Congress, both Republicans and Democrats speak like this man speaks, because we know what the Cuban people feel.

Our friends in Congress here, who are all of you, coincidentally, who are here this evening, from both parties, the friends of the Cuban people respect the Cuban people and want free elections for the Cuban people, and they listen to the Cuban people's representatives like Leonel Morejon Almagro. I thank the representatives.

On behalf of Leonel Morejon Almagro and the Cuban people, I thank the representatives of the American people and the American people for standing on the side of Cuba's right to be free.

□ 2145

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I think that it is vital that we understand that if we do what is right now, and we have the courage, as this man suggested in the reading, that we discipline ourselves and not rush in to try to invest in Cuba before Castro is gone.

Castro will some day be gone, whether it is natural causes or otherwise, and the Cuban people will have a chance to be free. But I fear that American businessmen, as they are doing in China and as they are doing in other dictatorships, are rushing not to try to have a positive influence, but instead, are looking at the quick buck and are establishing economic ties with these totalitarian regimes which will give life to those regimes.

In other words, I believe that once American businessmen invest in Cuba, we will find that Communist Cuba has a whole new group of advocates in the United States, as we have seen in China, as we have seen people who are supposed to be talking about democracy in China because they are Americans and they are investing in China and up spending all of their time trying to do what? Trying to lobby us not to be tough on China because of the abuses of human rights there. This same thing could happen in Cuba.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, at the very least, even though we have not been able to prevent what I personally consider an immoral policy with regard to the Chinese Government, because the real matter is that the Chinese Government uses slave labor and the multinational corporations are investing in that market and benefiting from the slave labor of the Chinese people. We have not been able to stop that because it is a billion people and it is too strong for us to have stopped it.

But at the very least we can say in this hemisphere, this is a hemisphere of democracy and this is a hemisphere of freedom and the Cuban people are not the only people that should be condemned to live in tyranny in this hemisphere; no, they deserve to be free.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), my colleagues that are here. They are representative of the overwhelming majority of the Congress of the United States in both parties who stand with the right of the Cuban people to be free.

We are, in the next few days, going to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the resolution passed by this Congress that said Cuba is and it ought to be free and independent, as we told the Spanish colonialists, who invented the concentration camp under General Wahler. By the way, interestingly enough, Castro's father was sent to Cuba to fight the Cuban insurrection as a Spanish soldier under General Wahler and General Wahler invented the concentration camp, and he put entire segments of the Cuban population in concentration camps to defeat the insurrection.

Mr. Speaker, it was the American people, and the American people alone, that stood with the Cuban people, and Cuba was free and independent. The United States withdrew from Cuba after helping the Cuban people defeat Spanish colonialism in 1888 and the United States withdrew in 1902.

The relationship between Cuba and the United States has always been friendly, except for this madman who represents the anti-Cuba and who will soon be gone from the face of the Earth and will be in the dust bin of history.

I thank the Congress of the United States; I thank the leaders who are here who represent the majority opinion of the Congress and of the American people, and I thank the American people for time after time after time standing with freedom, standing with democracy, two times in this century, saving the world from tyranny. This is a noble people, and what an honor to be able to stand in this Congress of this great Nation of the United States of America.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY: A NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. Maloney) is recognized for 60 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight with my colleagues to commemorate the 177th anniversary of Greek Independence Day, which is a national day of celebration of Greek and American democracy.

While commemorative resolutions are no longer permitted in this House, there is still tremendous support for Greek Independence Day. Every year since 1986, a resolution has been cosponsored by over 50 Senators and passed in the Senate, as well as one in the House, sponsored by over 218 Members, and passed.

The President of the United States has once again signed a proclamation this year recognizing this day as Greek Independence Day, and I would like to insert his proclamation into the RECORD at this time.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY: A NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION OF GREEK AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, 1998

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—A PROCLAMATION

This year, as we mark the 177th anniversary of the advent of Greece's struggle for independence, we celebrate with the Hellenic Republic and recognize the close ties that have long existed between Greece and the United States. Through two centuries, our nations have enjoyed a strong and enduring friendship. For more than half a century, we have stood together in NATO, modern history's most successful alliance.

Our bonds are deeper still, however, for we are joined by blood, culture, and a profound commitment to shared values. Greek ideals of democracy and freedom inspired our Nation's founders and breathed life into America's experiment with democratic self-government. Generations of Greek Americans have enriched every aspect of our national life—in the arts, sciences, business, politics, and sports. Through hard work, love of family and community, steadfast commitment to principle, and a deep love of liberty, they have contributed greatly to the prosperity and peace we enjoy today.

The bonds between America and Greece, in fact, have never been stronger than they are today. We are partners in the effort to find a lasting, peaceful solution in the Balkans and to build an enlarged NATO that will enhance our common security. As our two nations prepare for the challenges and possibilities of the new millennium, we look forward to building on that partnership so that the seeds of democracy we have nurtured together for so long will bear fruit in a bright future not only for ourselves, but for our global community.

Now, therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1998, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, Greece has been called the birthplace of United States democracy, and I would like to quote: ''Our Constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of the minority, but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law. When it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not the membership of a particular class, but

the actual ability which the man or woman possesses.''

This sounds like it could have been written by one of our Founding Fathers, but it was actually written by Pericles in an address made in Greece 2,000 years ago.

Thomas Jefferson once said, ''To the ancient Greeks we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves, the American colonies, out of Gothic darkness.''

Just as Greek ideas of democracy and individual liberties became the foundation of our government, the American Revolution became one of the ideals of the Greeks as they fought for their independence in the 1820s. Greek intellectuals translated the Declaration of Independence of the United States and used it as their own declaration.

During the fight for independence, a Greek commander in chief, Petros Mavromichalis, appealed to the citizens of the United States saying, ''Having formed the resolution to live or die for freedom, we are drawn toward you by a just sympathy, since it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode, and by you that she is prized by our fathers. Hence, honoring her name, we invoke yours at the same time, trusting that in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you. It is for you, citizens of America, to crown this glory.''

Through two centuries, Greece has been a long and trusted ally. In fact, they fought alongside the United States in every major international conflict of this century. For more than half a century, we have stood together in NATO, in friendship, and in alliance.

During the early 1900s, one of every four Greek males between the ages of 15 and 45 departed for the United States of America, and I might add that many of them settled in Astoria, Queens, which I am fortunate to represent. Astoria is one of the largest and most vibrant communities of Greek and Cypriot Americans in this country. It is truly one of my greatest pleasures in Congress to be able to participate in the life of this community with the wonderful and vital Greek American friends that I have come to know.

I have also had the pleasure of establishing, along with my great friend from the great State of Florida, (Mr. BILIRAKIS) the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues. This caucus allows Members of the House to join together to find ways to work together toward better United States Greek and Cypriot relations.

