

Twenty years ago, it would have been hard to imagine coming to the House floor in support of a bipartisan bill on educational exchanges with Mexico. Now, a bill like this will glide through the House with little, if any, opposition, just as it did last year. But we cannot take cooperation for granted. We have to keep on working with Mexico to improve our relationship.

I thank my colleagues for supporting me and joining me in supporting this legislation to double down on the successes in the U.S.-Mexico partnership, and I urge its immediate passage.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 133, the “United States-Mexico Economic Partnership Act” that promotes economic partnership and cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

The “United States-Mexico Economic Partnership Act” strategy predominantly focuses on academic, business and medical exchanges.

The United States and Mexico have benefitted from a bilateral, mutually beneficial partnership focused on advancing the economic interests of both countries.

In March 2011, the United States launched the “100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative”, which increased educational exchanges between the United States and other countries in the Western Hemisphere region.

The 100,000 United States students are studying in other countries in the Western Hemisphere region and 100,000 non-United States students from the region are studying in the United States per year by 2020.

The “United States-Mexico Economic Partnership Act” would expand the educational and professional exchange programs with Mexico, including through the framework of the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative.

In the 18th Congressional District of Texas, the Houston Independent School District is educating nearly 3,500 immigrant students in their first year in American school systems.

The state’s largest district of Texas has more than 11,000 immigrant students who have been in America for three years or less.

René Sánchez, the principal of César E. Chávez High School located in the 18th district and the son of Mexican immigrants made statements to incoming high schoolers.

“Many of you were not in Houston last year, were not in the United States, yet we’re holding you to the same standards as students . . . living in the United States all their lives,” said René Sánchez.

High school students like Sophia Martinez, an 18-year-old senior from Mexico have been in Houston for nearly two years and speak near-fluently but stumble over the essay section.

For these students and reasons, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 133.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 133.

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.

TRANS-SAHARA COUNTERTERRORISM PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 192) to establish an interagency program to assist countries in North and West Africa to improve immediate and long-term capabilities to counter terrorist threats, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 192

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 “Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Act”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, launched in 2005, is an interagency program to assist partner countries in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa on their immediate and long-term capabilities to address terrorist threats and prevent the spread of violent extremism;

(2) armed groups and violent Islamist terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram, the Islamic State of West Africa, and other affiliated groups, have killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians, displaced populations, destabilized local and national governments, and caused mass human suffering in the affected communities;

(3) it is in the national security interest of the United States to combat the spread of radical Islamist extremism and build partner countries’ capacity to combat these threats in Africa;

(4) extremist movements exploit vulnerable and marginalized communities suffering from poverty, lack of economic opportunity (particularly among youth populations), and weak governance; and

(5) to address critical security, political, economic, and humanitarian challenges in these regions of Africa, a coordinated, interagency approach is needed to appropriately allocate resources, share responsibility, de-conflict programs, and maximize the effectiveness of United States defense, diplomatic, and development capabilities.

SEC. 3. TRANS-SAHARA COUNTERTERRORISM PARTNERSHIP.

(a) TRANS-SAHARA COUNTERTERRORISM PARTNERSHIP.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall establish a partnership, to be known as the “Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership” (TSCTP), to coordinate all United States programs, projects, and activities in North and West Africa that are conducted for any of the following purposes:

(A) To build the capacity of foreign military and law enforcement entities in such regions to conduct counterterrorism operations.

(B) To improve the ability of foreign military and law enforcement entities in such regions to cooperate with the United States and other partner countries on counterterrorism efforts.

(C) To enhance the border security capacity of partner countries in such regions, including the ability to monitor, restrain, and interdict terrorists.

(D) To strengthen the rule of law in such countries, including access to justice, and the ability of the law enforcement entities of

such partner countries to detect, disrupt, respond to, investigate, and prosecute terrorist activity.

(E) To monitor and counter the financing of terrorism.

(F) To further reduce any vulnerabilities among affected populations in such regions to recruitment or incitement of terrorist activities through public diplomacy efforts, such as supporting youth employment, promoting meaningful participation of women, strengthening local governance and civil society capacity, and improving access to economic opportunities and education.

