

the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3202.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1345

DHS INTERAGENCY COUNTERTERRORISM TASK FORCE ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4555) to authorize the participation in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces of personnel of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4555

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “DHS Interagency Counterterrorism Task Force Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. OVERSEAS INTERAGENCY COUNTERTERRORISM TASK FORCE PARTICIPATION.

Section 102 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 112) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) COORDINATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES OVERSEAS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to assign Department personnel to participate in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces to—

“(A) facilitate the sharing of counterterrorism information, and

“(B) combat the threat of terrorism and associated risks to the United States stemming from overseas sources of conflict or terrorism, as determined by the Secretary.

“(2) PERSONNEL.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may assign personnel from any component of the Department the Secretary determines necessary to participate in the overseas counterterrorism task forces referred to in paragraph (1).”.

SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORTS.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter for three years, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Relations, Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate on activities carried out pursuant to subsection (h) of section 102 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 112), as added by section 2 of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria seek to return home or travel to other regions in the wake of the defeat of ISIS on the battlefield, cooperation among U.S. military, national security, and law enforcement agencies is vital.

When these fighters move from the Middle East to the West or other regions, information collection and tracking becomes extremely difficult, especially when ensuring that all relevant Federal agencies have access to the same critical information. An enhanced, whole-of-government effort to share information and intelligence related to these fighters and their movements would improve security of the homeland.

In order to achieve this, H.R. 4555 authorizes the Department of Homeland Security Secretary to assign DHS personnel to overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces to facilitate the sharing of counterterrorism information and combat threats stemming from overseas sources of conflict or terrorism. This will enable DHS to build on existing initiatives to colocate DHS personnel with other Federal departments and agencies that play a crucial role in the fight against terrorism.

For example, assigning DHS personnel to the Department of Defense locations would facilitate better collection and sharing of information recovered from those conflict zones, which significantly improves our ability to interdict terrorists before they enter our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4555, the DHS Interagency Counterterrorism Task Force Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4555 authorizes DHS personnel to participate in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces. Since the attacks of September 11 and the demise of central al-Qaida, there has been an upsurge in the number of foreign terrorist organizations. The terrorist threat picture demands that DHS work to “push our borders out” and deal with terrorist threats overseas. As such, it is important that DHS deploy DHS personnel overseas to engage in counterterrorism information sharing with international partners.

Our close partnerships with countries around the world, especially in Europe, are essential to preventing returning foreign fighters from attacking the U.S. homeland. However, we remain concerned that terrorist organizations, in particular, ISIS, al-Qaida, and their affiliates, continue to plot attacks against the U.S. homeland and our interests abroad.

Authorizing the participation of DHS personnel in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces will facilitate better counterterrorism information sharing, which will help protect the homeland and U.S. interests abroad. As such, I support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 4555 authorizes the participation of DHS personnel in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces. This measure seeks to help safeguard our homeland by fostering DHS overseas partnerships and facilitating counterterrorism information sharing.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) for sponsoring this legislation and for working with me on my amendment, which added reporting language on the activities authorized by this measure.

This is an important step forward and, again, I might emphasize, the work that is being done between the ranking member, Mr. THOMPSON, and the full committee chair, Mr. MCCAUL, in bringing our committee together in producing a myriad of constructive legislation all geared to our task, because, when all is said and done, we are the Homeland Security Committee within the Homeland Security Department, created in the aftermath of the most heinous, horrific tragedy in the history of the United States of recent recollection that was not an incident of war.

Therefore, I think the American people, and I know the American people are owed our diligence and are owed our commitment and are owed our studiousness. I am very pleased to say that, on this committee, the production of legislation that comes to the floor, all is geared to securing the homeland.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 4555.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4555, the “DHS Interagency Counterterrorism Task Force Act of 2017.”

H.R. 4555 authorizes DHS personnel to participate in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces.

Since the attacks of September 11th and the demise of central al Qaeda, there has been an upsurge in the number of foreign terrorist organizations.

