voting on the first question shall be a minimum of 15 minutes.

The Clerk will designate section 1.

The text of section 1 is as follows:

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

SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION AMENDMENT.

Section 40120(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''(including the Act entitled 'An Act relating to the maintenance of actions for death on the high seas and other navigable waters', approved March 30, 1920, commonly known as the Death on the High Seas Act (46 U.S.C. App. 761–767; 41 Stat. 537–538))'' after ''United States''.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Are there any amendments to section 1?

Hearing none, the Clerk will designate section 2.

The text of section 2 is as follows:

SEC. 2. APPLICABILITY.

The amendment made by section 1 applies to civil actions commenced after the date of the enactment of this Act and to civil actions that are not adjudicated by a court of original jurisdiction or settled on or before such date of enactment.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Are there any amendments to section 2?

There being no amendments, under the rule, the Committee rises.

□ 1115

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WICKER) having assumed the chair, Mr. BURR of North Carolina, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 603) to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify the application of the Act popularly known as the ''Death on the High Seas Act'' to aviation incidents, pursuant to House Resolution 85, he reported the bill back to the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed until later today.

COMMERCIAL OPERATION OF SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT CATEGORY AIRCRAFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 86 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. 661.

□ 1116

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. 661) to direct the Secretary of Transportation to prohibit the commercial operation of supersonic transport category aircraft that do not comply with stage 3 noise levels if the European Union adopts certain aircraft noise regulations, with Mr. BURR of North Carolina in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Under the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER).

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Recently, the European Union took the first step in adopting a very discriminatory regulation that would effectively ban most U.S.-based stage 3 hushkitted and certain U.S. re-engined aircraft from operation in the European Union, even though they meet all international noise standards.

Hushkitted aircraft are older aircraft that have what is essentially a muffler added so that they can meet the current stage 3 noise requirements. Re-engined aircraft are stage 2 aircraft that have stage 3 engines added to meet current noise requirements.

Now, the proposed European Union regulation, on which they have already taken the first step, limits the number of possible buyers of U.S.-owned hushkitted and re-engined aircraft. Under the regulation, the European Union operators can only buy these hushkitted and re-engined aircraft from other European operators. They cannot buy them from American operators.

In addition, the regulation significantly increases U.S. costs of operation in European Union countries. New U.S. operations will have to be flown by aircraft originally manufactured to meet stage 3 requirements even though the retrofitted engines meet all the requirements. U.S. hushkitted aircraft will not be allowed to fly in Europe.

This is blatant, outrageous discrimination. This regulation implements a regional standard that is substantially different from that agreed upon through international standards and unfairly targets U.S. operations.

The bill before us takes the first step to respond to these discriminatory practices by effectively banning flights of the Concorde in the U.S. if a final regulation is adopted by the European Union. The Concorde does not meet the stage 3 noise requirements that the U.S.-owned hushkitted aircraft currently meet. It does not even meet the less restricted stage 2 requirements.

So it is important that we, today, take our first step in response to the Europeans, having already taken their first step, so that we demand a level playing field. I strongly urge support of this bill.

It is our hope that we do not need to proceed further with the Senate and having this signed into law, because our hope is that the Europeans will not proceed beyond the step they have already taken. But if they do, we are certainly prepared to respond in a similar fashion, and I urge strong support for this pro-American legislation.

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

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to thank the chairman of our full committee for that very strong, forceful, well-phrased statement but, more importantly, for his prompt action on this legislation, moving it through subcommittee and full committee to the floor quickly, because the situation demanded quick action. The gentleman is a strong advocate for American interests, whether in steel or in other modes of transportation, but especially here in this case in aviation.

I did my graduate studies at the College of Europe in Brugge, Belgium, at the time of the formation of the European Common Market. I have continued to follow events in Europe very closely, from the coal and steel community, through the European Common Market, to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers developments, all of which have united Europe, have brought a higher standard of living to Europe in the post-World War II era, all of which developments have been strongly supported by a succession of U.S. presidents and Congresses.

We want a strong, economically strong, united Europe. It is in our best economic interest. It is in our national security interest. But it is to be a Europe that will trade fairly with the United States, that their markets must be open to ours on the same terms and conditions that ours are open to theirs. And we have the world's largest open, free market for any commodity, and especially in aviation.