We are here tonight because 177 years ago the revolution which freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire began. Greece remained under the Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, and during this time, the people were deprived of all civil rights. Many volunteers from various localities in the United States sailed to Greece to participate in Greece's war for independence.

So today, as we mark the 177th anniversary of Greece's struggle for independence, we celebrate with the Hellenic Republic and recognize the close ties that have long existed between Greece and the United States.

On this occasion we should also direct our attention to the Island of Cyprus, which for 24 years now has been striving for an end to its tragic division and the illegal Turkish occupation of 37 percent of the island. Again, Cyprus is on the verge of becoming a flash-point for regional conflict because of Turkey's opposition to European membership for Cyprus. Last fall, H.R. 81 passed the House of Representatives unanimously calling for a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem. President Clerides of Cyprus was recently reelected to a second term, and Cyprus is to begin negotiations with the European Union next week on March 31st.

Mr. Speaker, it is now time to reaffirm our commitment to a peaceful solution. We must use Cyprus's EU accession as an impetus for positive progress and not let Turkey use it as an excuse for heightened tensions. A positive contribution by Turkey to help resolve the situation in Cyprus would facilitate Turkey's aspirations to become a member of the European Union. We should use our influence in the region to help Turkey to understand this.

That is why I, along with many of my colleagues, introduced a resolution to assert our position on a peaceful solution to Cyprus. This bill encourages Turkey to work with Greece and Cyprus to find a just solution, and I would like to introduce into the RECORD at this time the resolution which the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and I are presenting today with well over 32 cosponsors.

H. CON. RES—

Whereas President Glafcos Clerides of the Republic of Cyprus was recently re-elected for a second 5-year term with a renewed mandate to resolve the situation in Cyprus arising from Turkey's invasion of the island in 1974 and its continuing military occupation of 37 percent of Cyprus' territory;

Whereas the international community, including the United States, is expected to engage in a sustained effort to bring about a just, viable, and comprehensive solution to the situation in Cyprus;

Whereas Cyprus will begin negotiations with the European Union on March 31, 1998, for accession to the European Union;

Whereas it is recognized that the prospect of Cyprus' accession to the European Union could serve as a catalyst for resolving the situation in Cyprus;

Whereas the entire population of Cyprus, including the Turkish Cypriots, would benefit greatly from Cyprus's membership in the European Union;

Whereas a positive contribution by Turkey to the solution of the situation in Cyprus, as repeatedly called for by the United States and the international community, will not only facilitate Turkey's aspirations in Europe but will also enhance stability and peace in the Eastern Mediterranean and will safeguard the interests on the United States in the region;

Whereas the United States Government has sought to identify the remains of United States citizen Andreas Kassapis and hopes that this action will lead to further breakthroughs on the subject of the missing from both communities in Cyprus;

Whereas, in July 1997, the House of Representatives and the Senate adopted House Concurrent Resolution 81 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 calling for a United States initiative to resolve the situation in Cyprus on the basis of international law, the provisions of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, democratic principles, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in accordance with the norms and requirements for accession to the European Union;

Whereas the House of Representatives and the Senate in these concurrent resolutions also consider that lasting peace and stability on Cyprus could be best secured by a process of complete demilitarization of the island;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1092 of December 23, 1996, states that a Cyprus settlement must be based on a state of Cyprus with a single sovereignty and international personality and single citizenship, with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded, and comprising 2 politically equal communities as described in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions in a bicommunal and bizonal federation and that such a settlement must exclude union in whole or in part with any country or any form of partition or secession; and

Whereas the Congress intends to remain actively seized of the matter: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress strongly urges the President—

(1) to seize the opportunity presented by the beginning of a new presidential term in the Republic of Cyprus and the opening accession negotiations between Cyprus and the European Union to launch an initiative to resolve the situation in Cyprus based on the parameters and principles set forth in House Concurrent Resolution 81 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 of the 105th Congress and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1092 of December 23, 1996; and

(2) to continue the bimonthly reports to the Congress on the active engagement of the United States in the efforts to find a solution to such situation in Cyprus.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we will soon celebrate Cyprus Day when, once again, the entire island would be united. However, the reason we are here today is to celebrate Greek Independence Day. There has always been a very special bond of friendship between our two countries, and there is no better way to show this than as we did today with a concrete vote on this floor which was helpful to Greek citizens in our country.

Today, Congress voted overwhelmingly, 360 to 46, for an amendment. This amendment will allow people from Greece to travel to the United States, whether for business or pleasure, without getting a visa, just as Greece allows Americans to travel to their country without a visa.

I would really like to end with a quote from the great poet, Shelley, and he said, ''We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our art have their roots in Greece.'' Tonight

we celebrate Greek independence and the many contributions of Greece to American culture.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida, (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the cofounder and cochair of the Hellenic Caucus. We appreciate all of the gentleman's hard work on behalf of a better bond of friendship between Greece and the United States.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I thank her for leading this Special Order and for her great work regarding the human rights areas particularly of Greece and Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, I too proudly rise today to lead my colleagues in honoring the valiant Greek freedom fighters who began an arduous struggle to win independence for Greece and its people on this day 177 years ago. So today, we do celebrate Greek Independence Day.

My colleagues may ask themselves, why we are commemorating those who secured independence for Greece, and the answer is really simple. Greek Independence Day, like the 4th of July, reminds us that we have a duty, a moral responsibility, to defend freedom, whatever the cost. Today we pay tribute to all of history's freedom fighters. We honor their triumph and spirit, because they valiantly fought and died for the ideals we and they hold dear.

One American patriarch, President Ronald Reagan, said that freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction. He reminded us that freedom is not ours by inheritance, but must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation.

□ 2200

As we know, freedom is not free. Our freedom has been paid for with hundreds of thousands of lives, with sweat and blood, and with a measurable sacrifice. The freedom we enjoy today is due to the sacrifices made by men and women who were willing to accept the highest and most noble responsibility, that of defending and promoting freedom.

This spirit of freedom began in ancient Greece, but it has manifested itself around the world in different centuries throughout history. History has provided shining examples of heroic fights for freedom. For instance, we saw it in Afghanistan, where its people defied the Soviet Union and refused to be oppressed. Afghanistan, like Greece, was ravaged, its people murdered and its villages destroyed.

Just as the Greek patriarchs fought foreign domination, the Afghan people refused to submit to Soviet aggression. They persevered because they believed that they should determine their own destiny.

Let me emphasize that all civilized nations inherited the principles of freedom and democracy from ancient Greece. The Greeks forged the first society which was governed by these principles.

We also celebrate this day because it marks the symbolic rebirth of democracy. On this day, as we have already said, 177 years ago Greece began to restore its glorious heritage through a desperate and unequal struggle for freedom. On March 25, 1821, the Greek people rose in rebellion, igniting a 7-year struggle for independence from 4300 years of foreign domination by the Ottoman Turks. That historic day led to a widespread revolution that attracted international attention.