The terrorist threat picture demands that DHS work to “push our borders out” and deal with terrorist threats overseas.

As such, it is important that DHS deploy DHS personnel overseas to engage in counterterrorism information sharing with international partners.

Our close partnerships with countries around the world, especially in Europe, are essential to preventing returning foreign fighters from attacking the U.S. homeland.

However, we remain concerned that terrorist organizations, in particular ISIS, al Qaeda, and their affiliates, continue to plot attacks against the U.S. homeland and our interests abroad.

Authorizing the participation of DHS personnel in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces will facilitate better counterterrorism information sharing, which will help protect the homeland and U.S. interests abroad.

I thank the gentleman from Florida, Mr. RUTHERFORD, for sponsoring this legislation and for working with me on my amendment which added reporting language on the activities authorized by this measure.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 4555.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for her very commonsense amendment to this bill, which made it stronger and better, and I do appreciate the bipartisan work on that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4555, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

POST-CALIPHATE THREAT ASSESSMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4564) to require a threat assessment on current foreign terrorist fighter activities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4564

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. THREAT ASSESSMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Secretary of State and Director of National Intelligence, shall conduct a threat assessment of current foreign terrorist fighter activities. Such assessment shall include the following:

(1) A detailed summary of current foreign terrorist fighter travel and trends, including countries of origin, travel destinations, and means of travel.

(2) An analysis of any country or region with a significant increase in foreign terrorist fighter activity.

(3) An analysis of foreign terrorist fighter travel trends in and out of Iraq and Syria.

(b) CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the en-

actment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate on the threat assessment required under subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to offer for consideration H.R. 4564, the Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act of 2017, for House consideration.

The Homeland Security Committee’s Task Force on Denying Terrorist Entry into the United States, which I am a member of, spent the last year taking a deeper look at how terrorist organizations and lone-wolf attackers are entering the nations they are targeting. One of the most concerning issues that the task force learned is that an estimated 40,000 foreign fighters traveled to ISIS-occupied territories to join a force of over 100,000 radical Islamic terrorists.

Through major victories by anti-ISIS forces, the Islamic State’s self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria has been mostly defeated as a whole, driving these terrorists into hiding. Many thousands of these battle-trained jihadists are now unidentified and their location is unknown. The United States is a primary target.

Of particular concern for the United States are those fighters seeking to return to Europe or the U.S. These fighters may seek to exploit direct flights to the United States as well as the Visa Waiver Program.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is about ensuring that we have the best possible data to defeat this threat. Specifically, my bill would direct the Secretary of DHS, in coordination with the Secretary of State and Director of National Intelligence, to conduct a threat assessment of current foreign terrorist fighter activity and report their findings to Congress. It would also ensure that Congress and the Executive gain better clarity on foreign terrorist travel and trends post-caliphate, which will strengthen our defenses as the diaspora unfolds.

Before closing, I would like to thank task force Chairman GALLAGHER, Representative KATKO, committee Chairman MCCAUL, bipartisan members of the Homeland Security Committee, and other members of the task force and their staffs for the hard work put in over the last year to make the report we issued this past December a reality.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of this commonsense legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 4564, the Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act of 2017. The Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act requires the DHS to conduct an intelligence threat assessment of foreign fighter activities.

With the military defeat of ISIL’s caliphate, we are concerned about the threat of foreign terrorists returning to the West. While the vast majority of foreign fighters originated from Russia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, about 20,000 foreign fighters traveled to Iraq and Syria from at least 110 countries. We must address foreign fighters who are ready to return home. We must stay abreast of their movements and stop them from coming to the United States.

Requiring DHS to conduct a threat assessment of current foreign fighter activities will help DHS to continue to focus on travel screening on the risk-based dangers that we face. Let’s focus our policies on preventing terrorism by keeping dangerous individuals from coming to this country.

H.R. 4564 requires a detailed report by the Secretary of Homeland Security, coordinating with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, on foreign fighter movements to help DHS focus on preventing their activities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this measure. I want to thank Mr. HIGGINS for this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4564.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.