

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(732) 350-2300; (609) 286-2571

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE
SUBCOMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

House Foreign Affairs Mark-Up Statement

Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Mark-Up Statement Hearing on Global Food Security Act
April 23, 2015

I want to thank Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel for scheduling this important mark-up, which evidences the bipartisanship and collegiality that is so characteristic of this Committee.

We are considering a number of substantively important bills and resolutions today, Democrat and Republican, and I want to make some brief remarks on three of them, two of which are Democratic measures.

I am proud to have re-introduced the Global Food Security Act, H.R. 1567, and to have the support of co-sponsors across the aisle – including prime co-sponsor Betty McCollum, the ranking member of our subcommittee, Karen Bass, and the ranking member of this Committee, Mr. Engel, as well as Chairman Royce. I want to thank and acknowledge those members of our subcommittee who have joined Ms. Bass and me as co-sponsors – Mr. Emmer, Mr. Meadows, Mr. DesJarlais and Mr. Cicilline, the latter as an original co-sponsor.

This is important legislation which will help provide a long-term solution to global hunger by authorizing the existing national food security program coordinated by USAID commonly known as Feed the Future. This program strengthens nutrition, especially for children during that critical first 1000 day-window, from conception to the child's second birthday, and also teaches small-scale farmers techniques to increase agricultural yield, thereby helping nations achieve food security, something that is in the national security interest of the United States as well.

In essence, it is a program that teaches a man to fish, instead of giving man a fish... As such it is economical in the long run, and should lead to a reduction in the amount of money we spend on emergency food aid. Our aid is leveraged with that of other countries, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and – especially – faith-based organizations, whose great work on the ground in so many different countries impacts so many lives.

By statutorily authorizing this existing program, which had its roots in the Bush Administration and was formalized by President Obama—it is a fittingly bipartisan program—we are also increasing our oversight by requiring the Administration to report to Congress.

As you may recall, last year we passed Global Food Security out of the House, only to have it stall and falter in the Senate.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute which you have before you is in substance similar to what the House passed year. We have made a few improvements with an eye toward passage in the Senate, including requiring that the Administration:

- submit to Congress its Global Food Security Strategy and set forth the role each Federal department and agency will play;
- provide “specific and measurable, goals, benchmarks, timetables [and] performance metrics;” and
- establish clear criteria showing how countries are selected first for participation in our food security programs and then for graduation once they have reached a level of self-sustainability. Again, the point here is not to provide a handout, but a leg up.

I also want to thank Mr. Poe, for offering an amendment that underscores the importance of Water, Sanitation and Health – known by the acronym WASH—in global development.

Finally, I would like to ask all of my colleagues here for your support beyond today’s mark-up, including that you would consider co-sponsoring this bill so that we make an already strong bipartisan statement in favor alleviating the scourge of global hunger even stronger by the time it reaches the floor of the House, which I hope will happen sometime in the near future.

Next I want to turn to our colleague Sander Levin’s measure, H. Res. 50, which calls for the release of former Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who has been languishing in Russian prisons since she was abducted by pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine last June and illegally transferred across the border in handcuffs and a bag over her head.

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill, which we marked up last week in our human rights subcommittee.

Since she was incarcerated on specious and unsubstantiated charges, Nadiya has endured interrogations, involuntary psychiatric evaluations and solitary confinement.

Nadiya is in poor health, having spent most of the last four months on a hunger strike as a symbol of protest, ending it just the week before last.

Nadiya is yet another victim of the Putin regime’s brutality and contempt for human life; and we must recognize that this isn’t just about her but also a very visible manifestation of Putin’s aggression towards a Ukraine that wishes to remain free, independent and democratic. Nadiya is a symbol for the struggle of Ukraine.

The amendment updates Nadiya’s current status, including with respect to her hunger strike, to reflect changes that have taken place since the introduction of H. Res. 50.

This amendment also calls for the imposition of targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for the kidnapping, arrest and imprisonment of Nadiya Savchenko and other Ukrainian citizens illegally incarcerated in Russia. It is essential that we hold those culpable for human rights violations personally accountable.

Finally, I want to say a word about Ranking Member Engel’s H.R. 1493, the Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act, of which I am lead co-sponsor, and was last year as well, when Mr. Engel introduced a substantively similar bill.

This bill could not be more timely, given the depredations of ISIS that we see played out on our TV screens when we turn on the nightly news – the horrific beheadings and killing of Christians and other religious minorities such as Yezidis by Islamist fanatics.

These murderers help finance their terror in part by looting cultural antiquities and coins from areas of Syria and Iraq that they control. Congress has already acted with respect to banning importation of “blood antiquities” from Iraq, which this bill would now extend to Syria. As such, this bill is part of the war on terror, helping to dry up sources of terror financing.

We also see that these fanatics will destroy what they cannot loot. This bill increases the inter-agency cooperation, including involvement of “Monuments Men” units of our armed forces, in striving to protect a cultural heritage which is part of our world’s patrimony.

I want to close by thanking Ranking Member Engel for introducing this important piece of legislation.