

Berman Unveils His Own Pakistan Aid Bill

By Adam Graham-Silverman
Congressional Quarterly
April 3, 2009

While the Senate and the administration are trying to strike a deal on an aid bill for Pakistan, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Howard L. Berman has moved ahead with one of his own.

The California Democrat unveiled his own bill this week, even though President Obama has called on Congress to pass legislation — yet to be introduced — that will be jointly sponsored by Senate Foreign Relations Chairman John Kerry, D-Mass., and ranking member Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind.

Like the Kerry-Lugar proposal, Berman's bill (HR 1886) would roughly triple non-military aid for Pakistan to \$1.5 billion for each of the next five years. It would focus on a wide range of development efforts, including improvements to schools and building up democratic institutions. And it would create a new, permanent fund to collect aid from several U.S. accounts and parcel it out where most needed.

The bill also would authorize money for military training and require that military financing focus on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. The measure would condition the military funding on a presidential certification that the Pakistani government is making progress in closing terrorist camps and stopping nonproliferation.

Notably, it would also restrict financing for F-16 fighters because of concerns that the U.S. has had little oversight of its military financing for Pakistan over the past eight years. Much of that aid is presumed to have supported Pakistan's conflict with India, not the fight against terrorists.

The Kerry-Lugar bill, meanwhile, has not been introduced because of a sticking point in negotiations with the White House over whether the administration should be allowed to determine the conditions on military aid.

© Congressional Quarterly Inc.

All rights reserved.

All material appearing on this site is copyrighted. All rights reserved. CQ does not convey any license, right, title or interest in any information -- including information provided to CQ from third parties -- transmitted via any CQ publication or electronic transmission unless previously specified in writing. No part of any CQ publication or transmission may be republished, reproduced, transmitted, downloaded or distributed by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, without prior written permission of CQ. Unauthorized reproduction or transmission of CQ copyrighted material is a violation of federal law carrying civil fines of up to \$100,000 and serious criminal sanctions or imprisonment.