CONCERN OVER LIMITATIONS ON OFFERING AMENDMENTS ON FOREIGN AID BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, there comes a time when we expect that legislation that is passed will be offered and passed in a bipartisan manner in the light of the seriousness and importance of the issue it confronts. Unfortunately, at the conclusion of the passage of H.R. 1561, the foreign aid bill, some 60 amendments were not allowed to be discussed. I rise to express my concern over that, as well as the passage of this particular legislation.

□ 1700

For the amendment that I felt was most important, among many others that was eliminated, was the increased funding from $2 million to $2,500,000 in fiscal years 1996 and 1997 for the micro- and small enterprise development credit program.

This program, which is administered by the Agency for International Development, has been a successful program emphasizing direct assistance to businesses owned by the poor in developing nations. Most of the businesses employ less than 10 individuals but help develop a strong entrepreneurial tradition in many countries.

The microenterprises are very small, informally organized, nonagricultural businesses that employ a third of the labor force in lower income countries. As I heard one of my Republican colleagues say, it teaches these entities and individuals to fish and not merely to be given fish.

The micro- and small enterprise development program, in conjunction with the private financial institutions, help provide full access to formal financial markets to small businesses that would not otherwise have such access.

These small businesses participating in the MSED are run by and employed by the poor. This would help keep a stabilized atmosphere in developing nations and that is a sure way to ensure political and economic peace.

If we are in fact to be a world power, it is important for us to stand on behalf of economic development in Third World and developing nations helping themselves. Again, we were not able today to rise to the support of the African Development Foundation, by adding to its budget $1,500,000 to increase it from the $5 million. This is a modest increase and it reflects the concern of Americans that we must be budget wise.

However, this particular foundation, established in 1980, is a forward-thinking organization that delivers funds directly to self-help organizations in economically undeveloped countries in Africa.

Since no funds are channeled through any foreign government, the ADF avoids any bureaucratic patterns in dispensing funds. This organization also has been instrumental in expanding ties and developing goodwill among the citizens of the United States and the citizens of many African countries.

In the year 1995, ADF received $18 million. This year's budget proposes $7 million, leaving ADF with only $10 million. However, as we proceed in the years to come, the funding will go to $5 million, which would be a 50-percent reduction from fiscal year 1996.

At this rate, Mr. Speaker, ADF, which has been very helpful, will simply go out of business.

My amendment that was to be proposed was part of an effort to ensure that these countries are able to stand on their own two feet. It helped agricultural cooperative youth groups and self-help organizations. These groups have been effective stewards of these grants which range from $25,000 to $250,000.

Moreover, the ADF conducts annual audits on how these community organizations utilize these funds and ADF has been pleased with the performance of the grantees. Many of my corporate constituents who do business in Africa and other Third World nations have indicated how important it is to maintain a stable climate, how important it is to have a responsible community in these countries so that we in America can do business and create jobs.

My amendment would have helped the African Development Foundation and helped millions of Africans and Americans and support adequate development assistance which would ultimately improve foreign relations and commercial trade between Africa and the United States.

I simply ask, as we move this legislation toward the U.S. Senate, that we enact responsible foreign policy. Yes, be efficient and effective with our dollars. We do not give away dollars recklessly and for no reason, but we do try to help those nations who are trying to help themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the U.S. Senate devise a foreign aid bill that works for Americans and works for its allies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIM). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. GENE GREEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. TIAHRT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. POSHARD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. POSHARD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

VACATION OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to vacate my special order of today for 5 minutes.

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

There was no objection.

OPIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, at a time when this country has a $4.5 trillion national debt, and at a time when there are Members here who are talking about cutting back on Medicare and Medicaid and veterans programs, student loans, school lunch programs, and other programs of tremendous need for the vast majority of our people, it seems to me that we can no longer tolerate spending billions and billions of taxpayers' dollars on corporate welfare. That is money that goes to the largest corporations in America and to the wealthiest people.