In fact, President James Monroe issued a declaration in December, 1822, supporting, as he called it, Greece's noble struggle. It read, in part, and I quote, ''That such a country should have been overwhelmed and so long hidden under a gloomy despotism has been a cause of unceasing and deep regret. A strong hope is entertained that these people will recover their independence and resume their equal station among the nations of the Earth.''

When the Greeks began this glorious revolution after 4 centuries of Turkish oppression, they faced what appeared to be insurmountable odds. It was truly David versus Goliath. The Greek freedom fighters had an unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom, and were prepared to live free or die. Reminiscent of Patrick Henry's famous declaration, ''Give me liberty or give me death,'' the Greeks adopted their own creed, ''Eleftheria I Thanatos,'' liberty or death.

In his book, Freedom and Death, renowned Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis recounted the last battle of his hero, a Captain and Greek patriarch who was surrounded by Turkish forces and contemplated the wisdom or folly of sacrificing himself and his men.

Kazantzakis writes, ''He looked about him at the comrades, down at the Turks far below, up at the uninhabited sky high above. Freedom or death, he muttered, shaking his head fiercely, freedom or death. Oh, poor Cretans. Freedom and death, that's what I should have written on my banner. That is the true banner of every fighter, freedom and death, freedom and death.''

In the ensuing battle moments later a bullet pierced his head and gave him both, freedom and death. Our Greek brothers earned their liberty with blood. As I have recounted many times before, the history of the Greek war for independence is filled with acts of heroism. The fabric of Greek independence is woven from remarkable acts by common people united with a singular purpose to break free from Turkish oppression.

It is a story of the Klephts who descended upon their invaders from the mountain stronghold. It is also the story of the Hydriots, seafarers who broke the Ottoman naval blockade. It is a story about the Philhellenes who took tales of heroic Greek actions to Europe, where they gained international recognition.

The spirit of Greek heroism continues in freedom's defense. The Greek landscape has changed remarkably since I came to Congress. I was elected to this body when tensions from the Cold War had reached epic proportions. We lived in a world that feared, if not expected, nuclear war and its devastating consequences. Eastern Europe remained behind the iron curtain of communism, and its people lived largely at the mercy of leaders in the Kremlin. We lived in a world divided between those who were free to determine their destinies and those who were not.

There is probably no better or perhaps worse symbol of this division than the Berlin Wall. The wall divided Berlin physically, but its meaning divided the world. Through determined American leadership and a strong desire to be free, the winds of freedom blew through Eastern Europe and liberated a continent oppressed by Communist rule.

I know my colleagues shared the pride that I felt watching tiny cracks of freedom grow until the Berlin Wall crumbled under the weight of its oppressive rule. We have witnessed freedom and democracy triumphing over tyranny and oppression time and time again. Yet, in some parts of the world, the struggle for freedom and independence continues today.

Ironically, it is still being challenged in the Mediterranean. Turkey continues, Mr. Speaker, to illegally occupy Cyprus, as it has since its brutal invasion, code named Atilla, in 1974. Since the invasion, 1,614 Greek Cypriots and five Americans have been missing.

As a result of a congressional mandate, our government recently discovered the remains of one of these Americans, a young boy, Andreas Kasapis, who was 17 when the invasion occurred. I am proud to announce that I am an original cosponsor of legislation to address this serious matter.

The bill was introduced by my cochair of the Hellenic Caucus, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN MALONEY), and urges the President to resolve the unacceptable division of Cyprus. This legislation also asks the President to report to Congress on U.S. efforts to promote a solution in Cyprus.

The United States, Mr. Speaker, we know cannot be the world's policeman, but we must use our freedom to help others who share our passion for liberty and peace. Our Nation has always been willing to fight for freedom on behalf of others. As Americans, as defenders of democracy, as righteous human beings, we must not and cannot remain idle while Cyprus remains divided.

Finding a fair resolution for Cyprus will help stabilize a region that is more often marked by conflict than accord. Cyprus has been a strong U.S. ally for many, many years. As partners in the fight for freedom the United States must accept responsibility and meet its obligation to Cyprus. Actions do speak louder than words, and thus far our actions have paled in comparison to our words.

Let me emphasize that this is certainly not a partisan issue. Cyprus has been divided for 24 years, a time that has spanned both Republican and Democratic administrations.

To those who preach freedom but promote inaction, the U.S. did not remain neutral when imperialism shook Europe's foundations during World War I, and the U.S. did not fail to act when the clouds of German and Italian atrocity descended upon Europe and the rest of the globe during World War II. Throughout the history of the United States, we have answered the call of freedom.

We are fortunate to live in the greatest democratic republic in the world. Therefore, as the leaders of the free world, we must foster freedom when it is challenged. In October we were graced by his All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, who is the spiritual leader of 300 million orthodox Christians worldwide, including 5 million Americans.

In his remarks in the Capitol Rotunda, Patriarch Bartholomew eloquently noted that the orthodox church ''may be opposed, but opposes no one; may be persecuted, but does not persecute; is fettered, but chains no one; is deprived of her freedom, but does not trample on the freedom of others.''

I was heartened, Mr. Speaker, when Congress awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to Patriarch Bartholomew in October. He received this honor, the highest that can be bestowed upon an individual by Congress, because of his commitment to promote peace, understanding, and religious tolerance around the world.

The Patriarch spread his message of peace, even though the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul has been repeatedly subjected to terrorist attacks. The latest act of violence came only weeks after the Patriarch delivered his stirring speech to Congress. I have introduced legislation urging the U.S. government to provide protection to the Patriarchate and its personnel.

Again, I would, Mr. Speaker, like to thank my friend, the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), who always joins us in our special orders, for supporting the inclusion of this language in the conference report on the State Department Reauthorization Act. We must continue to take a strong stand in support of religious freedom and human rights worldwide.

Let me close with the words of President John F. Kennedy, who in June, 1963, spoke to the citizens of West Berlin at the Berlin Wall. He correctly pointed out that freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free. He went on to say that all free men were citizens of Berlin.

Mr. Speaker, all free men are Philhellenes. We must end the division of Cyprus and reaffirm our commitment to the Greek patriarchs who led Greece out of the darkness of tyranny and into the light of freedom and democracy. If we are to maintain our freedom, we can neither take it nor its architects for granted.

That is why I stand here with the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), and so many of my other colleagues who have yet to speak, every year to honor those who secured independence for Greece. Again, I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very eloquent remarks and leadership in the Hellenic Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANK PALLONE), who is the chair of the Armenian Caucus, and has been a leader on Greek issues and many other important issues before this Congress.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I would like to begin, as I do every year, by thanking the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for organizing this hour to honor the anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

My colleagues, my two colleagues, are both tireless champions of Greek-American relations, and I thank them both for their leadership of the congressional Hellenic Caucus, and their tireless efforts to strengthen the ties between our two countries.

Today, March 25, it has been noted, Greece celebrates its 177th year of independence. And despite the late hour, many of us are pleased to be able to take this time to praise a society that represents, in a historical sense, the origins of what we call Western culture, and in a contemporary sense, one of the staunchest defenders of Western society and values.