(G) To support independent, local-language media, particularly in rural areas, to counter media operations and recruitment propaganda by terrorist organizations.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In coordinating programs through the TSCTP, the Secretary of State shall also consult, as appropriate, with the Director of National Intelligence, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Agency for Global Media (formerly known as the Broadcasting Board of Governors), and the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies.

(3) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 15 days before obligating amounts for an activity coordinated by the TSCTP pursuant to paragraph (1), the Secretary of State shall submit a notification, in accordance with the requirements of section 634A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2394-1), that includes the following:

(A) The foreign country and entity, as applicable, whose capabilities are to be enhanced in accordance with the purposes specified in paragraph (1).

(B) The amount, type, and purpose of support to be provided.

(C) An assessment of the capacity of the foreign country or entity to absorb the assistance to be provided.

(D) The estimated cost and anticipated implementation timeline for assistance.

(E) As applicable, a description of the arrangements to sustain any equipment provided by the activity beyond the completion date of such activity, if applicable, and the estimated cost and source of funds to support such sustainment.

(F) The amount, type, statutory authorization, and purpose of any United States security assistance provided to such foreign country during the three preceding fiscal years pursuant to authorities under title 10, United States Code, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.), or any other “train and equip” authorities of the Department of Defense.

(b) COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS.—

(1) DEVELOPMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a comprehensive, interagency strategy that—

(A) states the objectives of the United States counterterrorism effort in North and West Africa with respect to the use of all forms of United States assistance to counter violent extremism;

(B) includes a plan by the Secretary of State for the manner in which programs shall be coordinated by the TSCTP pursuant to subsection (a)(1), including which agency or bureau of the Department of State, as applicable, will be responsible for leading and coordinating each such program; and

(C) outlines a plan to monitor and evaluate TSCTP programs and identifies the key indicators that will be used to measure performance and progress under the strategy.

(2) SUPPORTING MATERIAL IN ANNUAL BUDGET REQUEST.—The Secretary of State shall include, in the budget materials submitted in support of the budget of the President (submitted to Congress pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code) for each fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act, a description of the requirements, activities, and planned allocation of amounts requested by the TSCTP.

(c) MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.—

(1) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.—The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall monitor and evaluate the programs coordinated by the TSCTP pursuant to subsection (a)(1) in accordance with the plan outlined pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(C).

(2) REPORT.—For the 5-year period beginning 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an annual report on monitoring and evaluation efforts pursuant to paragraph (1) that describes—

(A) the progress made in meeting the objectives listed in the strategy required by subsection (b)(1), including any lessons learned in carrying out TSCTP programs and activities and any recommendations for improving such programs and activities;

(B) the efforts taken to coordinate, de-conflict, and streamline TSCTP programs to maximize resource effectiveness;

(C) the extent to which each partner country has demonstrated the ability to absorb the equipment or training provided in the year previous under TSCTP programs, and where applicable, the ability to maintain and appropriately utilize such equipment provided;

(D) the extent to which each partner country is investing its own resources to advance the goals described in subsection (a)(1) or demonstrated a commitment and willingness to cooperate with the United States to advance such goals; and

(E) the actions taken by the government of each partner country receiving assistance through programs coordinated by the TSCTP to combat corruption, improve transparency and accountability, and promote other forms of good governance.

(d) FORM.—The strategy required by subsection (b)(1) and the report required by subsection (c)(2) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

(e) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCaul) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous

material on H.R. 192, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this measure. I would like to begin by again thanking Mr. McCaul for once again putting forward this legislation. I look forward to working with him, as I mentioned before, as he begins his role as the ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The bill before us today authorizes the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. This interagency program was established in 2005 to help America’s partners in the Sahel and Maghreb regions counter terrorism and violent extremism.

In places where instability leads to terrorism and conflict, it is important that we collaborate with our allies and that our policy is driven by a united interagency effort. That is why this bill is so important.