We have negotiated one after another liberal aviation trade agreement with European countries, beginning with the Netherlands. Free open-skies agreements. We have with Germany. We have with Italy. We are negotiating one now with France. Why, then, in the face of this openness to trade, why in the face of U.S. cooperation with Europe in aviation matters, joint ventures with Airbus industry, the joint

venture between GE and Snekma, the French engine manufacturer, why in the face of some 60 percent of the materials and parts produced for Airbus aircraft coming from the United States, why is the European Community taking anti-competitive action as they have done with their proposal to eliminate some 1,600 U.S. aircraft from the European air system?

The European Commission made a recommendation to the European Parliament, which debated this issue, and then adopted a proposed regulation, submitted to the European Council of Ministers, that would restrict the use in Europe of some, but not all, aircraft that have either a new engine or a hushkit installed on existing engines to meet their highest current noise standards, Chapter 3 of ICAO, or stage 3 as we call it in the United States.

On the face of it, it looks fair, but in practice it applies only to U.S. aircraft and U.S. engines. Conveniently, it excludes the engines produced by the GE alliance with the French manufacturer Snekma, the CFM series engines. U.S. aircraft engines are quieter than their European Chapter 3 counterparts, and if this regulation is finalized, the effect would be to cost American businesses over a billion dollars in spare parts and engine sales and reduce the resale value of some 1,600 U.S. aircraft as well as reduce the market for U.S. hushkitted manufacturers.

Now, I have been to the Nordham facilities in the United States where they manufacture hushkits, and I have seen the splendid job they do. And their hushkits have been installed, starting with Federal Express and then with other U.S. airline operators, to meet our Stage 3 standards. They do a superb job. They quiet those engines down. We are down now from the 1990 noise law in the United States, from 2,340 aircraft in 1990 that were Stage 2, we are down to just under 900 aircraft. By the end of this year we will be down to under 600, and by the end of next year we will be down to zero.

We have done a far superior job of noise control in the United States than the European Community has done. Our aircraft are seen worldwide as the standard. Our technology is seen worldwide as the standard. So why has Europe chosen to take this policy initiative? Hushkits have been used for over 15 years to quiet aircraft. The regulation says that engines with a higher bypass ratio would be allowed in the European airspace, but those high bypass engines are mostly European manufactured.

An engine's bypass ratio is only one of several factors in determining the actual noise produced by that equipment. Compare a 727–200 re-engined with a Pratt & Whitney JT8D–217C/15 engine and a Airbus A300B4–200 equipped with a CF6–50C2 engine. The 727, and I want to be very precise about this, because the Europeans have made a big stink about this issue, the 727 I have described is quieter than the Airbus 300. The 727 re-engined has a performance standard of 288.8 decibels; the Airbus A300, 293.3 decibels. Yet, under the European Union proposed regulation, the Boeing aircraft would be banned, the Airbus aircraft will fly.

Well, I got news for the Europeans, that does not fly here in the United States. Furthermore, I think this would be destructive in the long run for the Europeans to enact this and permanently put into place this regulation because it will create havoc in the international community in negotiations on future noise regulation and air emissions standards from aircraft.

Probably there is no one today who can remember what the skies over Washington looked like 25 years ago. Huge clouds of smoke, 12,000 tons of pollutants deposited on the Nation's capital from aircraft taking off from National Airport. We have cleaned that all up. We do not see those black smoke trails any longer. Well, Europe caught on, too. They followed our path, but now they want to be discriminatory.

If the proposed recommendation is adopted, then our bill banning the Concorde is an appropriate response to Europe's anti-competitive practice.

□ 1130

The Concorde is European aviation's flagship aircraft. The Concorde is Europe's signature technological mark on world aviation. It is a mark of pride for Europe. We have been allowing their market pride to fly in our airspace, even though it does not meet our noise standards. We have been tolerant of and cooperated with airlines flying the Concorde. British Airways and Air France operate four daily flights, eight operations, that is, eight arrivals and departures each day into U.S. airspace. Yesterday, March 2, was the 30th anniversary of the first Concorde flight to the United States.