There are many of us in the Congress on both sides of the aisle who are staunchly committed to preserving and strengthening the ties between the Greek and the American people. I would say that Americans and Greeks are growing even closer, bound by ties of strategic and military alliance, common values of democracy, individual freedom and human rights, and close personal friendships.

In the early 20th century, Mr. Speaker, Greece stood by the United States in World War I. When Hitler's war machine decimated Europe in the middle of this century, Greece again stood on the same side as the United States; I might add, at great cost to the Greek people and the Greek Nation.

History has shown that the historic battle of Crete, in which the indomitable spirit of the Greek people forced Hitler to delay his planned invasion of Russia, was one of the most important battles of the Second World War.

Last October I joined my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS), who is here tonight, in paying tribute to ''Ohi'' Day, commemorating that day in 1940 when Greek Prime Minister Metakis refused Mussolini's ultimatum to surrender with an eloquent one-word answer, ''Ohi'', Greek for no.

World War II's aftermath left Europe mired in the Cold War, and Greece, then a NATO ally, and a NATO ally to this day, once again answered the call. Greece showed its national valor and sense of historic mission, joining forces with the United States in preserving and protecting the freedoms enjoyed today by an unprecedented number of the world's people. The qualities exhibited by the Nation of Greece, Mr. Speaker, are a reflection of the strong character and values of its individual citizens.

The United States has been greatly enriched as many sons and daughters of Greece made a new life here in America. The timeless values of Greek culture have endured for centuries, indeed, for millenia. But I regret to say, Mr. Speaker, that to this day the Greek people must battle against oppression.

My two colleagues have already mentioned that for almost 24 years now, Greece has stood firm in its determination to bring freedom and independence to the illegally occupied Nation of Cyprus. Like their forefathers, who were under control of a hostile foreign power for four centuries, the Cypriot people hold fast in defiance of their Turkish aggressors with every confidence that they will again be a sovereign nation. Negotiations aimed at achieving settlement to the Cyprus issue are an important priority for American foreign policy.

I just want to say that I am proud to be an original cosponsor of legislation that was introduced today by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and also the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that asserts our strong support for a peaceful solution in Cyprus. We have to keep up this effort, as these two leaders in Congress have done, in making it clear that we want an independent and sovereign Cyprus that is united and that is free of Turkish military rule.

The reelection of President Clerides and the bid of Cyprus to join the European Union also offer an historic opportunity for peace on the island. I would point out to Turkey that a positive contribution by that country to both the peace process and the European Union accession by Cyprus could be a start in helping Turkey undo some of the damage they have caused with their intransigent and aggressive policies.

We also have to continue to work with Greek leaders and the United Nations to secure protection for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and orthodox Christians residing in Turkey. As the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) mentioned, last year we were shocked by the terrorist attack on the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul. Many of us in this Congress called on our administration to issue a strong response to this tragic, senseless act.

Many of us have also staunchly opposed the transfer of U.S. military hardware to Turkey.

□ 2215

As the cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Armenia Issues, and I know the gentlewoman from New York mentioned that before and I appreciate it, and also as a member of the Hellenic Caucus, I have consistently fought to change U.S. policy with regard to Turkey. I have sought to block the Turkish Government's efforts to pay big money for Turkish studies chairs at prestigious American universities as an instrument of spreading Turkish propaganda.

The gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) has joined me in many occasions here on the floor, trying to prevent the Turkish Government and the acceptance of money by various American universities from the Turkish Government through these various Turkish studies programs or Turkish chairs that come with strings attached, that basically allow them to spread Turkish propaganda and not tell the truth about the history of Turkey or the history of Armenia or the history of Greece. Turkish leaders must understand that they will not continue to benefit from U.S. economic subsidies if they continue to flout the very values that America, Greece, and other freedom-loving nations of this world stand for.

In closing, I just want to congratulate the Greek people for 177 years of independence and thank them for their contributions to American life.

And I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for organizing this tonight. All of us are going to continue with our efforts to not only continue to bring up Greek Independence Day, but fight for Cyprus and fight for the other values that Greece and the Greek people hold dear.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his statement.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KLINK). He is a leader in the Hellenic Caucus. He is one of the reasons that we were successful on the floor today in achieving the visa waiver. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KLINK).

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) for her leadership, and also thank my dear friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), for his leadership in the Hellenic Caucus. We have risen on the floor together so many times on issues that were of importance to Hellenes and philhellenes. We have met together with very important dignitaries who have arrived, from the patriarchy to the leaders in the Greek Government. Many of us have traveled together to Greece.

Mr. Speaker, I want recall, and I have shared with my dear friend, the gentlewoman from New York, stories of a trip that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and I took last August. She has been such a great leader on these issues that many people in the Greek-American community often refer to her as Bouboulina, who is, of course, the lady who risked her life, her fortune, and everything else in building a fleet of ships to fight for the independence of Greece. The gentleman from Florida and I had the wonderful opportunity last year to travel to the home of Bouboulina, and we wish that our friend, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), had been with us because I tell her that she was in our minds and our hearts the whole time we were there.

We appreciate the fact that people because, we have a reason for the feelings that we have, and that is the fact that I am of Greek parentage, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS) as well, but our friends and colleagues who take on this issue, because this is in their heart and their mind, and we appreciate what they have done.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement and all of his hard work and leadership.

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlelady would yield, I thank her very much. Every family who has come from Greece has stories. If we look at the ceremonial uniforms of the Greek soldiers, they have the pleated kilts; and these tall, strong-looking Greek soldiers, and there are 376 pleats in their kilt, one for each year that the Greek nation was held in domination by the Ottoman Empire.

My own family, and I did not have the opportunity to meet the Greek half of my family, it is a long story which I will not go into here. But I did not have the opportunity to meet the Greek half of my family, because of estrangement and divorce, until I was almost 40 years old. I had the opportunity to go to Kalimnos, which is an island off the coast of Turkey where my family came from, as well as the family of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), my dear friend. In fact, we found here we are a Republican from Florida and a Democrat from Pennsylvania, and our families lived on the same tiny island off the coast of Turkey. In fact, we were neighbors, when we got to talking about where we come from, and here we are neighbors on issues in Congress.

They told us about what had happened to the family during almost 400 years of what was practically servitude and enslavement by the Ottoman Empire and by the Ottoman Turks. In fact, the family name at that point had been Papaelias, which meant there was a priest back in the family heritage whose name was Elias. During the time they were under domination by the Turks, the name became Giavasis, which came from the word ''giavasis,'' which is a Turkish word for ''slowly,'' and the reason was simply that they had gone into a 400-year work slowdown.

My family were architects and builders, and so during the virtual servitude to the Turks, 400 years of it, they used to build and to draw designs of buildings. They went into this work slowdown, and so the Turks said ''giavas,'' or ''slowly,'' and the family name eventually became Giavasis for the fact that they had this slowdown that lasted generation after generation after generation.

