

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Recognition is within the discretion of the Chair, and the gentleman clearly did not understand.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

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

Mr. MCHUGH. I thank the gentleman. I have deep respect for the Speaker. He is a great American, in spite of the fact he is a fan of the Boston Red Sox. But I would ask, is it appropriate under the House rules for the Speaker, as a member of the committee, to be ruling on points of order against the bill of which he is a member?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has a point of order. The Chair of course was about to turn the gavel over to another Member and did not anticipate this point of order.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will step down, I have another point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman's point of order with respect to the bill that is before the House?

Mr. MCHUGH. It is to this bill. I think the point of order speaks for itself.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, is it not against the rules of the House for a member of a committee of a bill before the House to be ruling on that bill and those questions?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. No, it is not.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 2082.

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

There was no objection.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 388 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2082.

□ 2156

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2082) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for intelligence and intelligence-

related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, with Mrs. TAUSCHER in the chair.

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Chair, I raise a question of consideration against the legislation before us.

The CHAIRMAN. The question of consideration is not available in the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. MCHENRY. I thank the Chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

□ 2200

Mr. REYES. Madam Chairwoman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Intelligence is our Nation's first line of defense. In a world of asymmetrical threats, it is critical that we detect and disrupt the plans and intentions of those who would do us harm. And it is critical that we conduct intelligence operations in a way that conforms to our laws and to our values as a Nation.

This bill was the product of bipartisan work, and I am pleased that the ranking member, Mr. HOEKSTRA, worked with me over the past several weeks and months to draft this bill. We do not agree on every provision in this bill, but we agree on the larger points, and we agree that intelligence officers in the field deserve our support.

Let me address up front one area where I think there has been some confusion, and that is section 407 of the bill, which asks for a national intelligence estimate on the national security impact of climate change.

We heeded the advice of 11 former 3- and 4-star admirals and generals who have studied this issue and specifically recommended an NIE. They believe that significant changes in global climate may act as a "threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of our world."

The ranking member has argued that this work should not divert resources from higher priority items. Our committee staff has spoken with senior Intelligence Community leaders in the administration, and we have been assured that this will not, I repeat, will not divert resources.

The data needed is already available. The administration is already drafting a community assessment on this very issue. And I want to assure the ranking member that we will work with the administration to ensure that nothing will divert resources away from higher priority efforts.

But I also want to be clear; targeted discussion on this topic is a distraction from the key points of this bill. This

bill provides funding for the men and women in the field. Opposition to this bill sends the wrong signal to them.

We are at war, and we face many threats over the horizon. This bill contains robust funding for critical intelligence programs to penetrate the hard targets, such as terrorist networks and countries developing WMD capabilities.

We add funds to both CIA and military elements for human intelligence training. We invest in language training for collectors and analysts and in language translation capabilities. We add funding for sending additional analysts overseas, and we strengthen counterintelligence field operations.

We have added funds to broaden our view so that we are spending, not just on Iraq, but on some of the other global challenges that we face, such as Iran, Russia, East Africa, Latin America and countries in Asia.

We have several provisions that enhance critical oversight. We require quarterly intelligence reports to Congress on the nuclear weapons programs of Iran and North Korea.

We also require that the CIA Inspector General conduct an audit of covert activities no less than once every 3 years. And we require the administration to provide the Intelligence Committees with a full list of all special access programs.

We also require detailed reports to Congress on the use of contractors in the Intelligence Community because their use has grown without adequate oversight, both by Congress and even by the executive branch.

We also require a strategy for implementing a multi-level security clearance system. This will allow patriotic Americans with much needed foreign language skills to serve as translators or linguists in the Intelligence Community.

And we also promote diversity in the Intelligence Community by requiring a strategic plan for implementing the recommendations of a highly regarded diversity panel.

I am of the strong view that diversity is a major strategic asset of the United States, and we have to leverage that asset to our full advantage.

In sum, Madam Chairman, this bill strengthens U.S. intelligence capabilities. This bill, if passed and signed into law, will help the courageous women and men of our Intelligence Community accomplish their mission. They are counting on our support, and tonight I hope we respond.

I urge all my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

With that, Madam Chairwoman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Chairwoman, I would like to yield myself 4 minutes.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague, Chairman REYES, for the cooperative working relationship that we have had as we have gone through this process and as we have developed and built this bill. There are a number of