It is rather appropriate we bring this legislation to the floor today. I am willing, and I know the chairman of our committee is willing, to cooperate and to support continuation of the waiver that has been in place for these three decades. But we are not going to do it unless the Europeans play fair and unless they drop their regulation that would prohibit certain U.S. aircraft from operating in European airspace. Fair is fair.

There will be positive environmental benefits from prohibiting the Concorde in our airspace. Preliminary analysis from the FAA says that eliminating the Concorde and its noise from New York airspace will reduce the noise footprint around John F. Kennedy International Airport by at least 20 percent. I think that is a very strong argument. The Europeans I hope will see the wisdom of changing their ways. The Clinton administration, I am very pleased, has responded vigorously to this thinly veiled attempt to give a competitive advantage to European aircraft and engine manufacturers. Transportation Secretary Slater, Commerce Secretary Daley and U.S. Trade Representive Ambassador Barshefsky have already appealed to the European Commission to defer action and to let this go to the proper forum, the ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Last week, Commerce Under Secretary for International Trade Aaron testified before the Finance Committee of the other body:

> The acceleration of consideration at the Council level appears aimed at precluding consultations between the United States and the European Union before implementation on April 1, 1999. Because of its potential impact on our bilateral commerce, Secretaries Daley and Slater, and Ambassador Barshefsky have written not only the European Commission but also to Ministers of the Member States asking that the Council not proceed with adoption of the regulation until consultations could be held. We are deeply concerned that this regulation remains on track for approval without meaningful consultations having taken place. I have informed the EU that the United States is prepared to respond appropriately to the harm our industry will suffer.

Mr. Chairman, we are responding today. Our action moving this bill through committee and to the floor so quickly has already had a positive effect. Deputy Transportation Secretary Mort Downey informed me yesterday that he was advised at an ICAO meeting on Friday that the President of the EU has postponed action for at least 3 weeks on the pending proposal, which means that the Council of Ministers will not be able to consider the banning of U.S. engines and hushkitted engines at least until the end of this month. The reason: They took very careful note of this bill moving through committee and to the House floor. The Secretary of Transportation and the State Department have asked for consultation with the EU. We understand that those consultations are likely to take place within the next week or so, certainly before the end of this month.

I share the administration's hope that the Europeans will come to their senses and realize that they have a lot at stake in working with us rather than against us. We have already been through the banana wars. We have had steel trade issues between the United States and the European community. Countervailing duties have been imposed on unfair trade practices by the European community and by Russia. I think Europe should get the message that in aviation, cooperation, competition on a fair and equitable playing field is right, but protective practices are not. We take a strong stand today and I think we have got their attention. We have just got to keep the heat on.

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on Aviation.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of this bill by one of the great aviation experts, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR). I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill.

H.R. 661, Mr. Chairman, would prohibit the commercial operation of supersonic transport aircraft if the European Union adopts a rule that would prohibit operation of U.S. aircraft that have been modified with hushkits or fitted with new engines. The Europeans contend that their regulation is merely intended to improve the environment by reducing aircraft noise, but this is really ridiculous. The European Union, if they adopt this rule, would be asking us to allow one of the noisiest airplanes in the world into the U.S., the Concorde, which does not even meet Stage 2 noise standards, while banning some of the quietest airplanes in the world, planes that meet the more advanced Stage 3 noise requirements. These would be banned only because they come from the United States.

This is not an environmental issue. This is a trade issue. What the EU is proposing goes against every principle of free trade and open skies and in fact would be very unfair trade. In fact what the Europeans are trying to do is to keep U.S. aircraft out of their market. The regulation in question would prevent U.S. airlines from selling their aircraft to European airlines if those aircraft have been modified with these more advanced hushkits or new engines. But the regulation would not prevent European airlines from selling their hushkit modified aircraft to other European airlines.