Every family has stories, some of them very tragic, of what happened to their ancestors during this almost enslavement and involuntary servitude under the Ottoman Turks.

It is ironic that the birthplace of democracy was subjected for so many centuries to a form of domination as the Greeks lived under the Turkish domination for 376 years, political oppression, no kind of freedom. But in 1821, Greece began a very successful fight for independence and today, 177 years later, we celebrate the fact of Greek independence.

Mr. Speaker, I would say there are truly many words in the statement of the gentleman from Florida that freedom fighters all over the world, of whatever nation or whatever race, share together that vision of freedom.

Greece is the home of democracy. Democracy will, I think, for all time, be the greatest gift of the nation of Greece to the rest of the world. The ancient Greeks passed down to us a government that places authority directly in the hands of all the people. How wonderful that we have the opportunity here to stand in the people's House and to talk and to share the heritage of what at that time was a very revolutionary idea that not kings, not emperors, not some quasi-God, should be the dictator of what would happen in men's lives, but that the men and women themselves would be able to make those decisions themselves.

Our founders chose to adopt a Democratic system, just as the Greek Constitution enshrines democracy as the governing rule of the Hellenic Republic. I had an opportunity on a previous trip to Greece to go to the island of Khios that lost much of its population back in 1974 after the Turks invaded the island of Cyprus.

When we start to learn about the struggle that took place over that 400 years of Turkish rule, we find that people like Thomas Jefferson had a constant correspondence with the Greeks to encourage them to fight for themselves and to once again become a nation of democracy. If we go back to the roots of our tree of democracy, we find that our Founding Fathers and the people who eventually got to the point where they were able to lead a successful Greek revolution, share their ideals and corresponded and had a dream that people themselves throughout this

world would be the ones to govern, people themselves would make the decisions.

Americans and Greeks fought together for the principles of democracy during World War II. We stuck together during the Cold War. And today we celebrate Greek independence.

We also have to take time to remember those who still endure oppression anywhere in the world, those who are denied freedom. Democracy does come with responsibilities to always seek peace, but to fight for freedom and to fight for human rights when we must fight, and to continue to build upon a strong democratic foundation.

Again, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), my friend, mentioned, and I am not going to go too far into detail because I know some other friends are waiting to talk, we have to go back, ''Ich bin ein Berliner.'' We were all Berliners because people were behind that wall when President Kennedy said, Mr. Kruschev, take down that wall. Today the divided city is Nicosia in Cyprus.

Since 1974, that city has been divided; 1,609 Greek Cypriots and American citizens remain missing. And it was only March 5, after nearly 24 long years, that the family of Andrew Kasapis of Detroit finally found the remains of that 17-year-old American citizen who was ripped from the hands of his family, ripped away with his passport still on him, and was murdered.

They found his bones scattered in what was no more than a field. And although it took this Congress to take action and it cost millions of dollars to do the most modern DNA screening to determine that that was the remains of this young 17-year-old American citizen, we still do not know where are the over 1,600 other bodies. When will those families seek the peace of at least knowing what happened to their relatives?

On this island nation of Cyprus, the Turks must again allow freedom to move forward, must allow Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to live together, to have free elections, to live together as neighbors; allow the Greek Cypriots, who were taken from 30 percent of that island where the green line cuts across, to go back into their homes, to go back into their churches of worship which have now become stables, barns, brothels, bars. Imagine such degradation to have one's church turned into a brothel or bar or barn.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to add to some of the gentleman's comments. Today the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and I had a meeting with the Hellenic Caucus and Mr. Miller, the special assistant to Richard Holbrooke, the special envoy who has been supported by President Clinton to support peace efforts in Cyprus, he gave a detailed report which the gentleman from Pennsylvania has brought part of it to the floor today. He also mentioned that they have not received information on the other four missing Americans, but they are working on the report, and he hopes to be able to bring it back to Congress and report to all of us exactly what happened.

I just want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for helping pass this resolution that led to this report that has brought some conclusion for the Kasapis family, but not for all the other families.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my colleague.

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for those comments. One family out of 1,619 families has answers. They are not pleasant answers to think that your 17-year-old son, who would now be 41 years old, died in this field, his bones scattered. Only through plowing and digging have these bones been recovered, and not in a grave.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of peace is that? At least they have the knowledge of knowing that he is not languishing in a prison or in slavery, but in fact probably suffered a horrendous death. That is little peace, but at least we know what has happened.

The division of Cyprus has been a problem for the international community since Turkey's invasion of the island in 1974. Its subsequent illegal military occupation of the northern 37 percent of the country has stopped any kind of growth. Cyprus could become a flashpoint for regional conflict because of Turkey's opposition to European membership for Cyprus into the European Union.

Cyprus should be allowed to thrive. Last fall, H. Con. Res. 81 passed the House of Representatives unanimously, calling for a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problems. The President of Cyprus was recently reelected to a second 5-year term, and Cyprus is about to begin negotiations with the European Union.

Mr. Speaker, we want peace. We would like to see Turkey admitted to the European Union. And Greece would like to see that. The gentleman from Florida and I spoke to the leaders of Greece. They would like to see Turkey admitted to the European Union. But to do that, Turkey must obey the U.N. resolutions, they must become a member of the family of nations, which they have ceased to do.

We do not look forward to having votes where we spank Turkey. We want them to do the right thing and they have not done that.

□ 2230

And they have not done that. So I thank my friends for their leadership. I will yield back my time because I have some other friends who are waiting here to speak.

But we could take hour upon hour. These are things that are near and dear to our heart. And the leadership that the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the friendship that you have given us and the leadership in taking us to Cyprus, to Greece, has given us a tremendous education not only of the current situation but of the history of mankind and the need for conscientious, freedom-loving people to stand up for other people who are oppressed whenever they can.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his really moving statement tonight.

I now yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS), newly elected to the 105th Congress, but already a leader here on Hellenic issues and many other issues of concern for New Jersey and our country. I thank him for participating.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. And I want to thank her and our colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), for their work on behalf of all of us who are interested in the Hellenic issues.

As cochairs of the Hellenic Caucus, they both have been active in informing this Congress about issues of importance to the millions of Americans of Greek descent. Today's successful vote on visa waiver extension is an important example of why the Hellenic Caucus' role is important in this Congress, and I thank both my colleagues for their leadership.

One hundred seventy-seven years ago, the Greek people declared their independence from foreign oppression by the Ottoman Empire. After inspiring America with the democratic ideals of ancient Greece, Greece was, in turn, inspired by the American Declaration in 1776. The idea for democratic independence was the first of a long-standing tradition for these two allies to share great ideas and common values.

The events of March 25, 1821, are critically important to the modern world. By throwing off the yoke of more than 400 years of Ottoman Turk domination, Greece retained its sovereignty, it marked the return to democratic values and civil society in southeastern Europe. It also sowed the seeds for a long-lasting and mutual relationship between Greece and the United States.

