

Clinton/Gore administration that appointed them.

COLOMBIA AID PACKAGE

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, soon the House is expected to consider the supplemental appropriations bill which contains the Colombia aid package. While this package is far from perfect, it is essential that we pass it now. Failure to do so would send a signal to the drug cartels in Colombia that this Congress is not serious about helping Colombia fight the war on drugs.

In fact, delaying the passage of this bill any further has and will lead to increased violence in Colombia. On March 8, just last week, for example, 100 guerillas from the drug cartel-backed FARC attacked a village 250 miles south of Bogota and released 92 of their compatriots who were imprisoned there. No doubt further delays will lead to more and even more bolder attacks.

This recent attack should present us with the more clear evidence that any further delay in passing a comprehensive aid package to Colombia will result in more violence, more attacks, and could threaten the very existence of the Colombian government.

Mr. Speaker, if we fail to act now, we will leave our friends in Colombia vulnerable to the narcoterrorists who will freely build their power and wealth upon the broken lives of our children. I urge support for the supplemental.

FAMILY FARMERS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the small family farm is quickly becoming an endangered species in this Nation. And with farmers being hit by the inheritance tax or what we should call the death tax, it is no surprise. Many family farmers work hard their whole lives struggling to make ends meet as they feed not only their own families, but families around the world. But instead of showing gratitude to farmers for their lifetime of work, our government instead punishes these farmers when they pass their farm on to the next generation.

When a farmer dies, the Federal Government assesses a tax of up to 55 percent on the value of his or her farm. This is ridiculous. It is tragic. For many people, the American dream is to build up a business or a farm and then pass it on to their children. Yet many times the children have to sell the farm just to pay the taxes.

Death should not be a taxable event. We are losing our farms. We should repeal the death tax.

I urge all of my colleagues to work towards this end. Farmers deserve a thank you, not an IOU.

TRADING WITH THE ENEMY

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, soon this august body will be debating the trade status of the United States with the People's Republic of China. We will begin discussing whether or not the U.S. should expand its trade relationships with a nation that has, one, stolen top secret nuclear technology from the United States and its laboratories; two, continues to be a known violator of human rights; and three, has threatened the United States with nuclear war.

Just a couple of weeks ago, China threatened to fire long-range nuclear missiles at the United States if we defend Taiwan. Mr. Speaker, how can we trust a nation that has stolen U.S. technology and secrets, oppressed its own people, and now threatens the United States with nuclear war?

The actions of China appear no different from those of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. We did not consider an open trade policy with the USSR then, and we should not consider granting normal trade relationships with China today.

I yield back the dangerous Clinton trade policies which force Americans to give to a nation that is all ready and willing to launch a nuclear attack on us.

CONGRESS SHOULD REPEAL THE GAS TAX TODAY

(Mr. COLLINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, the lead story on most all newscasts today is about the high price of gasoline and fuel.

In just the past 2 weeks, the price has risen 12 cents per gallon, with a national average today at \$1.53 per gallon as compared to less than \$1 one year ago. For the past two weeks the people at home have asked, what is Congress going to do about the high price of gasoline?

Mr. Speaker, the only controlling factor the Congress has pertaining to the price of gas or fuel is the tax imposed by Congress. In 1993, the Congress increased the gas tax by 4.3 cents per gallon for deficit reduction. Today there is no deficit. Today Congress can repeal the 4.3 cents gas tax and help with the cost of gas and fuel.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the needs and the challenges of infrastructure, but the Congress must adjust its needs, the same as a family adjusts its budget to meet its needs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BALLENGER). Pursuant to clause 8 of

rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

ESTABLISHING A JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate Concurrent Resolution (S. Con. Res. 89) to establish a Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2001.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 89

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT COMMITTEE.

There is established a Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (in this resolution referred to as the "joint committee") consisting of 3 Senators and 3 Representatives, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The joint committee is authorized to make the necessary arrangements for the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2001.

SEC. 2. SUPPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

The joint committee—

(1) is authorized to utilize appropriate equipment and the services of appropriate personnel of departments and agencies of the Federal Government, under arrangements between the joint committee and the heads of those departments and agencies, in connection with the inaugural proceedings and ceremonies; and

(2) may accept gifts and donations of goods and services to carry out its responsibilities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS).

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

Mr. Speaker, everyone, I think, is becoming aware that this is a presidential election year, but it is not just a political event. It is, in fact, an important governmental institutional event. It is, in the long history of governments, the longest peaceful transition between those who hold the executive position in this government.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 89 is the traditional start of this institutional process. The chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and the ranking member have cleared through the Senate and presented to the House this concurrent resolution, which will