This is blatant discrimination, Mr. Chairman. There is no reason that U.S. hushkitted aircraft should be treated differently from European ones. Moreover, aircraft with a hushkit or a new engine are environmentally friendly. As I have noted, they meet the Stage 3 standards established by our own FAA and the Chapter 3 standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO. In many cases, these aircraft are quieter than aircraft that the Europeans would continue to allow.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has acted quickly in addressing this issue and he and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) are both to be commended for moving this bill so quickly. I know that there is some concern regarding the speed with which we are moving. Some people really wanted us to go much further. But this bill is an appropriate and I think measured response to the European action. It would target the commercial flights of the Concorde which meet neither the Stage 3 nor Chapter 3 standards for noise. In fact, as I noted earlier, they do not even meet Stage 2 noise standards. They make much more noise than the hushkitted aircraft that the Europeans want to ban. The EU refused to enter into consultations regarding its measure until this bill was introduced. It is important that we move ahead with this bill to keep up the pressure on the EU. This approach will give our State Department added leverage in its consultations and negotiations on this matter.

This is a very good bill, Mr. Chairman. I urge my fellow Members to support it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), ranking member of the Subcommittee on Aviation, and thank him for his splendid support for this issue.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for yielding me the time. I want to compliment him on this piece of legislation. My only regret in regards to it is that I did not think of it first. I salute him. I also want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) for moving this bill so quickly through the subcommittee and the full committee.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in very, very strong support of H.R. 661, a bill that will prohibit the operation of the Concorde in the United States. This bill is in direct response to a proposed European regulation which would effectively ban most U.S.-based Stage 3 hushkitted and reengined aircraft from operation in the European Union.

The European resolution banning hushkits is supposedly based on noise-related environmental concerns. However, there is no environmental analysis that supports the hushkit ban. In fact, some of the aircraft that will be banned under the regulation are quieter than some of those that will still be flying into European airports.

The European regulation banning hushkitted and reengined aircraft is not an environmental regulation. Instead, it is an unfair trade action disguised as an environmental regulation. The regulation proposed by the European Parliament is specifically targeted against U.S. products, such as Boeing aircraft, Pratt & Whitney engines, and hushkits, which are only manufactured in the United States of America. There is no doubt that this regulation is designed to discriminate against U.S. aircraft and aircraft manufacturers.

The economic effect of this proposed regulation will be immediate and severe. The U.S. aviation industry is already suffering at the hands of the Europeans. Within the past 2 years, Boeing's market share has fallen from 70 percent to 50 percent. Boeing is losing out to Airbus, which is still subsidized by four European countries that own it, because Boeing does not receive the same protectionist treatment that is given to Airbus.

We cannot allow the Europeans to use the environment as a false excuse to attack U.S. aviation and aviation companies. Therefore, if this proposed regulation banning hushkitted and reengined aircraft is implemented, we must reciprocate by banning the operation of the Concorde, which is the pride of European aviation.

H.R. 661 sends a strong message to our counterparts in Europe that we are serious about this issue. We cannot afford to let Europe use unfair trade methods to protect and promote their own aviation industry at the expense of U.S. companies. Boeing cannot afford to lose any more market share. In fact, no U.S. company can afford to lose business because of unfair trade regulations.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 661. This bill will ban the operation of the Concorde in the United States if and only if the European Union implements the regulation banning hushkitted and reengined aircraft. We must act quickly to let the Europeans know we are serious about protecting U.S. environmental interests from unfair trade actions, even if they are disguised as environmental protections.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I am pleased to rise in support of this bill requiring retaliation against the European Union banning flights of the Concorde if the EU adopts legislation restricting the use of so-called hushkits.

I commend the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) for bringing the issue to the floor and our attention and to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for moving this measure quickly through the House.

We had the opportunity to raise this issue with members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg during this past January. I was joined in that regard by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), a member of the U.S. delegation and a member of the Subcommittee on Aviation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. We informed our European colleagues that we were very much concerned that the proposed legislation

was a design standard and not a performance standard and that it was unilateral action not in keeping with the rules of the International Civil Aviation Organization. We told them it would cause great harm to American interests.

Upon our return to the States, the gentleman from California and I decided to proceed in expressing our views in greater detail. Meanwhile, the legislative tempo in Europe sped up almost as if to try to cut off the flow of information from this side of the Atlantic.