Greece has been one of four allies to fight with the United States in every conflict in this century. This has happened because both countries recognize the importance of democracy and that it is better to fight for it than to roll over and suffer under tyranny. As such, I am glad to celebrate this happy occasion with my colleagues on the floor of this House, the embodiment of democracy for many as created by ancient Greece.

Here on this floor, I am a Greek American sent here by citizens in central New Jersey to carry on the right to advocate on their behalf, knowing full well that democracy was created by Greeks and places the ultimate power to govern not in me, not in us in this Chamber, but in the people we represent. What an awesome idea. This

country is eternally grateful for their foresight in ancient times and for their fortitude to break free from the Ottoman oppression and restate their unwavering commitment to democratic ideals.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is fully appropriate that we take pride in celebrating this day and acknowledge the debts we owe to Greek ideals.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement.

The gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is a member of the very important Committee on International Relations. He has worked hard not only on the Hellenic Caucus but on many, many important issues before this Congress.

I now yield to my colleague from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York for yielding, and I thank both her and her co-chair of the Hellenic Caucus for not only convening this hour to commemorate Greek independence, but for inviting me to be part of this effort.

One hundred seventy-seven years ago today, on March 25, 1821, the Greek people declared their independence and began a ten-year effort to throw off the yoke of Ottoman oppression. Greek patriot Regas Fereos issued a rallying cry in that struggle, ''Better an hour of freedom than 440 years of imprisonment and enslavement.''

Today, 177 years later, we in this House, just a few hours ago, I think found an interesting way to commemorate Greek independence by allowing citizens of Greece to independently visit the United States as tourists, free and liberated from paperwork, just as we have allowed tourists from other parts of Europe and the European Community to visit the United States without undue restriction.

Greek freedom fighters looked to the American Revolution and to American democracy 177 years ago today, just as the American revolutionaries looked to ancient Greece and its tradition of democracy. After a 10-year struggle, the Greek people won their independence and reestablished democracy. Greece and America are bound not only by a common dedication to democracy, but also because Greek philosophy and Greek culture are so much the foundation of the society in which we live, the society which has gradually established many of the cultural norms, many of the philosophic underpinnings for an emerging world culture.

Since its liberation, Greece has stood by America, and America should stand by Greece. Greece is one of three nations in the world outside the British Empire that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict of this century. As has been pointed out by earlier speakers, one out of every nine Greeks lost their life fighting the Nazis in World War II. Just as Greece joined the United States in that effort, immediately after that war the Marshall Plan was critical to reviving Greek society and the Greek economy.

Today, Greece remains a staunch NATO ally and it deserves America's support. In the past year, Greece held the historic Inter-Balkan Conference in Crete and has worked to promote regional stability in the Balkan Peninsula, an area that has been contentious throughout this century and an area that Americans are coming to know better today. As we focus on Kosovo, as we focus on Bosnia, we should recognize Greek efforts to bring peace and stability to that troubled region.

As the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) pointed out, I serve on the Committee on International Relations, and in that capacity, had the opportunity, along with her and many other Philhellenes to meet with the Greek foreign minister just yesterday. And we had an opportunity to praise Greece for not only its constructive role in the Balkans, but also because it is Greece, and the supporters of Greece here in the United States who have urged upon the United States a very interesting approach to foreign aid.

Greece and the supporters of Greece here in the United States have urged that zero be appropriated in military aid to Greece and commensurately zero be appropriated in aid to Turkey. And given the fact that we must diminish the amount that is spent, especially by military forces in that troubled region of the world, this is a very constructive position, a position reflected in President Clinton's most recent budget.

I should point out that, quite wisely, President Clinton's budget does provide continuing aid to Cyprus, a society that continues to suffer from division as a result of the occupation of Turkish forces. Not only is the zero decision one that is included in the President's budget, it is also helpful to the United States as we continue to face budgetary pressures.

There are several outstanding problems that continue to be the focus of those of us who work with the Hellenic Caucus, and I am happy to have been a member of that caucus from my first day in the United States Congress. One of those outstanding problems is that of the Aegean. The Greek-Turkish dialogue should go forward. But many of us have urged that before it goes forward, the Turkish Government, must indicate its respect for international law in the Aegean, and that Turkish overflights of Greek and Cypriot airspace and other acts of aggression, should cease. The Turkish Government should agree to be bound by international law on all issues involving the Aegean and should cease its acts of aggression.

I have joined, most of the leaders of the Hellenic Caucus as a cosponsor of the Peace in Cyprus Resolution last year, and a resolution introduced today reaffirming our commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Cyprus problem with the withdrawal of all Turkish troops from that troubled island. I take special interest in seeing the peace talks move forward now that the Cypriot elections are over and President Clerides has been reelected.

U.S. Presidential envoy Richard Holbrook should move forward toward peace, toward a withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island. Regrettably, there has not been much progress to date. We mentioned earlier in this hour the fact that four Americans are still missing. The remains of one American, Andrew Kasapis, have been returned. But certainly, as important as it is to his family for those remains to have been discovered and returned, we need to see much more progress toward peace and unity in Cyprus.

This is an historic movement for Cyprus, as the European Union accession talks are scheduled to begin next week. The European Union's decision to invite Cyprus to join ranks will benefit a reunified Cyprus and should be an impetus towards peace.

Unfortunately, the Turkish Government seems to wants to hold Cyprus hostage for its own membership in the European Union. If Turkey wishes to join the European Union, Turkey should seek to meet the standards of that union on its own rather than holding Cyprus hostage.

Finally, Turkey must accord protection to the Ecumenical Patriarch, should allow the reopening of the School of Theology, which was closed in 1971, and allow the work of the Patriarch to continue in safety and protection. I also want to call upon my colleagues to join with me and the others in the Hellenic Caucus in cosponsoring House Resolution 148 commemorating the 75th anniversary of the destruction of Smyrna, as it is time for Turkey to come to grips with its past.

Unfortunately, the Turkish Government has decided to embark on a program of denial, of denying the massacres at Smyrna, at denying the genocide of the Armenian people. And this has taken the form of seeking to plant academics in the United States.

I am a proud graduate of UCLA. I was there when we won the NCAA championship after championship. And I was proud of my alma mater then. But as proud as I was when Bill Walton was sinking jump shots, I was even prouder when earlier this year UCLA turned down a gift of over a million dollars from the Turkish Government because that gift came with strings attached which would have curtailed academic freedom and would have given the Turkish Government control over how the occupant of that chair pursued scholarship and teaching in the area of Ottoman and Turkish history. Academic freedom is not for sale at UCLA.

