chicago White Sox have shown that with the power of the made-up mind that they could be victorious.

Mr. Speaker, they started out this year saying they had one thing on their mind, that they were going to go to the World Series, and they did it. We are proud of them. They have shown the way, and I am just so grateful to have the opportunity to come and to speak on behalf of this resolution. So I want to congratulate the Chicago White Sox and their entire organization.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, I just want to say to my colleague from the Seventh Congressional District and to others, we will try to do all that we can to ensure that this franchise, that this organization, that this World Series champion has what it takes in order for them to continue on with their success.

I want to let the world know that we will be erecting a new public transportation system, a metro system, that will have a stop there at the White Sox field there, U.S. Cellular Field. The

Cell will have a metro stop there so that people from far and near can come. And if my colleagues from the Cubs part of the city, from the north side and from the other places, if they want to get on the metro and come to Comiskey Park to see some winning going on in the City of Chicago, then they are invited to come over. It does not take a lot of money. We invite them to come from the north side to the south side in order to see some victories in the City of Chicago.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL), who hails right from Cub territory, no doubt about it, Wrigleyville.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Chicago for yielding me this time. I may have to go into a witness protection plan after this speech, given Wrigleyville is in my district.

As a fan of the Chicago Cubs, as those have noted and anybody listening tonight knows, the difference between the north side and the south side of Chicago when it comes to baseball is like deep dish pizza versus thin pizza. It is a serious, lifelong fight.

I will say as the proud father of an 8-year-old son, who took his son to the World Series game Sunday in the rain and 32-degree weather, which is a little more like a football game than a baseball game, and watched that grand slam and being there with my son, it was a great moment. It was a great moment for baseball, it was a great moment for Chicago, and a great moment for this country. And as a north sider, it was a great season for watching the Chicago White Sox, a great team.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, let me just close by thanking all of those who have spoken. And I agree with my colleague from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) when he said that the City of Chicago and the Chicago White Sox have no greater White Sox fan than the mayor of the City of Chicago.

If you have never seen a ticker tape parade, if you have never seen a real outpouring in a city, you should have been there on Friday when Chicago put on one of the greatest displays of public affection upon an athletic team, an athletic enterprise that one could ever witness. So I want to thank the people of Chicago for their great display of support shown to the White Sox.

As a matter of fact, you would have thought that there was no other kind of Sox except White Sox in town. It was a great season, a great victory. Again, I congratulate the owners of the White Sox, I congratulate all of the players and the coaches, and say that we will be back next year.

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 281.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 281.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4128, PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-266) on the resolution (H. Res. 527) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4128) to protect private property rights, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE MEN WHO GO TO WAR

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in 1599 Shakespeare said this about the men who go to war: “From this day to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.”

Some of those brothers from southeast Texas who shed their blood in Iraq were:

Specialist Adolf C. Carballo, Houston, Army;

Chief Warrant Officer Andrew Todd Arnold from Spring, Texas, Marines;

Specialist Scott Q. Larson, Jr., Houston, Army;

Captain Andrew R. Houghton, Houston, United States Army;

Lance Corporal Michael B. Wafford, Spring, United States Marine Corps;

Lance Corporal Thomas J. Zapp, Houston, Marine Corps;

PFC Jesus A. Leon-Perez, Houston, Army;

Lance Corporal Fred Maciel, Spring, Texas, United States Marine Corps;

Staff Sergeant Dexter S. Kimble, United States Marine Corps from Houston;

Sergeant Michael T. Robertson, Houston, Army;

Staff Sergeant Timothy J. Roark, Houston, United States Army;

Master Sergeant Ivica Jerak, Houston, United States Army.

These brothers died representing the United States of America, this band of brothers that we will remember. That's just the way it is.

TORTURE MUST NOT BE CONDONED BY THE U.S.

(Mr. McGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this morning the top story on the front page of the Washington Post describes in detail how the CIA has been hiding and interrogating al Qaeda and other prisoners in covert prisons around the globe. No one knows what the rules of the game are for the interrogations that take place there. There is no accountability, no genuine oversight. In fact, information about these facilities and their practices has been deliberately withheld from the Congress and the American people. In effect, the prisoners in these jails simply disappear.