□ 1145

The legislation was approved in early February even though it did not appear on the advanced agenda for that day of the week, and the final step in the adoption of the European legislation is approval by the Council of Ministers of the European Union. However, in reaction to strong representations by several members of our own Cabinet and, I believe, in the expectation that this legislation we are now considering will be coming to the floor, the European Union's Executive Commission has asked the final approval by the council administrators be held off until late March. During that time and during which negotiations will be under way we are hoping that some kind of agreement can be reached that will uphold our American interests.

Mr. Chairman, we have often heard the view that sanctions do not work. Well, this is a case where the justified frustration and concern of the American people has brought us to the point of adopting a unilateral sanction to retaliate, and we will do so by a wide margin. I hope that the sponsors of this bill will bear in mind how important it was to take quick action and will not agree to legislation to place speed bumps in the way of enactment of future sanctions bills. I hope that the bill's managers will be sensitive to the need to modify this bill as the process moves along and will bear in mind the importance of the overall U.S.-EU relationship and balance them along with the very important American interests involved in the hushkit issue.

Let me indicate my dismay that the hushkit issue was allowed to get to this point where it may precipitate a series of measures and countermeasures. We need to prevent this from happening and not just reacting to events. The U.S. and European parliamentary delegations agreed in Strasbourg to step up the level of our cooperation for this purpose among others. Indeed, we have formed a transatlantic legislative dialogue. We hope to have, for example, video conferences to allow in-depth discussions on the issues that concern us. Aviation issues such as Airbus/Boeing and hushkits might well be a good place to start.

We will also be setting up links between the relevant committees to try to give early warning and advice in both directions across the Atlantic, again to try to prevent crises in our relationships and find ways to cooperate. Our Nation and the EU's democracies, which have the world's largest trading and investing relationships, need, of course, to head off conflict wherever possible.

In conclusion, not only is conflict disruptive to our economies, but it can make it difficult for us to cooperate on important matters on the transatlantic agenda and in third countries. It has aptly been said that if our Nation and Europe do not act together, little will get done on the world scene.

So, let me conclude again by saying that we simply must do a better job of managing the U.S.-EU relationships, but I regret to say that at this point we need to keep the pressure on, and the best course of action is to pass this measure before us. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 661.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this bill requiring retaliation against the European Union banning flights of the Concorde if the EU adopts legislation to restrict the use of so-called "hush kits."

I became aware of the so-called "hush kit" issue late last year, when the impending European legislation to ban the entry of additional "hushkitted" planes from Europe was brought to my attention by industry.

After consultation with industry and the Executive branch, we had the opportunity to raise it with members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg this past January. I was joined in this regard by our colleague, Congressman STEVE HORN, a member of our United States delegation and a member of the Aviation Subcommittee of the Transportation Committee.

We informed our European friends that we were concerned that the proposed legislation was a design standard, not a performance standard, and that it was a unilateral action not in keeping with the rules of the International Civil Aviation Organization. We told them it would cause great harm to American interests.

We were pleasantly surprised to learn that the new Chairman of the European Parliament delegation, Barry Seal, M.E.P., was the spokesman of the Socialist group on aviation. He told us that he had been unaware of the problem the United States had with the legislation and that he would look into it. Mr. Seal serves on the EP's Transportation Committee.

Subsequently, a meeting of the Parliament's Environment Committee was held and this bill was discussed. Another member of the EP's delegation for relations with the United States, Mary Banotti, M.E.P., raised our concerns along with her own. However, she did not amend the legislation, but expressed her hope that an amendment could be worked out that would provide for a performance standard in lieu of a design standard.

Upon our return, Congressman HORN and I wrote to the EU Members we had met with expressing our views in greater detail. In addition, Mr. HORN and I rounded up several colleagues on a letter to Secretary Slater and Ambassador Barshefsky to express our concerns.

Meanwhile, the legislative tempo in Europe sped up, almost as if to try to cut off the flow of information from this side of the Atlantic. The legislation was approved on February 10th, even though it did not appear on the advance agenda for that day or week.

The final step in the adoption of the European legislation is approval by the Council of Ministers of the European Union. However, in reaction to strong representations by several members of the United States cabinet, and, I believe, in the expectation that this legislation we are now considering would be coming to the floor, the European Union's Executive Commission has asked that final approval by the Council of Ministers be held off until late March. During this period of time, during which negotiations will be under way, I hope some kind of agreement can be reached that will uphold American interests.

