mind all Members as a matter of comity to refrain from characterizing Senate action.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, may we characterize Senate inaction?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The characterization of Senate action or inaction is not proper, as a matter of comity.

INFORMATION ON H.R. 1486, THE FOREIGN POLICY REFORM ACT

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, in what I am advised is a practically unprecedented move, the minority leadership, apparently acting on behalf of minority members of the Committee on International Relations, indicated that they would interpose an objection to the committee majority's request to file a supplemental report on the bill, H.R. 1486, the Foreign Policy Reform Act. The supplemental report would have provided the cost and mandate estimate of the Congressional Budget Office and the "Ramseyer print" of the amendment ordered reported by the International Relations Committee.

For the information of the Members, the CBO report is printed below. The Ramseyer print, which would cost $30,000 or more to print in the RECORD according to an informal estimate from the GPO, will be available for Members to review in the offices of the International Relations Committee.

U.S. CONGRESS
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, May 12, 1997.

Hon. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1486, the Foreign Policy Reform Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contacts an Joseph C. Whitehill and Sunita D'Monte.

Sincerely,

JUNE E. O'NEILL.
Director.

Enclosure.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE, COST ESTIMATE

H.R. 1486—Foreign Policy Reform Act

Summary: H.R. 1486 would consolidate various international affairs agencies, would authorize appropriations for foreign assistance programs, the Department of State, and related agencies, and would authorize the sale of 14 naval vessels.

Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 1486 would result in additional discretionary spending of $33 billion over the 1998–2002 period. The legislation would increase direct spending by $11 million in 1998 and by $0.3 billion over the next five years; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. The sale of naval vessels would generate an estimated $163 million in offsetting receipts.

The bill contains a provision that would result in costs to state, local, or tribal governments. CBO is unsure whether this provision constitutes an intergovernmental mandate as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA), but mandate costs, if any, would be well below the threshold established in the law ($50 million in 1996, adjusted annually for inflation). H.R. 1486 would impose no new private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 1486 is shown in the table. For the purpose of this estimate, CBO assumes that all amounts authorized would be appropriated by the start of each fiscal year and that outlays would follow historical spending patterns.

	By fiscal year in millions of dollars					
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
DIRECT SPENDING						
Proposed changes, refugee determination:[1]						
Estimated budget authority	0	0	20	60	70	80
Estimated outlays	0	0	20	60	70	80
Other proposed changes:						
Estimated budget authority	0	11	15	15	16	17
Estimated outlays	0	11	15	15	16	17
Total changes in direct spending:						
Estimated budget authority	0	11	35	75	86	97
Estimated outlays	0	11	35	75	86	97
ASSET SALES[2]						
Estimated budget authority	0	−163	0	0	0	0
Estimated outlays	0	−163	0	0	0	0
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Spending under cuttent law:[3]						
Estimated authorization level[4]	15,740	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated outlays	16,322	7,073	2,974	1,513	702	383
Proposed changes:						
Estimated authorization level	0	16,467	16,099	621	633	646
Estimated outlays	0	9,337	13,547	6,031	2,592	1,601
Spending under the bill:[3]						
Estimated authorization level[4]	15,740	16,467	16,099	621	633	646
Estimated outlays	16,322	16,410	16,521	7,544	3,294	1,984

[1] Spending for Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Supplemental Security Income. Under current law, CBO estimates that spending for these programs will be $150 billion in 1997 and will rise to $208 billion in 2002.

[2] Under recent budget resolutions, proceeds from asset sales are counted in the budget totals for purposes of Congressional scoring. Under the Balanced Budget Act, however, proceeds from asset sales are not counted in determining compliance with the discretionary spending limits or pay-as-you-go requirement.

[3] Funding for foreign assistance programs, the Department of State, and related agencies.

[4] The 1997 level is the amount appropriated for that year.

Basis of estimate:

DIRECT SPENDING

This bill would increase direct spending by an estimated $0.3 billion over the next five years.

Refugee determination.—Section 1218 would extend a provision of U.S. immigration law that favors the automatic admission as refugees of certain nationals of the former Soviet Union (chiefly Jews and evangelical Christians), Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Applicants for admission need only assert that they have a fear of persecution and a "credible basis" (not the stricter "well-founded basis" that others must prove) for that fear. (These provisions are commonly known as the Lautenberg criteria.)

These criteria were first enacted in November 1989, and have been renewed several times since then. They currently cover applicants for refugee status who apply through September 30, 1997. Section 1218 would extend that deadline for two years, through September 30, 1999.

Under current law (section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act), the annual ceiling on refugee admissions is set by the President after consultation with the Congress. The refugees affected by this bill are accommodated within that ceiling. However, CBO believes that these criteria lead the President and the Congress to set a higher ceiling for refugee admissions than they otherwise would. That is, without these criteria, refugee admissions would be lower. There is no mechanism by which lower admissions of, for example, Soviet Jews and evangelicals would automatically lead to higher admissions of, say, Rwandans or Bosnians.

According to the Department of State, approximately 2,000 people in the former Soviet Union currently apply for admission each month as refugees, and about three-quarters of them are found to meet those criteria. (They are the principal beneficiaries of the provision.) Those figures are significantly smaller than the peak levels of the early 1990s. Because there are lags in scheduling applicants for interviews and then in assembling travel documents, CBO expects that extending the criteria for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 would boost the number of entries in 1999 and 2000. By the end of 1999, an estimated 18,000 more refugees would be in the United States as a result of the extension; by the end of 2000, an estimated 36,000.

According to the annual Report to the Congress of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services, about 10 percent of these refugees go on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), 60 percent on Food Stamps, and up to 60 percent on Medicaid. (Also, some go on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which has now been converted to a block grant at fixed levels of funding; on general assistance, which is state-funded; or on short-term refugee assistance, a federally-funded program that is subject to appropriation.) Last year's welfare reform law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–193), curtailed the eligibility of most immigrants for welfare benefits, but spared refugees during their first five years in the United States. Based on these past patterns of welfare participation, CBO estimates that extra outlays in the SSI, Food Stamp, and Medicaid programs would total $20 million in 1999 and would grow to $80 million in 2002.

Appropriation of interest.—The bill contains several sections that authorize the deposit of certain funds into interest-bearing accounts and the spending of subsequent interest earnings without further appropriation. Sections 1205, 1202, and 1204 provide this authority for proceeds from the sale of overseas property, the Foreign Service National Separation Liability Trust Fund and the International Center Reserve Fund, respectively. CBO estimates that these provisions would increase direct spending by $7 million to $10 million a year. Section 1402 authorizes recipients of grants from the National Endowment for Democracy to deposit grant funds in interest-bearing accounts and to use the interest for the same purpose for which the grant was made. Under current law, the grantees refund their interest earnings to the government. CBO estimates that under this provision the Treasury would forgo collections of less than $60,000 a year.

Recovery of health care costs.—Section 1214 would authorize the Secretary of State to recover from insurance companies the reasonable costs of health care services provided by the department and to deposit the funds as offsetting collections. These amounts would