I want to say a few words today about one particular program which I think is a very good example of corporate welfare. That is OPIC, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. What OPIC does is receive about $5 million a year of taxpayers' money. And what they do with that money is something that is very interesting. What they do is help some of the largest corporations in America invest abroad. They provide insurance for those companies who are investing in politically unstable countries such as Russia, Eastern Europe, former Communist bloc and certain Latin American countries. What they are saying is, if there is political unrest in those countries, if your assets are nationalized, we will provide insurance to cover your loss.

Also, OPIC provides generous financing to the large multinationals who wish to invest abroad.

Now, it seems to me that, if the largest corporations in America wish to invest in Russia, wish to invest in Croatia, wish to invest in Peru or Latin America, they have every right in the world to do so. But it also seems to me to be absolutely wrong to say to the middle class of America, people who are working longer hours for lower

wages, that we are going to subsidize your investment abroad.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that particularly outrages me is that many of the companies who we are providing incentives to invest abroad are precisely those companies who are laying off hundreds of thousands of American workers.

Now, it seems to me that it is a little bit absurd that we are helping the Ford Motor Company invest abroad, after they have laid off 337,000 workers here in the United States in the last 15 years. And I would ask my colleagues to take a good look at this chart, which is right here by my side.

What this chart shows is that Ford is getting help from OPIC to invest abroad; interesting, after laying off 337,000 American workers in the last 15 years. So we are saying to Ford and the other companies, thank you very much for throwing American workers out on the street. Thank you very much for lowering the standard of living of American workers. And here is your reward, the taxpayers of America will help you invest in other countries. And we say thank you to the Exxon company. You have only laid off 86,000 American workers in the last 15 years. Here some help. Maybe you want to go abroad and hire people there for low wages. Thank you very much. Thank you AT&T, you have only laid off over 200,000 American workers. General Electric, 221,000 American workers, and so forth and so on.

Now, it seems to me that rather than having the taxpayers of America providing incentives for these huge corporations to go abroad, and I might say, Mr. Speaker, and this is a fact not very often talked about, that these American corporations, the large multinationals who are laying off millions of American workers, they have invested this last year $750 billion abroad. Now, in every city in America, in every State in America, mayors and governors are getting down on their hands and knees and they are saying to these companies, invest in the State of Vermont, my state, invest in Texas, invest in California. But these corporations do not. They are laying off American workers and they are going abroad.

So it seems to me that instead of encouraging them to go abroad, maybe we may want to say to them, hey, stay back here in the United States and provide jobs for our workers; pay your taxes here.

At a time when this country has a $4.5 trillion national debt it seems to me that we can no longer afford to maintain various forms of corporate welfare, at great expense and risk to the taxpayers.

I rise today to call for the end of Government funding for OPIC, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and for the elimination of this agency which receives about $50 million a year in funding but, more importantly, has placed at risk some $6.3 billion of taxpayer money through Government insured assets.

It is important to acknowledge that concern about Government funding for OPIC extends across the political spectrum—progressives, moderates and conservatives increasingly see no sense to the public funding of this agency.

I am also delighted to say that Budget Chairman JOHN KASICH, in the recently passed Republican budget, quite appropriately called for eliminating the appropriations for OPIC, and I want to credit Mr. KASICH for doing so.

Furthermore, a Wall Street Journal editorial of April 12, 1995, also called for the defunding of OPIC. The Wall Street Journal is deeply concerned, as I am, about OPIC's risky financial guarantees in Russia and Eastern Europe.

A very conservative think tank—the Center for Security Policy—is also sounding the alarm regarding the growing danger of OPIC continuing to use taxpayer dollars to insure risky investments in Russia and other former Communist countries.

But it is not only conservative groups who are calling for the elimination of OPIC funding. Progressive groups are also raising the same cry. For example, here in Congress the 46-member progressive caucus was the first congressional organization to call for OPIC's elimination. Furthermore, two organization affiliated with Ralph Nader—Congress Watch and Essential Information—have called for the elimination of OPIC.