□ 2245

Now the Turkish government has turned its attention to the north, to the University of California at Berkeley. I hope that our cousins in northern

California will reject all strings and will insist that the occupant of any academic chair be free to pursue academic inquiry wherever it leads. What greater tribute to American universities, what greater tribute to the philosophy of free thinking that we have inherited from the ancient Greeks. As I mentioned, ancient Greece inspires us all. Its philosophy and culture underpin American philosophy and culture, and its greatest gift, as was remarked before, is that of democracy. We owe a lot to the ancient Greeks and we owe a lot to the modern Greeks. They stood with us and we stood with them in World War II and the Cold War. In just a few years, we will have a chance to celebrate the Olympics in the year 2004 as it returns to Greece, its ancient home, and also the place where the modern Olympics were reborn. We have a lot to thank the ancient Greeks for; a lot to thank modern Greeks for. I think the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) said it just perfectly when he said all free men are Philhellenes.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the occasion of Greek Independence Day is an opportunity to thank the Greek people for their long tradition of friendship and partnership with the United States, and to reflect on the great values that Greeks and Americans have shared throughout the centuries.

Greek-Americans have helped build the United States and have contributed immeasurably to the nation's cultural and intellectual enrichment. Devoted to education and advancement, Greek-American families have produced great leaders such as Massachusetts' Michael Dukakis and Paul Tsongas. I am currently helping to set up a foundation in the name of Senator Tsongas. The foundation is designed to foster scientific achievement and innovation and honor his life and service.

The United States and Greece are the two cornerstones of democratic tradition in the world, whose shared history is a proud tradition of cooperation. Our experiences have intertwined at some of the most precarious junctures of history. Over 600,000 Greeks died fighting on the side of the Allies in the Second World War. During the Cold War, the friendship between the United States and Greece helped stall the spread of communism, and maintained the freedom and security of the Mediterranean.

Today, the U.S.-Greek relationship is more important than ever. The occasion of Greek Independence Day gives us a chance to reaffirm our commitment to helping Greece with the challenges it faces today. The United States must strengthen its cooperative relationship with Greece to secure our many mutual interests. And Congress must ensure that the United States remains engaged in the region in order that we may secure those interests.

Greece and the U.S. can merge their talents to prevent ethnic conflict from spreading throughout the Balkans and to help the region to develop economically.

In Cyprus, the United States has a duty to lead the charge for a lasting, peaceful solution. Congress must continue to support the Administration's diplomatic efforts for the island. We must insist on demilitarization of the island and demand Turkey's full compliance with international law and the United Nations resolutions on Cyprus which call for its withdrawal. We have still not answered lingering questions about the Greek-Cypriots who disappeared at the hands of Turkish soldiers. The victims and their families deserve answers.

But the peace talks will not work if the arms race continues. We must have a demilitarization process in action alongside the peace talks. How can we talk peace when both sides are stockpiling sophisticated weaponry on both sides of the green line? What kind of negotiations can you have if both sides are looking down the barrel of a gun?

We can honor those who perished and those who have lost loved ones in Cyprus if we work to help today's Cypriots realize their dreams of a free, unified Cyprus. In doing so, we may be able to secure a lasting peace and economic security for a people who are so richly deserving of it.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, let us use the occasion of Greek Independence Day to thank our Greek friends, to salute Greek-Americans, and to reaffirm our commitment to working with Greece to solve the challenges that will face us all in the future.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to offer congratulations to the people of Greece who today are celebrating their 177th year of independence from the Ottoman Empire. Their story is one that closely mirrors that of our own country and is deeply engrossed in the very principles that our nation was founded. Like our forefathers, the people of Greece arduously fought against oppression to win their independence and their right to self-determination. We share a common appetite for the individual freedoms that characterize our democracies and common disdain for those who threaten that liberty.

In fact, the society we live in today—a democracy where freedoms and liberties are paramount—was crafted, in theory, by the great thinkers and politicians of ancient Greece. Our Founding Fathers relied heavily on the political and philosophical experiences of the ancient Greeks as they themselves toiled with the blueprints of this great nation.

We can easily equate the observance of the Greek Independence Day with the celebration of our own independence on the Fourth of July. Both represent opportunities to trumpet the successes of democracy, revel in our freedoms and pay our respects to those who have come before us and perished to protect our liberties.

Mr. Speaker, Greece remains one of the United States' closest allies. It is interesting to note that they are one of only three nations, outside the British Empire, which has fought alongside American soldiers in every war this century. Their loyalty is commendable and deserves our continued reciprocity.

As I stand in the chamber of this great legislative body, surrounded by renderings of several of the most notable Greek philosophers, I am compelled to recognize the legacy left behind by the original pioneers of democracy. I thank the people of Greece for their continued goodwill and offer them my sincere best wishes as they celebrate their lasting independence.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today to recognize the 177th anniversary of Greek Independence Day. As the U.S. Representative of a region with over 5,000 people of Greek descent, I know that this important event will be joyously celebrated throughout Northwest Indiana.

I would like to honor not only this important day in Greek history, but the strong and unique relationship that exists today between the United States and Greece. The development of modern democracy has its roots in ancient Athens. The writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and others were the first to espouse the basic tenets of a government of the people and by the people. While these ideals were not always followed in ancient Greece, these writings provided a roadmap for later governments in their attempts to establish democracy in their countries.

The Founding Fathers of the United States were particularly influenced by the writings of the ancient Greeks on democracy. A careful reading of The Federalist Papers reveals the significant part the early Greeks played in the formation of our government. Thomas Jefferson called upon his studies of the Greek tradition of democracy when he drafted the Declaration of Independence, espousing the ideals of a government representative of and accountable to the people. Decades later, these ideas were a catalyst in the Greek uprising and successful independence movement against the Ottoman Empire—the event we celebrate today.

On March 25, 1821, the Archbishop of Patros blessed Greek flag at the Aghia Laura monastery, marking the proclamation of Greek independence. It took eleven years for the Greeks to finally defeat the Ottomans and gain their true independence. After this long struggle against an oppressive regime, Greece returned to the democratic ideals that its ancestors had developed centuries before.

Today, this country's relationship with Greece is as strong as ever. Greece has been our ardent supporter in every major international conflict of this century, and they play an important role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. Greece is also a key participant in the United Nations peacekeeping force in Bosnia, providing troops and supplies. In turn, the United States has worked to attain a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Cyprus, the island nation that was brutally invaded by Turkey in 1974.

Mr. Speaker, I would thank our colleagues, Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mrs. MALONEY, for organizing this Special Order, and I join all of our House colleagues in recognizing Greek Independence Day. I salute the spirit of democracy and family that distinguish the Greek people, as well as their courage in breaking the bonds of oppression 177 years ago. I look forward to many more years of cooperation and friendship between our two nations.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Greek Independence Day.

For the Greek-Americans I represent, and indeed for all Greek-Americans, this day represents the determination of the Greek people to live free. Under Ottoman rule for four centuries, the Greek people proudly secured their independence in 1829. From that moment forward, America's warm relationship with Greece and the Greek people has grown, bringing our two nations closer together in enduring ways.

