

I have heard eyewitness testimony from the Syrian Emergency Task Force. Listen to the horrors, Mr. Speaker:

A survivor of a gas attack told *The New York Times* in 2017:

My eyes were burning, my head was throbbing, and my throat was blocked. I was suffocating. I tried to inhale, but all I heard was a horrible rasping sound as my throat closed up. An unbearable pain drummed in my head. The world began to blur. I pounded my chest, but I couldn't breathe. I thought my heart was going to explode.

Does this Congress need any more testimony, Mr. Speaker?

I commend President Trump for hearing these cries and his leadership to carry out airstrikes to block Assad's mass murder, and I call on him again to strengthen his resolve against Assad's barbarous acts and think of these innocent Syrian people who face these terrible atrocities nearly every day.

Finally, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 31, and I call on the Senate to not twiddle their thumbs any longer and act with expedition and pass this legislation. Let's not waste any more time bringing Assad and his co-conspirators to justice.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I once again recognize the work of Chairman ENGEL, his cosponsors, and former Chairman Royce.

Those of us who have talked to eyewitnesses and seen video and photos will never forget the atrocities perpetrated by Bashar al-Assad: the bombing of the hospitals, the torture of prisoners, and the gassing of children who died agonizing deaths in their beds.

For 7 years international diplomats have debated ways to protect civilians in Syria, with no results. Today, we send a strong message that the United States will work to ensure that Assad's war machine is halted.

It is not too late to act, as Mr. HILL eloquently stated. The people of Syria cannot afford further delay. I urge all Members to support it, and I sure hope this time the Senate will be able to pass it.

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

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

In closing, let me thank the ranking member, Mr. McCAUL, for his very important words.

The world has failed the Syrian people. Nothing can undo the horrors they have had, and they have had to endure them for nearly 8 years. Nothing can bring back those who have been lost. But the world owes it to the living and the dead to try and bring this crisis to an end.

The role America must play is to push for a political solution that allows the Syrian people to choose their own future. That is what American

leadership looks like. That is what sets us apart from other great powers on the world stage.

We simply cannot look the other way and allow Assad, Russia, and Iran to steamroll over Syria. That would send a terrible message to our allies. It would undermine security across the entire region, and it would cost so many more innocent lives.

My bill would give the administration greater leverage to raise the cost for Assad and crack down on his lifelines. I ask that all Members support this measure.

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

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. 31, 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.

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DIRECTING SECRETARY OF STATE TO DEVELOP STRATEGY TO REGAIN OBSERVER STATUS FOR TAIWAN IN WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 353) to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 353

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

SECTION 1. PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, charged with coordinating health efforts within the United Nations system. The World Health Assembly (WHA) is the decision-making body of the WHO, which convenes annually in May to set the policies and priorities of the organization. Statehood is not a requirement for attendance at the WHA, and numerous observers, including non-members and non-governmental organizations, attended the most recent WHA in May 2018.

(2) Taiwan began seeking to participate in the WHO as an observer in 1997. In 2009, with strong support from successive United States Administrations, Congress, and like-minded WHO Member States, and during a period of improved Cross-Strait relations, Taiwan received an invitation to attend the WHA as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei". Taiwan received the same invitation each year until 2016, when following the election of President Tsai-Ing Wen of the Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan's engagement in the international community began facing increased resistance from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Taiwan's invitation to

the 2016 WHA was received late and included new language conditioning Taiwan's participation on the PRC's "one China principle". In 2017 and 2018, Taiwan did not receive an invitation to the WHA.

(3) Taiwan remains a model contributor to world health, having provided financial and technical assistance to respond to numerous global health challenges. Taiwan has invested over \$6 billion in international medical and humanitarian aid efforts impacting over 80 countries since 1996. In 2014, Taiwan responded to the Ebola crisis by donating \$1 million and providing 100,000 sets of personal protective equipment. Through the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, the United States and Taiwan have jointly conducted training programs for experts to combat MERS, Dengue Fever, and Zika. These diseases know no borders, and Taiwan's needless exclusion from global health cooperation increases the dangers presented by global pandemics.

(4) Taiwan's international engagement has faced increased resistance from the PRC. Taiwan was not invited to the 2016 Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), despite participating as a guest at the organization's prior summit in 2013. Taiwan's requests to participate in the General Assembly of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) have also been rejected. In May 2017, PRC delegates disrupted a meeting of the Kimberley Process on conflict diamonds held in Perth, Australia, until delegates from Taiwan were asked to leave. Since 2016, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Republic of Panama, the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, and the Republic of El Salvador have terminated longstanding diplomatic relationships with Taiwan and granted diplomatic recognition to the PRC.

(5) Congress has established a policy of support for Taiwan's participation in international bodies that address shared transnational challenges, particularly in the WHO. Congress passed H.R. 1794 in the 106th Congress, H.R. 428 in the 107th Congress, and S. 2092 in the 108th Congress to direct the Secretary of State to establish a strategy for, and to report annually to Congress on, efforts to obtain observer status for Taiwan at the WHA. Congress also passed H.R. 1151 in the 113th Congress, directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain observer status for Taiwan at the ICAO Assembly, and H.R. 1853 in the 114th Congress, directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain observer status for Taiwan at the INTERPOL Assembly. However, since 2016 Taiwan has not received an invitation to attend any of these events as an observer.