Mr. Speaker, this is not what America stands for, this is more like Chile under Pinochet or Argentina under the junta.

We know now why Vice President CHENEY is so determined that the final defense appropriations conference report include exceptions to Senator McCAIN's provision against torture and the Markey provision prohibiting rendition. If those provisions are watered down or struck down by the defense conferees, then mark my words, Mr. Speaker, America will lose a piece of its soul. Let us reclaim the values and the principles that have made this country great.

Mr. Speaker, the text of the article in today's Washington Post is as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 2, 2005]
CIA HOLDS TERROR SUSPECTS IN SECRET PRISONS

(By Dana Priest)

The CIA has been hiding and interrogating some of its most important al Qaeda captives at a Soviet-era compound in Eastern Europe, according to U.S. and foreign officials familiar with the arrangement.

The secret facility is part of a covert prison system set up by the CIA nearly four years ago that at various times has included sites in eight countries, including Thailand, Afghanistan and several democracies in Eastern Europe, as well as a small center at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba, according to current and former intelligence officials and diplomats from three continents.

The hidden global internment network is a central element in the CIA's unconventional war on terrorism. It depends on the cooperation of foreign intelligence services, and on keeping even basic information about the system secret from the public, foreign officials and nearly all members of Congress charged with overseeing the CIA's covert actions.

The existence and locations of the facilities—referred to as “black sites” in classified White House, CIA, Justice Department and congressional documents—are known to only a handful of officials in the United States and, usually, only to the president and a few top intelligence officers in each host country.

The CIA and the White House, citing national security concerns and the value of the program, have dissuaded Congress from demanding that the agency answer questions

in open testimony about the conditions under which captives are held. Virtually nothing is known about who is kept in the facilities, what interrogation methods are employed with them, or how decisions are made about whether they should be detained or for how long.

While the Defense Department has produced volumes of public reports and testimony about its detention practices and rules after the abuse scandals at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and at Guantanamo Bay, the CIA has not even acknowledged the existence of its black sites. To do so, say officials familiar with the program, could open the U.S. government to legal challenges, particularly in foreign courts, and increase the risk of political condemnation at home and abroad.

But the revelations of widespread prisoner abuse in Afghanistan and Iraq by the U.S. military—which operates under published rules and transparent oversight of Congress—have increased concern among lawmakers, foreign governments and human rights groups about the opaque CIA system. Those concerns escalated last month, when Vice President Cheney and CIA Director Porter J. Goss asked Congress to exempt CIA employees from legislation already endorsed by 90 senators that would bar cruel and degrading treatment of any prisoner in U.S. custody.

Although the CIA will not acknowledge details of its system, intelligence officials defend the agency's approach, arguing that the successful defense of the country requires that the agency be empowered to hold and interrogate suspected terrorists for as long as necessary and without restrictions imposed by the U.S. legal system or even by the military tribunals established for prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay.

The Washington Post is not publishing the names of the Eastern European countries involved in the covert program, at the request of senior U.S. officials. They argued that the disclosure might disrupt counterterrorism efforts in those countries and elsewhere and could make them targets of possible terrorist retaliation.

The secret detention system was conceived in the chaotic and anxious first months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, when the working assumption was that a second strike was imminent.

Since then, the arrangement has been increasingly debated within the CIA, where considerable concern lingers about the legality, morality and practicality of holding even unrepentant terrorists in such isolation and secrecy, perhaps for the duration of their lives. Mid-level and senior CIA officers began arguing two years ago that the system was unsustainable and diverted the agency from its unique espionage mission.

“We never sat down, as far as I know, and came up with a grand strategy,” said one former senior intelligence officer who is familiar with the program but not the location of the prisons. “Everything was very reactive. That's how you get to a situation where you pick people up, send them into a netherworld and don't say, ‘What are we going to do with them afterwards?’”

It is illegal for the government to hold prisoners in such isolation in secret prisons in the United States, which is why the CIA placed them overseas, according to several former and current intelligence officials and other U.S. government officials. Legal experts and intelligence officials said that the CIA's internment practices also would be considered illegal under the laws of several host countries, where detainees have rights to have a lawyer or to mount a defense against allegations of wrongdoing.