Even so, it appears that the legislation itself will be adopted, and whatever agreement comes will be by way of a side agreement of some sort relating to the implementation of the legislation. If no appropriate agreement is reached, legislation like this may be just the beginning of our reaction to the EU's position.

Mr. Chairman, we have often heard in this chamber the view that "sanctions don't work." Well, here is a case where the justified frustration and concern of the American people have brought us to the point of adopting—dare I say it?—a "unilateral sanction" to retaliate. And we will do so by a wide margin. I hope that the sponsors of this bill will remember how important it was to take quick action and will not agree to legislation to place "speed bumps" in the way of the enactment of future "sanctions" bills.

The mere threat of the passage of this sanctions bill becoming law should make its final enactment unnecessary. It may well be necessary to modify this bill in the Senate or in Conference to reflect an agreement between the United States and EU. I hope that this bill's managers will be sensitive to the need to do so, and will bear in mind the importance of the overall U.S.-EU relationship, and balance them along with the very important American interests involved in the hush kit issue per se.

Let me indicate my dismay that the "hush kit" issue was allowed to get to the point where it may precipitate a series of measures and countermeasures. We need to prevent that from happening and not just reacting to events.

The U.S. and European Parliament delegations agreed in Strasbourg to step up the level of our cooperation for this purpose (among others). Indeed, we have formed a "Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue." We hope to have, for example, videoconferences to allow in depth discussions on the issues that concern us. Aviation issues such as Airbus/Boeing and "hushkits" might well be a good place to start. We will also be setting up links between relevant Committees to try to give early warning and advice in both directions across the Atlantic—again, to try to prevent crises in our relationship and to find ways to cooperate.

There is no question that there have been significant bumps on the road in U.S.-EU relations in the recent past. With tensions high on

the banana and beef hormone disputes, not to mention issues such as data protection, Iran, and Cuba, we need to keep all lines of communication open.

The private sector also needs to be on the lookout for legislation or regulations that will cause the U.S. and the EU to come into conflict. Organizations such as the Transatlantic Business Dialogue and the Transatlantic Policy Network have an important role to play in this regard. Our Administration could also do a better job in keeping on the lookout for such problems on the horizon. But they need to be helped by the private sector—and there is no question that the rather non-transparent policy process in Brussels contributes to our being taken by surprise from time to time. Policymakers need to have issues on which conflict might arise brought to their attention well in advance, so that they can be addressed with ample time to make effective, thoughtful decisions.

Our Nation and the EU's democracies, which have the world's largest trading and investing relationship, need, of course, to head off conflict wherever possible. Not only is conflict disruptive to our economies, but it can make it difficult for us to cooperate on important matters on the transatlantic agenda and in third countries. It has aptly been said that if the United States and Europe do not act together, little will get done on the world scene.

Let me conclude by saying that we simply must do a better job of managing the U.S.-EU relationship but, I regret to say, at this point we need to keep the pressure on and the best course of action is to pass this bill.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 661.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, before I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), I yield myself 30 seconds to say that I am delighted to hear from the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations that this mechanism is being set up for consultations through the committee process between the U.S. Congress and the European Parliament. I think that will go a long way to improve understandings and prevent, hopefully, debacles of this kind or near debacles of this kind.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON).

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Chairman, I want to commend the chairman and ranking member for moving quickly. This is a critical time in our relationship with the European community, because the ground rules are just being established, and if the United States sits back as the Europeans close up this very important market for us, protecting and nurturing their own markets, we will find it will not just be in aerospace, it will be in every other sector. Any time the Europeans have a problem, whether it is exports of grain or beef or technology, they will come up with some new standard that their companies have already reached or have been advance notified, and American companies will be locked out.

This administration and this Congress have to be tough and hard on this issue because, as we begin the relationship with a unified Europe, if they get the sense that they can shut out American products without paying a price, every worker and every company in America is under threat.

Mr. Chairman, again I commend the ranking member and the chairman for taking this swift action.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I totally concur in the splendid statement of the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON). After all, Europe is where they invented the Hanseatic League, cartels, and they know how to control markets. This is a message to Europe: ''You're not going to do it in aviation.''