(b) AUGMENTATION OF REPORT CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 1 of Public Law 108–235 (118 Stat. 656) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) An account of the changes and improvements the Secretary of State has made to the United States plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the World Health Assembly, following any annual meetings of the World Health Assembly at which Taiwan did not obtain observer status.”

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect and apply beginning with the first report required under subsection (c) of section 1 of Public Law 108–235 that is submitted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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. 353, a bill to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, 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 will start by thanking Mr. YOHO for his work on this bill. It passed the House last Congress with broad bipartisan support, and I look forward to seeing that happen again today.

Mr. Speaker, we all know too well that disease knows no borders, so it is in the interest of the United States to address global health challenges. Without the ability to consistently monitor threats and rapidly coordinate responses globally, health and lives will be at risk, including those of Americans.

A critical organization in this global public health effort is the World Health Organization's World Health Assembly. This is a summit meeting of countries coming together to address global health challenges.

China is actively lobbying against Taiwan's inclusion in these summit meetings, part of its larger effort to squeeze Taiwan out of the international community. Beijing may believe this serves its own narrow interests in asserting control over Taiwan, but it is to the detriment of the effort to fight disease wherever it strikes.

This bill before us today is a step to rectify this situation. H.R. 353 enhances reporting requirements, which will provide Congress better insight into our administration's efforts to obtain Taiwan's observer status in the annual World Health Assembly meetings.

We need to make every effort to ensure that China does not strong-arm and manipulate these international meetings, which are important opportunities to make significant progress on health issues facing the global community. This progress should not be jeopardized by Beijing's political agenda.

I support this measure. We should continue to stand with our partners in Taiwan, and this resolution does just that. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill to help Taiwan regain observer sta-

tus in the World Health Organization, introduced by my good friend from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

The House passed this bill unanimously last Congress. Because Taiwan has an especially distinguished record of international contributions to global health, Taiwan's exclusion from the WHO is not just unfair, it is also dangerous.

The world is more and more interconnected, and pandemics are a constantly growing threat that can cross borders at the speed of a jetliner. Unfortunately, President Xi and the Communist Party of China continue to jeopardize global health in their campaign to marginalize Taiwan.

Taiwan has been totally excluded from participating at the WHO's World Health Assembly for 2 years running. Ultimately, Taiwan's expulsion from the WHO illustrates a broader trend. Taiwan is a model democracy that makes the world better, while China is a revisionist authoritarian power that places the world at risk.

This year will be significant for U.S.-Taiwan relations as we look forward to the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act.

Xi Jinping just delivered a speech, where he reiterated a willingness to use force against Taiwan, and said: "The Taiwan issue will disappear with the rejuvenation of the nation."

I urge my colleagues to start this year on the right foot by supporting Taiwan's WHO participation and telling President Xi that Taiwan will never disappear under our watch.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, and I rise in support of H.R. 353, which would direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization.

I thank Mr. YOHO for his leadership on this important issue, and I thank Mr. ENGEL as well as my colleague from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) for this as well. They have both been leaders on this for a long time.

As a long-time friend of Taiwan and strong supporter of our bilateral relationship, I believe it is essential that they be allowed to participate in the World Health Organization.

Taiwan has been routinely marginalized and barred from participation in multilateral organizations, despite being a model participant in the global community and routinely contributing to global health advancement.

Between 2008 and 2015, Taiwan was invited to participate as an observer at the annual meeting of the World Health Assembly, the governing body of WHO. Unfortunately, in its efforts to

isolate President Tsai, China has effectively blocked Taipei from receiving an invitation for the past 3 years by erroneously tying Taiwan's participation to the so-called One China policy.

Beijing is playing politics with not only the health of Taiwan's people, but with the health of the entire international community because, as Mr. MCCAUL mentioned, the health of the world is linked, and so the PRC is essentially putting all our health at risk by being belligerent in this particular area.

This is particularly ridiculous because being an observer of WHA is not limited to countries, and so participation does not imply Taiwanese independence.

Furthermore, Taiwan should be allowed to participate on its own merits. It is a de facto country and should be treated as such, and it would be if it weren't for China's bullying. The sooner the world stops participating in Beijing's fiction that Taiwan is part of China, the better.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 353.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, diseases and pandemics know no borders. Taiwan is a critical player in the global health and the internationally connected transportation hub. By excluding Taiwan from participation in the WHO, the Communist Party of China is placing the world at risk because of their own insecurities.

I again thank Mr. YOHO and Chairman ENGEL for this bill which deserves our unanimous support.

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

□ 1700

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

We have supported a strong U.S.-Taiwan relationship since we passed the Taiwan Relations Act back in 1979. It is critical that we continue to support our close friend and partner, Taiwan, on the world stage and ensure they maintain a seat at the table when discussing global health challenges.

