

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.

□ 1400

COUNTERTERRORISM INFORMATION SHARING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4569) to require counterterrorism information sharing coordination, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4569

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 “Counterterrorism Information Sharing Improvement Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. COUNTERTERRORISM INFORMATION SHARING COORDINATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President, acting through the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall ensure that, for counterterrorism purposes, the Department of the Homeland Security has access to biographic and biometric data collected by the United States Government on individuals associated with a terrorist organization.

(b) COORDINATION.—The President shall direct the heads of relevant Federal departments and agencies to coordinate with the Secretary of Homeland Security to minimize and overcome any administrative, technical, capacity, or classification challenges to carrying out subsection (a).

(c) PROTECTIONS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that all relevant laws, rules, and procedures, including the section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the “Privacy Act” or the “Privacy Act of 1974”), regarding classification levels and civil rights and civil liberties are followed while seeking to carry out subsection (a).

(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall, consistent with the protection of classified information, submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the implementation of this section.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include a description of how the data referred to in subsection (a) is utilized for Department of Homeland Security screening and vetting purposes and any challenges associated with incorporating such data into departmental screening and vetting systems.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

As we destroy the caliphate in the Middle East, foreign fighters and terrorist sympathizers have fled the battlefield and are looking for new ways to spread their hatred, recruit new followers, instill fear, kill innocent people, and disrupt our way of life.

The December 11 bombing at the New York City Port Authority Bus Terminal was the second terror attack in New York in less than 2 months and a grave reminder of the reality of this threat.

Given this current environment, at the direction of Chairman McCaul, I led a task force to identify specific national security challenges and examine how terrorists might infiltrate our homeland and bring harm to our people. Subsequently, we produced a report with a series of solutions to fix any identified weaknesses that may be exploited by our enemies.

This report resulted in several pieces of legislation that have come before the House today. To that end, my bill, the Counterterrorism Information Sharing Improvement Act, seeks to enhance the current information-sharing environment that exists within the Federal and military communities. Throughout the task force, we heard time and time again about the incredible amount of biometric and biographic data being pulled off battlefields in Syria and Iraq, as U.S. forces and our allies continue to roll back the territories once held by ISIS.

It is often DOD personnel that encounter ISIS fighters on the battlefield, which often leads to the collection of valuable data. However, if these fighters and their associates move back to the West or try to enter the U.S., the DHS becomes the primary entity that will engage them. Therefore, it is critical that the data recovered by the DOD in the battlefield is able to reach the DHS and its systems for effective frontline screening and vetting of known or suspected terrorists.

In order to verify we are utilizing this information to support our counterterrorism efforts, we must ensure that the Department of Homeland Security gets access to that data in a timely manner, particularly so that it can be used for screening and vetting purposes. My bill directs the President, acting through the Secretary of Homeland Security, to ensure that the DHS has access to biographic and biometric data collected by the U.S. Government on individuals associated with a terrorist organization. The bill also directs the Secretary to report to Congress on these efforts.

The U.S. must prioritize any opportunity to identify bad actors outside the country and expand our ability to identify and deter threats before they reach the homeland. Unfortunately, information-sharing challenges among U.S. agencies can prevent valuable information from becoming available for

frontline screening and vetting. Not only is this a bureaucratic challenge, given the number of separate government agencies and components involved, but legal capacity and technical issues exist as well.

This bill will address these challenges and create improved collaborations between the Department of Homeland Security and its other Federal and military partners.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4569, the Counterterrorism Information Sharing Improvement Act of 2017. This bill seeks to ensure that the DHS gets access to biometric and biographic data collected by the United States Government to carry out its counterterrorism efforts.

Since 9/11, the Democratic members of this committee have been committed to bolstering terrorism information sharing within our government. Today, terrorist threats are decentralized, spreading beyond al-Qaida, al Shabaab, and ISIL to a patchwork of small cells and lone wolves who stand ready to carry out violence to our country at their whim. Increasingly, this threat also includes homegrown violent extremists and domestic terrorists.

Ensuring that the DHS has access to biographic and biometric data on individuals associated with a terrorist organization is critical to comprehensive assessing of all forms of terrorism and threats to our government.

This legislation also requires that the DHS report on how the data is being received and utilized for screening and vetting purposes. This report will help Congress ensure that screening and vetting of travelers to the United States is conducted in a risk-based manner.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation and I am prepared to close.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this legislation ensures that the DHS have access to biographic and biometric data collected by our government on individuals associated with terrorist organizations. It is important that this information be integrated into the DHS’ screening and vetting programs to protect our country, our citizens, from all forms of terrorism and extremism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I thank my colleagues for their hard work in generating the task force report and all of the ideas that led to the variety of bills we are doing here today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from