Mr. Chairman, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would emphasize indeed it is the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) who provided the leadership in moving this bill forward, and so I am very happy to be supportive of his initiative, but he is the one that really deserves the credit for this.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of this legislation, and I would like to thank the distinguished Chairman and the ranking member for giving members the opportunity to express their concern about this situation.

At a time when the United States has advanced measures to reduce trade barriers and open doors to the global marketplace—and while the European Union has done much of the same—we're facing the passage of a new European Union regulation to limit the fair trade of aircraft.

The regulation will have the effect of targeting the resale of U.S. aircraft that already meet International noise standards. And one of the most frustrating aspects of this initiative, common position 66/99, is that some of the aircraft banned under that regulation are quieter than some that are permitted to be sold.

The regulation would prohibit the purchase of aircraft, from non-EU nations, that have been re-engined with a ''hushkit'' to meet internationally-established noise standards agreed upon by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

And the regulation, which is presumably designed to reduce environmental noise, will allow purchases of aircraft with the same level of noise emissions that are already owned by EU operators.

This type of gerrymandered regulation is a step backward in our efforts to promote international cooperation and a freer flow of trade, and may actually be a violation of some bilateral air service agreements between EU member states and the U.S.

If the rule is adopted, U.S. manufacturers, airlines, and leasing companies stand to lose billions of dollars—and the impact on U.S. aviation workers will be substantial.

I've heard estimates that the EU rule could result in job reductions as high as 16 thousand at impacted airlines and engine manufacturers.

The U.S. can't stand by and watch as the EU unilaterally takes steps with this wide of an impact on U.S. airline, machinist, and aerospace workers.

H.R. 661 is an appropriate response to an unfair barrier, and I strongly support its passage.

Again, I thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member for their efforts and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Chairman, I rise to express apprehension regarding the passage of H.R. 661. This bill, which bans the Concorde from operating in the United States, was introduced to deter the European Union (EU) from adopting a proposed regulation that would limit the use of hushkitted aircraft in Europe. American companies are worldwide suppliers of hushkits, which are fitted on older aircraft to reduce their noise level to meet worldwide noise pollution standards. The EU regulation discriminates against U.S. companies, and will cost American industry millions of dollars in losses. I strongly oppose the EU's regulation to restrict hushkitted aircraft, and support efforts to propel the EU to reassess their hushkit regulation.

Last week, the EU did just that. The EU decided to postpone its decision on banning hushkitted aircraft until the end of March 1999. Originally, the EU was scheduled to pass the regulation on March 9, 1999. This delay gives U.S. negotiators a chance to make our case to the EU, and us a chance to carefully consider a reasoned and appropriate U.S. response if one proves necessary. I have some concerns that this particular proposal is neither effective nor risk free for U.S. interests.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The text of H.R. 661 is as follows:

H.R. 661

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

SECTION 1. COMMERCIAL OPERATION OF SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT CATEGORY AIRCRAFT.

If the European Union adopts Common Position (EC) No. 66/98 as a final regulation or adopts any similar final regulation, the Secretary of Transportation shall prohibit, after such date of adoption, the commercial operation of a civil supersonic transport category aircraft to or from an airport in the United States unless the Secretary finds that the aircraft complies with stage 3 noise levels.

The CHAIRMAN. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chair may accord priority in recognition to a Member offering an amendment that he has printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amendments will be considered read.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone a request for a recorded vote on any amendment and may reduce to a minimum of 5 minutes

the time for voting on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote, provided that the time for voting on the first question shall be a minimum of 15 minutes.

Are there any amendments to the bill?

If not, under the rule the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FORBES) having assumed the chair, Mr. BURR of North Carolina, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 661) to direct the Secretary of Transportation to prohibit the commercial operation of supersonic transport category aircraft that do not comply with stage 3 noise levels if the European Union adopts certain aircraft noise regulations, pursuant to House Resolution 86, he reported the bill back to the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on H.R. 661, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

PEACE CORPS ACT AUTHORIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 83 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. 669.