But China sees it differently, in pursuit of its own narrow political agenda. Beijing is jeopardizing international efforts to improve global health and fight transnational disease outbreaks by redoubling efforts to prevent Taiwan from participating in organizations like the World Health Assembly.

Our response to global health challenges and crises is stronger when more countries are involved in the discussion and prevention. After all, diseases go from border to border and across borders. It is ridiculous to try to keep Taiwan out.

Our response to global health challenges is stronger, again, when more countries are involved in prevention.

There is no reason that the international community should accept a scenario where we allow Beijing to compromise global health as they play the bully with respect to their neighbor. That is another reason why Kosovo should be admitted as well.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, many of the members who serve in this chamber, myself included, value the important relationship the United States shares with Taiwan. To this end, The House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation in the 115th Congress similar to the bill that is being debated today. Both bills direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to assist Taiwan in regaining observer status at the World Health Organization.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 3320 in the 115th Congress, I commend the gentleman from the great state of Florida for bringing this bill to the floor early in this Congress. Taiwan has been a model member of the global health community, having served as an observer in the World Health Assembly from 2009 until 2016. Taiwan has also contributed in enhancing regional and global disease prevention networks, along with working with other countries to ensure the World Health Organization's vision of health being a fundamental human right is successfully met.

While some outside actors try to prevent Taiwan from contributing to the global health community as an observer at the World Health Organization, it is important for all of us to realize that the best way to address the challenges of today and tomorrow with regards to global health is to work together, rather than exclude parties due to geopolitics. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 353.

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. 353.

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.

NATO SUPPORT ACT

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 676) to reiterate the support of the Congress of the United States for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 676

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 "NATO Support Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that:

(1) The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which came into being through the North Atlantic Treaty, which entered

into force on April 4, 1949, between the United States of America and the other founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, has served as a pillar of international peace and stability, a critical component of United States security, and a deterrent against adversaries and external threats.

(2) The House of Representatives affirmed in H. Res. 397, on June 27, 2017, that—

(A) NATO is one of the most successful military alliances in history, deterring the outbreak of another world war, protecting the territorial integrity of its members, and seeing the Cold War through to a peaceful conclusion;

(B) NATO remains the foundation of United States foreign policy to promote a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace;

(C) the United States is solemnly committed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's principle of collective defense as enumerated in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty; and

(D) the House of Representatives—

(i) strongly supports the decision at the NATO Wales Summit in 2014 that each alliance member would aim to spend at least 2 percent of its nation's gross domestic product on defense by 2024;

(ii) condemns any threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom and democracy of any NATO ally; and

(iii) welcomes the Republic of Montenegro as the 29th member of the NATO Alliance.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the President shall not withdraw the United States from NATO; and

(2) the case *Goldwater v. Carter* is not controlling legal precedent with respect to the withdrawal of the United States from a treaty.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to remain a member in good standing of NATO;

(2) to reject any efforts to withdraw the United States from NATO, or to indirectly withdraw from NATO by condemning or reducing contributions to NATO structures, activities, or operations, in a manner that creates a de facto withdrawal;

(3) to continue to work with NATO members to meet their 2014 Wales Defense Investment Pledge commitments; and

(4) to support robust United States funding for the European Deterrence Initiative, which increases the ability of the United States and its allies to deter and defend against Russian aggression.

SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF FUNDS TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds are authorized to be appropriated, obligated, or expended to take any action to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington, DC on April 4, 1949, between the United States of America and the other founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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 in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 676, reit-

erating the support of the Congress of the United States for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 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, let me start by thanking the author of this bill, the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA). I was glad to join him as an original cosponsor, and I am grateful as well to our ranking member, Mr. MCCAUL, for his strong support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, for nearly 70 years, the NATO alliance has been the bedrock of transatlantic peace, security, and stability. For seven decades, NATO has been synonymous with Western democracy.

The organization's architects had a tremendous vision, and that vision translated into the most successful political military alliance in history, an alliance that won the Cold War, that brought peace to the Balkans, that fought terrorism in Afghanistan, that today is guarding against Russian aggression in Europe and training forces in Iraq and elsewhere.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have heard, most notably from the President, that NATO is obsolete, that it is ill-suited to 21st century challenges. That is just plain wrong.

Would we be safer without Article 5, the principle that says an attack on one is an attack on all, an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all NATO members, the commitment that brought our NATO allies to fight at our side after September 11? Would we be better off without 28 other countries that share our values and that know how to fight together effectively? Of course not.

NATO is not a burden, Mr. Speaker. It is a bulwark against aggressive forces that seek to undermine democracy and the rule of law, against strongmen who flout international law and act as though might makes right.

NATO is our greatest strategic advantage, one built over time and at great sacrifice. We simply cannot cede such an advantage. Past and future generations alike would never forgive the squandering of something so precious. We cannot betray our young soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines by sending them into battle alone, without capable allies to share the burden.

So this bill, again, reiterates Congress' commitment to NATO. It would also prohibit any withdrawal from NATO.

I am glad we are considering it so early in this Congress. It sends a clear message to our allies, to our adversaries, and to the administration that this branch of government fully supports the alliance, the collective defense of our allies, and peace across the North Atlantic region.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.