By coordinating our diplomatic, military, and development efforts in our own government and with partners abroad, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership strengthens our response to the international security threats facing these regions of Africa.

Passing this legislation, which authorizes an existing program, will also enhance the ability of Congress to conduct thorough oversight.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, which already passed the House last year, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of my bill, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Act. This bill passed the House last year. I am pleased that the chairman and I were able to make it an early priority in this Congress.

This legislation strengthens our counterterrorism operations in Africa, an area where the terror threat is rapidly rising.

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Our military successes in Iraq and Syria have splintered ISIS, squeezed terrorists out of the Middle East, and sent them fleeing to Africa. The numbers are alarming.

On the eve of 9/11, al-Qaida had only a few hundred followers. Today, it is estimated that 10,000 ISIS and al-Qaida jihadists have established bases across the continent.

Along with other existing terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram, terrorism is taking hold in Africa and prohibiting its prosperity. We know that these groups have plotted attacks that threaten U.S. interests, and some have succeeded.

The Trump administration recently released their Africa strategy. It appr

priately prioritizes U.S. efforts to counter radical Islamic terrorism on the continent. I applaud their continued focus on this issue.

My bill, which I introduced with my friend Mr. KEATING, authorizes for the first time a program called the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. This program works with countries such as Chad, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria to build their capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations, prevent the spread of violent extremism, and strengthen the rule of law.

Furthermore, it requires the State Department, USAID, and the Defense Department to work together to develop a counterterrorism strategy in Africa. By taking a multifaceted approach and better coordinating our efforts, we can prevent terrorism from gaining a larger foothold in these countries.

Again, I thank Mr. ENGEL and I thank Mr. KEATING for their shared support of this cause, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank Chairman ENGEL and Congressman KEATING. The bill authorizes a really important interagency effort to combat terrorism and prevent the spread of radical Islamist extremism in Africa. As ISIS and other terrorist ideologies are degraded in the Middle East, they are, unfortunately, finding a safe haven in Africa.

We must partner with other nations to work to combat these threats before they impact the homeland. This bill will increase congressional oversight from our committee and better coordinate U.S. assistance.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I again thank Mr. McCaul for his work on this measure and state again that I look forward to working side by side with him as chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. This bill authorizes an important program that strengthens our efforts to assist partners in the Sahel and Maghreb to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to support this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 192, the “Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership Act,” which will help to establish an interagency program to assist countries in North and West Africa to improve immediate and long-term capabilities to counter terrorist threats, and for other purposes.

This bill launched in 2005, is a partnership to cooperate with countries in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa on their immediate and longterm capabilities to address and prevent the spread of violent extremism.

Extremist movements, such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram, the Islamic State of West Africa, and other affiliated groups, have killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians, displaced populations, destabilized local and national governments, and

caused mass human suffering in the affected communities.

As Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are being driven out of the Middle East, Africa is becoming the new battleground for their terror attacks.

According to the Environmental System Research Institute, in the last four years, terrorist attacks have killed 31,600 people in 4,455 attacks in Africa.

Boko Haram alone caused more than 8,000 fatalities across Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

Boko Haram have taken control of the former commercial town of Baga near the border with Chad, which caused the displacement of hundreds of people.

Armed groups and violent Islamist terrorist organizations exploit vulnerable and marginalized communities suffering from poverty, lack of economic opportunity (particularly among youth populations), and weak governance.

Youth populations are more likely to join an expanding terrorist network in West and Central Africa, which make the region more likely to be hit by a severe violent attack.

Al-Qaeda and ISIS recruited in Tunisia 6,500 youth volunteers.

On Oct. 4, 2017, militants affiliated with ISIS ambushed a team of U.S. troops in Niger, killing four soldiers and wounding two.

On October 6, 2017, a terrorist attack killed more than 300 people, injured nearly 400 and leveled an entire block in Mogadishu, Somalia.

That is why it is important that we vote today to implement the following recommendations from the report:

To establish an interagency program to assist countries in North and West Africa to improve immediate and long-term capabilities to counter terrorist threats, and for other purposes.