Mr. Speaker, if huge Fortune-500 corporations like Ford, Exxon, AT&T, General Electric, IT&T, and Coca-Cola want to make investments in politically unstable countries, they have every right in the world to do so. That is not what we are debating today.

These multi-billion-dollar corporations have every right in the world to invest in Russia and Eastern Europe—in Albania, Croatia, El Salvador, Somalia, Peru, or anyplace else they want to invest. But, Mr. Speaker, they do not have the right to ask the American taxpayers to underwrite the insurance on those investments. And they do not have the right to get advantageous financing from the Government.

If these corporations invest and make a lot of money—the stockholders get the profits. If, on the other hand, they invest in Russia or any other country and because of political instability they lose their assets through nationalization or expropriation—the American taxpayer picks up the bill. That is wrong. If you take a risk, you can sometimes make a lot of money. But sometimes you lose. And it is not the function of the U.S. Government to place our taxpayers at risk for $6.3 billion to protect the investments of huge, multinational corporations.

Now, who are some of the corporations who are receiving this help? Here are some recent examples: OPIC is providing $105,057,000 in insurance in Russia for the Coca-Cola Export Corp.; $200,000,000 in insurance for Du Pont in Russia; $200,000,000 in insurance for Mars, Inc., in Russia, which I believe is owned by one of the wealthiest families in America; and $200,000,000 in financing for GTE and AT&T for a joint cellular telephone project in Argentina.

Other major corporations that are being provided insurance by OPIC are: First National Bank of Boston, the Enron Corp., Bechtel, Cargil, Duracell, American Express, International Paper, Levi Strauss, and Citibank.

Mr. Speaker, another aspect of this whole situation which bothers me very much is that the U.S. Government is providing financial incentives to the largest corporations in America to invest abroad—when, on the contrary, we should be demanding that these companies invest in the United States, hire workers in the United States, and pay taxes in the United States. Corporate America already invests $750 billion a year abroad—and the number is increasing every year. They do not need Government subsidies to increase that investment.

It is especially outrageous that we are using taxpayers dollars to help finance companies who, in the last 15 years, have thrown millions of American workers out on the street. My colleagues, take a good look at this chart, and note how many workers have been fired by some of the very same companies that OPIC is now providing financial assistance to.

Should we really be helping Ford Motor Co. invest abroad after they have laid off 337,000 workers in the last 15 years. Thank you, Ford, for laying off these workers. Now here is your Federal subsidy to invest abroad so that you can hire foreign workers. Exxon—86,000 workers laid off, AT&T—233,000 laid off, General Electric—221,000 workers laid off or downsized as they occasionally say. And on and on it goes. This is a list of only 10 companies—and they have laid off over 1 million workers. Helping companies go abroad after they have laid off 1 million American workers does not make a lot of sense to me.

I wonder what the laid off workers of these companies must think when they learn that their tax dollars are rewarding those companies who have caused so much suffering and, to a large degree, are responsible for the terrible decline in the standard of living for working people all over this country. Yes, cut-backs in Medicare, Medicaid, student loans and veterans programs, but $50 million a year, and a $6.3 billion insurance risk for the largest corporations in America. A very sensible policy.

BOSNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. GONZALEZ] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in order to report on my actions and activities with respect to the ongoing situation in Bosnia and my letter to President Clinton, which I had prepared immediately, that that became a crisis point, and it looked as if the President might take unilateral action without any real consultation with the Congress.

So in my letter I said: ''The preparations currently underway for the possible involvement of U.S. military forces on the ground in Bosnia impel me once again''—because I have previously ''to urge you in the strongest possible terms to seriously consider this matter before committing our troops to any such action and to abide in the closest possible way to the laws of the land with regard to the use of U.S. military force abroad.''

Let me say, this has been the story of my career since I first came to the Congress, beginning with then-President Kennedy, believe it or not, who was probably one of the most intimate personal friends I have had as a President, and then with President Johnson,