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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548



B-129650

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AUG 30 1977

The Honorable Frank Thompson, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on House
Administration
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your questions about the applicability of our recent decision, B-129650, May 11, 1977, relating to the practice of making local currencies available for congressional travelers in non-excess foreign countries, to 22 U.S.C. § 276c-1 (Supp. V, 1975). Section 276c-1 requires the Chairman or senior member of every House or Senate group or delegation to the Interparliamentary Union, or any similar parliamentary organization of which the United States is a member or participant, "by whom or on whose behalf local currencies owned by the United States are made available and extended and/or expenditures are made from funds appropriated for the expenses of such group or delegation," to file reports with designated committee chairman on all such expenditures.

The provisions of 22 U.S.C. § 276c-1 do not in and of themselves make funds available to congressional groups or delegations attending international parliamentary organization meetings, but merely place a reporting requirement on any groups or delegations to whom such funds were provided. Our decision is not really directly applicable, since it does not deal with and has no effect on the reporting requirements of 22 U.S.C. § 276c-1.

Our decision could, however, affect the availability of foreign currencies for congressional travel to attend, among other things, the Interparliamentary Union or similar parliamentary organizations. In this regard, our decision prohibited purchases of foreign currencies for congressional travel purposes using dollars drawn from Treasury miscellaneous receipts and from the Commodity Credit Corporation revolving fund. However, the decision also concluded that under the authority of section 502(b) the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended, 22 U.S.C. § 1754(b)(Supp. V, 1975)

"* * * to the extent foreign currencies generated by foreign assistance loans, sales of surplus commodities

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and receipts of other Government programmed activities have not been disbursed to agencies for their dollar appropriated program needs, up to \$75. maximum per diem per person is available under section 502(b) for congressional travel needs." B-129650, May 11, 1977 at p. 3.

Therefore, our decision would affect congressional delegations to interparliamentary groups in non-excess foreign countries only when there have been no funds appropriated for the expenses of such groups or delegations, and there are no foreign currencies already owned by the United States available for congressional needs.

We hope this has been of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

SIGNED ELMER B. STAATS

Comptroller General
of the United States