

the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] to Libya.

In that matter, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] has expressed the concerns of all Members about any Member of Congress traveling to Libya. In an effort to be helpful, and in my capacity as chairman of the Committee on International Relations and in the exercise of our committee's oversight responsibilities, I will inquire of the administration what laws and regulations, if any, would apply to travel by any Congressman to Libya, and whether any of those laws or regulations may have been violated.

I will be undertaking a review of this matter. I assure the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] that I will promptly share with him the response of the administration to our inquiries.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS].

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, on September 18, I wrote the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] and told him how important I thought it was that he give a public explanation for his trip to Libya. When I received no response to that letter, I noticed 2 days ago my intention to file a privileged resolution. That resolution I read in full to this body two nights ago.

It is very important that our body know the facts and circumstances surrounding this visit. It was, as the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] noted, to an outlaw nation, a nation which is presently, not sometime in the past, but is presently engaged in terrorist activity in several countries.

I have again called on the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] today to make a public explanation. I welcome the assurances of the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the committee will be looking into these facts.

What I intend to do at this time is not to go forward with my resolution, but I will note that if the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] does not make a full and complete explanation of his trip, as I have outlined in the resolution, that in the interests of this body and its integrity, and because the American people have a right to an explanation, I will renounce my resolution next week or the week after.

I again call on the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD], and I know other Members of the body share my opinion, that he make a full and complete explanation of his trip to Libya.

It is my understanding that the Committee on International Relations, and it was from earlier conversations, that they are going to do an investigation into this trip which I hope will include talking to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] and asking the gentleman from Alabama for an explanation of his trip. I will be looking forward to that.

I believe that it is a much better forum, if it is done before the Committee on International Relations, it is done in a public hearing, and this is

something that we will just have to follow day by day. But the American people deserve and I think demand an explanation. It is against the law for anyone to travel to Libya. It is against the law for a United States Congressman to travel to Libya. The laws apply to everyone, including U.S. Congressmen.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

ON A RESPECTFUL APPROACH TO INQUIRY INTO MEMBER'S TRAVEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Ms. WATERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor because I wanted to make sure that any attempts to try and answer for the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] or to describe what he may or may not have done be characterized in a way that would not indict him without his having an opportunity to deal with this issue. He is not here.

As chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, I pay special attention, of course, to those members of the Caucus. I wish that they always be represented in the right way, and whenever there appears to be a problem unfolding, I want to make sure that we do everything that we can to see to it that they are handled with respect.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked with the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] about this, and I am convinced that he simply, in the interests of his constituents in the State of Alabama, is simply attempting to have some questions answered that have been raised by people in Alabama. I respect that.

I do wish, however, that this issue not become something that is debated on the floor while in fact there is a complaint now pending in the Ethics Committee. Normally, if there is a complaint, it would be handled in the body that is constructed to handle these kinds of concerns. It is a little bit unusual to talk about some protracted debate either in committee or on the floor.

I would hope that something happens between now and next week that would cause this to be not only deposited as it is in the Ethics Committee, but discussed there. I suppose we could end up discussing these kinds of concerns ad nauseam.

As I reviewed, kind of, the record over a period of time about travel, I guess there have been some questions from time to time about travel to Cuba, even at one point to Vietnam and other places, where I think we have some restrictions or sanctions, but it has not occupied the committee or the House. If there is a complaint filed, it is taken up there.

So let me just say that I rise today on behalf of the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD], to say that certainly he has not had the opportunity to have his say; that he has responded to some inquiries that have been made

in an unofficial way, I think, by the State Department. The State Department has made it clear they are not investigating him. They simply have almost a perfunctory duty to raise some questions about travel to certain areas where there may be some restrictions.

As far as we know, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] has done nothing wrong. He is not in violation of anything. Even when sometimes it appears that there is travel to restricted places, there are ways and waivers which allow for travel if they do not violate certain things, like the use of passports, money transactions.

□ 1415

So based on what I know, I am convinced that the gentleman from Alabama's actions are honorable and that he has not in any way violated any laws or the responsibilities and trust that are placed in him by virtue of his being a Member of Congress.

So I wanted to be here today to say that I respect the gentleman's concern. I do think that there is some continued discussion that can take place about how to proceed with this, and with that I would happily be involved with the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] next week to see how we can move this in a fashion that we can all feel good about.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. WATERS. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I respect what the gentlewoman said, and I agree with what she has said in part. I would say that there are many questions because we simply do not know, we have not had an explanation. And until we have an explanation, it is hard for us to make final judgment, and that is basically what I have asked for.

Ms. WATERS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, not that I am the legal adviser on this, but if I were to advise him, now that a complaint has been filed with the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, I would confine my explanations to the body that is taking a look at the issue, should they decide to do that, and I would wait to see how they were going to handle it, rather than trying to come to the floor and present a defense when he has not really been charged with anything, or to provide an explanation that may complicate proceedings that may be underway or may get underway.

So I wish that we would not take his lack of a response to the gentleman's request as an unwillingness to discuss it; but rather, now, I think he is put in a position where he has to make some decisions about what is the appropriate response and in what manner that will be done.

GREAT FUTURE FOR OUR NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New