This is in the national security interest of the United States to combat the spread of radical Islamist extremism and build partner countries' capacity to combat these threats in Africa.

H.R. 192 follows the recommendation from the report and ensures that the U.S. Congress can assist its partner countries to:

Address critical security, political, economic, and humanitarian challenges in these regions of Africa, a coordinated, interagency approach is needed to appropriately allocate resources, share responsibility, de-conflict programs, and maximize the effectiveness of United States defense, diplomatic, and development capabilities.

H.R. 192 is a step in the right direction because it will help to establish an interagency program to assist countries in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa on their immediate and long-term capabilities to address and prevent the spread of violent extremism.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 192.

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.

SPECIAL ENVOY TO MONITOR AND COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM ACT

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 221) to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to monitor and combat anti-Semitism globally, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 221

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 "Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act".

SEC. 2. FINDING.

Congress finds that since the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004 was enacted, in many foreign countries acts of anti-Semitism have been frequent and wide in scope, the perpetrators and variety of threats to Jewish communities and their institutions have proliferated, and in some countries anti-Semitic attacks have increased in frequency, scope, violence, and deadliness.

SEC. 3. MONITORING AND COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 59 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2731) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by inserting before the period at the end the following: " , who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate"; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The Special Envoy shall report directly to the Secretary. " ; and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the heading, by striking "APPOINTMENT" and inserting "NOMINATION";

(ii) by striking the first sentence;

(iii) in the second sentence, by striking "If the Secretary determines that such is appropriate, the Secretary may appoint" and inserting "If the President determines that such is appropriate, the President may nominate"; and

(iv) in the third sentence, by striking "The Secretary may allow such officer or employee to retain the position (and the responsibilities associated with such position) held by such officer or employee prior to the appointment" and inserting "Such officer or employee may not retain the position (or the responsibilities associated with such position) held by such officer or employee prior to the nomination"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(3) DUTIES.—The Special Envoy shall serve as the primary advisor to, and coordinate efforts across, the United States Government relating to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic incitement that occur in foreign countries.

"(4) RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR.—The Special Envoy shall have the rank of ambassador.

"(5) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Special Envoy should be a person of recognized distinction in the field of—

"(A) combating anti-Semitism;

"(B) religious freedom; or

"(C) law enforcement. " .

(b) NOMINATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 120 after any such position becomes vacant, the President shall nominate the Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating anti-Semitism under section

59 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, as amended by subsection (a) of this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCaul) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 221, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 221. I am a proud original cosponsor of this bill, and I am pleased we are considering it today. We passed it with bipartisan, unanimous support in the last Congress, and I am looking forward to seeing us show that broad support again. In this Congress, we must continue to stand against anti-Semitism.

I thank my colleagues for their hard work on this effort: Congressman CHRIS SMITH, the author of this legislation, and my fellow co-chairs of the Bipartisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism. I am proud to stand with a group of legislators committed to fighting intolerance and hatred.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen a sickening increase in anti-Semitism over the past few years. Just a few months ago, a gunman stormed a synagogue in Pittsburgh, attacking peaceful congregants and killing 11 people. We have seen people who embrace hatred and bigotry given a new, loud megaphone to spread their poison. Across the United States, we have seen an uptick in anti-Semitic language and an increase in threats of violence against Jewish communities. In my home State of New York, NYPD officials have reported an alarming surge of anti-Semitic hate crimes.

Every day, more and more alarming anti-Semitic incidents are happening across the world: Holocaust survivors recently assaulted, rallies and parades glorifying Nazi leaders, and swastikas graffitied to incite fear and terror. The list goes on and on.

This is appalling, and it demands immediate action.

As a country, we need to come together to say enough is enough. We need to confront evil, call it by its name, and say there is no place for it anywhere in the United States or around the world. We need to do it as citizens. We need to do so in our laws and in our policies. We need to make sure that we fill the positions that are supposed to be dealing with this issue. The Special Envoy to Combat Anti-Semitism position at the State Department is still vacant, and that is simply unacceptable.