international peacekeeping activities. Mr. Speaker, this is an incredibly short-sighted reduction.

BY supporting such peacekeeping activities under the auspices of the United Nations, we are encouraging our involvement and participation in activities to keep the peace in a number of areas around the world. By fostering international peacekeeping, we are encouraging the participation of other nations and the participation of the military forces of other countries in activities that encourage peace and stability in many regions of the world. We have supported and fostered such efforts in a number of areas around the world, areas which are important to the United States—Cyprus, the Sinai, Cambodia—to name only a few. Our contribution to such peacekeeping efforts is an indication of our commitment to international action to maintain stability and encourage respect for appropriate international behavior.

Second, this conference report reduces by almost one quarter, 24 percent, U.S. contributions to international organizations, which fund the U.S. share of activities in the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and other such international organizations. These are not good will donations to these organizations; these are international treaty obligations of the United States. These organizations support important national security and foreign policy interests—international sanctions against rogue regimes such as Iran, Libya, and Iraq; efforts to reduce nuclear proliferation and other weapons of mass destruction; common international efforts to maintain Middle East peace and security, including the struggle to maintain the borders of Israel and Kuwait; the promotion of an open international trade framework; the control of diseases, such as the Ebola virus; and the promotion of human rights.

These short-sighted reductions in funding in this legislation impede the ability of the United States to carry out these vital national security and foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, the draconian cuts in funds severely hamper the State Department's ability to press for much-needed reforms at the United Nations and at other international organizations. Under strong pressure from many of us here in this body, the administration—under both Democratic and Republican leadership—has made considerable progress in pressuring for managerial, administrative, and budgetary reform. The unilateral reduction of our contributions seriously undermines our ability to continue to press for these needed reforms.

For half a century—since the end of World War II—the United States has spent enormous sums of money for our military forces to protect our national security and to further our international objectives. We pursued farsighted policies that had broad bipartisan support. Unfortunately, now that the cold war is over, we have not been willing to continue even the relatively modest spending that is required to protect these more cost-effective security and foreign policy interests. This is extraordinarily imprudent. This ought to be changed, and changing this legislation is the place to begin.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the adoption of this legislation before us today. We can—and we should—do better.

CIVILITY IN CONGRESS

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

Mr. HAMILTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington report for Wednesday, December 6, 1995, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

CIVILITY IN CONGRESS

In his recent press conference announcing why he would not be a candidate for President, Colin Powell mentioned the ''incivility that exists in political life today''. He's right. In national politics and in Congress we have seen a clear decline of basic civility. This year in Congress there have been mean personal attacks, shouting across the aisle, shoving matches, hissing and booing, and Members going out of their way to antagonize those of the other party. Press accounts have described the situation in Congress as ''nasty'', ''full-scale partisan warfare'', and ''the politics of poison''. Partisan tensions are as bad as I can remember. As one senior Member recently noted, ''Boy, it's mean out there.''

President Clinton recently called for more mutual respect in public discourse, echoing the sentiments of President Bush who called for an end to the ''climate of ugliness'' on Capitol Hill. The situation certainly isn't as bad as in other countries where we see brawls and fistfights breaking out among members of parliament, but it does merit some attention.

HINDERS LEGISLATION

The bitter, contentious exchanges in Congress certainly do not reflect well on the institution, lead to public cynicism, and make the job of legislating more difficult. As Thomas Jefferson stated, ''It is very material that order, decency, and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body.'' Excessive partisan bickering poisons the atmosphere of Congress and hurts the ability of Members to come together to pass legislation for the good of the country. In a democracy like ours, the willingness of Members of Congress to listen and to talk to each other in a civil way is essential to our ability to reach a consensus on the difficult policy issues facing our nation—from balancing the budget to sending troops to Bosnia.

Certainly spirited debate is appropriate for the many important policy questions before Congress. Members have strong feelings on particular issues, and naturally get upset when they believe that programs very important to their constituents are being gutted or when they feel the other side is putting up unnecessary roadblocks to their legislative agenda. But Members can carry the legitimate debate too far and argue in ways that undermine serious policy deliberation.

PAST HISTORY

The problem of a breakdown of civility in Congress is certainly not a new one. In past years, especially during periods of national turmoil such as the Civil War or the civil rights movement, there have been major breakdowns in decorum. Over the years, Members have been formally punished by the House for making statements such as describing another Member as one ''who is the champion of fraud, who is the apologist of thieves, and who is such a prodigy of vice and meanness that to describe him would sicken imagination and exhaust invective''. Heated debate at times led to fistfights, pistol duels, and, a frequent response in earlier days, hitting another Member over the head with a cane.

ENFORCEMENT

Congress has two basic ways of disciplining Members for inappropriate speech. If the remarks occur during debate on the House floor, another Member can object and request that the speaker's ''words be taken down''. If the words are ruled inappropriate by the Chair, the speaker either can withdraw the statement or be prohibited from speaking on the floor for the remainder of the day. Broader enforcement can come from the House Standards of Official Conduct Committee—the House ethics committee—which has been given wide-ranging powers to punish Members for any actions which do not ''reflect creditably on the House of Representatives''. Formal charges could be filed against a Member, and the Standards Committee could recommend a range of sanctions. In the past, Members have been formally censured by the full House for disorderly words spoken in debate.

REMEDIES

The vast majority of the contacts between Members of Congress are civil and courteous. But there are intemperate exchanges—often getting extensive media coverage—which hurt the ability of the institution to properly function. Several steps would be helpful in minimizing them.

First, the Standards of Official Conduct Committee should issue an advisory opinion to all Members of Congress spelling out to them what are the proper limits of discourse and what are the consequences of going beyond the limits. The Standards Committee has a separate Office of Advice and Education which was set up specifically for such an advisory role to help head off misconduct before it occurs.

Second, we need more consistent enforcement by the Chair and by the Standards Committee. Rulings by the Chair can be spotty and inconsistent, and the rules requiring penalties for improper remarks have at times been waived. The Standards Committee has failed to act on some fairly egregious cases of improper speech in recent years.

Third, outside groups can be helpful watchdogs in keeping an eye on Members' statements. A bipartisan group like the Former Members of Congress, for example, could play a useful role in monitoring and publicizing proper and improper discourse on the floor.

Fourth, we need tougher enforcement by the voters. At times a Member of Congress might rise to prominence through a negative, confrontational style. If other Members think the nasty approach to politics works, they will emulate it. The voters need to send a clear signal that negative and nasty doesn't work.

Finally, Members must take it upon themselves to uphold appropriate standards of debate. In the end, it is up to each of us in Congress to set the proper tone and to work with our colleagues to maintain decorum.

CONCLUSION

Breakdowns in civility in Congress can reflect the passions of the moment, the polarizing nature of the policy issues, or even a less civil tone in the larger society. But that is no excuse for letting particularly intemperate and inflammatory speech go unchecked. Reining in the excesses can go a long way toward improving the ability of Congress to tackle the tough legislative agenda before us.

(Information was taken from a Congressional Research Service report, ''Decorum in House Debate'')

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 1995, may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

DECEMBER 15

9:30 a.m.

Labor and Human Resources

To hold hearings on proposed legislation to amend provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act relating to the minimum wage.

SD–430

2:00 p.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings on Eric James Boswell, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, and Anthony Cecil Eden Quainton, of the District of Columbia, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, both of the Department of State.

SD–419

DECEMBER 19

10:00 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine trends in youthful drug use.

SD–226

2:00 p.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings on pending nominations.

SD–226