□ 1155

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. 669) to amend the Peace Corps Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 through 2003 to carry out that Act, and for other purposes, with Mr. PEASE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Under the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the main purpose of H.R. 6689 is to reauthorize appropriations to expand the Peace Corps to President Ronald Reagan's goal of 10,000 volunteers. This legislation was introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), and I am proud to be a cosponsor along with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON). I understand that all three Republican and all three Democratic Members who served in the Peace Corps cosponsored this bill. Senator COVERDELL and Senator DODD will introduce companion legislation in the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, 14 years ago Ronald Reagan's late beloved Peace Corps director, Loret Ruppe, gave us a vision of a Peace Corps that could grow to 10,000 volunteers, and today we renew that goal on a bipartisan basis, working with the administration and with the minority in Congress to realize that vision.

This bill was carefully drafted in cooperation with the administration and with OMB, and while we initially planned to get the Peace Corps to 10,000 by the year 2000, budget realities and our concern for the planned and orderly expansion of the Corps means that we will reach our goal by the year 2003. This is a slower pace than we like and with which the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CALLAHAN) has indicated he would be more comfortable.

We choose the Peace Corps as one of our first orders of business because it represents the best part of our foreign assistance programs. The Peace Corps remains foremost in the imagination of America's young people. From President Kennedy to President Reagan and now to President Clinton, the Peace Corps serves as a symbol of what is best in our own Nation and its humanitarian missions around the world.

Today, there are millions of people around the world whose first impression of our Nation is through a Peace Corps volunteer. To date, over 150,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps, including seven U.S. ambassadors, five current Members of Congress and Senator DODD, and they represent an invaluable corps of veterans who speak over 80 languages in some of the countries most important in advancing our Nation's nationality security, economic and humanitarian interests.

Mr. Chairman, the Peace Corps is changing. It is not the same young people going overseas just to teach English. More people are volunteering after retiring, providing a wealth of knowledge and experience to their projects.

Peace Corps Director Mark Gearan formed the Crisis Corps to bring former volunteers back to the most difficult projects of importance to our Nation. For example, Crisis Corps volunteers are serving today in Central America, helping those nations recover from the 200-year devastation of Hurricane Mitch.

□ 1200

House passage of this bill will demonstrate that the Congress is back at work, passing important legislation and doing it on a bipartisan basis.

Accordingly, Mr. Chairman, I urge support for this measure, and I insert the following for the RECORD:

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS,
Washington, DC, March 3, 1998.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to convey my sincere appreciation to you and the other Members of the Committee for your decision to authorize an increase of $29 million for the Peace Corps FY 2000 budget. The Peace Corps has been fortunate to enjoy bipartisan support in the Congress for many years. On behalf of the Peace Corps, I wish to thank you for the strong leadership that you have brought to bear in making it possible for more Americans to serve our country as Peace Corps Volunteers. If Congress appropriates the Committee's authorized funding level, there will be 8,000 Volunteers serving overseas by the end of FY 2000. This proposed budget will keep the Peace Corps on the path to achieving the goal that Congress established for us in 1985—to field a Volunteer Corps of 10,000—in the early part of the next century.

This is a particularly appropriate moment in the Peace Corps history to undertake a careful effort to expand the number of Volunteers. Today, there are nearly 6,700 Volunteers serving in 79 countries. In recent years, however, the requests for Peace Corps Volunteers that we have received from developing countries has generally far exceeded the capacity of our budget. There is a reason for this: Our Volunteers are making important and lasting contributions to the development of some of the world's poorest communities. Their work at the grass-roots level in education, small business development, the environment, health, and agriculture has become a model of success for other international development agencies. Given the pressing need for this kind of people-to-people assistance, I am confident that the additional Volunteers we recruit will have effective and successful jobs in their overseas communities.

As the need for the service of Peace Corps Volunteers continues to rise overseas, I am pleased to report to you that we have seen an equally significant increase in interest in Peace Corps service among Americans here at home. Each year, tens of thousands of our fellow citizens contact the Peace Corps seeking information about serving as a Volunteer, and thousands of more of our citizens apply for Peace Corps service than our budget can fund. This growth in interest in the Peace Corps reflects our country's great tradition of service and our willingness to work with people in some of the world's poorest