Today, Greece is a moderm nation and a global force in an ever demanding world marketplace. As Greece moves closer to adopting

the single European currency, the fact of her economic strength becomes ever clearer. All Greek-Americans are rightly proud of Greece's vigorous and growing economy. Their homeland's unique ability to preserve its remarkable history while moving proudly into the twenty-first century is a tribute to the Greek people.

On this day, as we celebrate and recognize Greek Independence Day, I would also like to highlight the fact that Greece will play host to the 2004 Olypmic Games. The historic importance of the Olympic Games returning to their roots in Athens is a story of rediscovery and restoration. I understand that the Greek Cabinet is already planning for a ''Cultural Olympiad'' which will be organized in connection with the 2004 Olympics. All efforts in support of the Olympic Games in Athens, efforts that I know the Greek-American community will be backing, should be supported by this Congress.

To conclude, let me add my name to my many colleagues who today are saluting Greek Independence Day. By remembering this memomentous occasion, this Congress serves to memoralize the sacrifice of a generation of Greeks who gave their last measure so that independence and freedom could be secured for the Greek people. It is a just cause the Greek people fought for in 1829 and one that we honor here today.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise on the floor of this chamber of American democracy in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

All the world looks to Greece as the fountain and inspiration for every modern-day democracy, including our own.

it is a tragedy of history that the people who created democratic rule were subject to harsh subjugation and robbed of independence for so many centuries.

For 400 years—from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 until the Greek people once again declared their independence in 1821—Greece remained under the Ottoman Empire. During this time, Greeks were deprived of all civil rights. Schools and churches were closed down. Greek Christian and Jewish boys were kidnaped and raised as Moslems to serve the Ottoman Sultan.

In 1823, a famous U.S. Representative from Massachusetts, Daniel Webster, described this period of Greek history in this way: ''This [Greek] people, a people of intelligence, ingenuity, refinement, spirit, and enterprise, have been for centuries under the atrocious unparalleled Tartarian barbarism ever oppressed the human race.''

So today, in reality, marks the 177th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire.

But Greece also lost its freedom during World War II to Nazi Occupation and afterwards briefly to communist rule. In 1948, it once again regained its independence and for the past 50 years, the people of Greece have controlled their own destiny.

It's for these reasons that we gather here today to honor the strength, courage and vision of the Greek people.

I am also here to honor the contributions made by Greek-Americans in my own district in Central Massachusetts. Since the turn of the century, over 5,000 Greek men, women and children have made Worcester, Massachusetts their home, contributing significantly to all aspects of civic life.

The Cathedral of St. Spyridon in Worcester reminds us of this vibrant Greek-American community. In Worcester, this important day is celebrated by teaching children to recite poetry and songs commemorating their past and their heritage. Discussion groups are held to honor the memory and history of the heroic deeds and patriotism of the Greek and Greek-American men and women who fought and died for the freedom I and my constituents enjoy today.

Similar celebrations are held throughout my district—in Fall River and Dartmouth, in Attleboro and Seekonk.

No one standing on the floor of the U.S. House of Representative can fail to honor the contributions of Greece to American democracy, freedom, literature and philosophy. Throughout this Capitol and this city, everywhere you might look, you will see homage to Greek ideas and ideals. They are engraved on our buildings, enshrined in our laws, and they surely influenced the minds and hearts of the men and women who founded this nation.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS]—a fine example of the contribution Greek heritage continues to make to American democracy—and to the gentlelady from New York [Mrs. CAROLYN MALONEY] for organizing this special order on this historic occasion.

I would like to remind them that, if Massachusetts would have had its way, we might have had two Greek-Americans as President of the United States. And so I thank them for their leadership of the Hellenic Caucus and for all their fine efforts to educate and involve other Members on the issues challenging Greek and U.S. policy today.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues to again recognize Greek Independence Day. This is a day to honor the sacrifices made by the Greek people over hundreds of years in their struggle against the oppressive rule of the Ottoman Empire.

This day also reminds us that Greece and the United States share much in common, including the 1.1 million American citizens who are of Greek descent. I am pleased to join New Jersey's Greek-American citizens in their celebration. Many of my constituents in southern New Jersey bear a proud ancestry to Greece. Their culture, food, and heritage add to the diversity and richness of our district.

In fact, many artistic and intellectual traditions have been handed down to the people of the United States of America by the people of Greece. Our nation is richer for these traditions, and we remain grateful to Greece.

The ties that bind America to Greece are not only historical, but also modern. Americans have fought side by side with Greeks in two World Wars as well as in the Persian Gulf War. Today, Greece is our invaluable ally in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I call upon President Clinton and the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, to make Greece—and the protection of Greeks in Cyprus and Turkey—a primary focus of U.S. foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would ask all Members of the House to join with me in honoring the historical ties between the United States and Greece and in continuing to foster the close relationship between our two countries that has proven so successful.

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, today thousands of Greeks and Greek Americans will celebrate the 177th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that resulted in the liberation of the Greek people from nearly 400 years of domination under the Ottoman Empire.

Approximately 2000 years ago the democratic principles of equality, freedom and self rule were espoused by such great thinkers as Aristotle, Plato and Polybius. Tragically, under the Ottoman Empire those principles were repressed and for hundreds of years Greeks were deprived of their civil rights. Fortunately, the foundations of democracy formed in Athens resurfaced and inspired the Greeks to stage a revolution in 1821 and break their ties of oppression.

These democratic principles of freedom, equality, and self rule inspired our founding fathers and were heavily relied upon as they drafted the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

Greece has been a strong ally of the United States. Every time the United States entered into international conflict this century, the people of Greece have shown their support by allying themselves with us. For that, I thank the citizens and soldiers of Greece.

I look forward to continued good relations with Greece and its citizens and working with them to preserve and expand democracy throughout the world. Again, I congratulate Greece on 177 years of independence.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the Greek community in celebrating the 177th anniversary of Greek independence. I also want to thank my colleagues Mr. BILIRAKIS and Ms. MALONEY for organizing this event.

On March 25, 1821, the Archbishop of Patras blessed the Greek flag at the Aghia Lavra Monastery near Kalavrita, marking the beginning of the Greek war of independence in which nearly 400 years of Ottoman rule were turned aside.

Ancient Greece was the birthplace of democratic values. It brought forth the notion that the ultimate power to govern belongs in the hands of the people. It inspired a system of checks and balances to ensure that one branch of government does not dominate any other branch.

These ideals inspired our Founding Fathers as they wrote the Constitution. In the words of Thomas Jefferson: ''to the ancient Greeks . . . we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves out of Gothic darkness.''

Today, the United States is enriched not only by Greek principles but also by its sons and daughters. Greek-Americans have made major contributions to American society, including our arts, sports, medicine, religion, and politics.

My home State of Michigan has been enhanced by the Greek community. In Macomb and St. Claire Counties, we are served by St. John's Greek Orthodox Church and Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. These institutions provide a multitude of community services and add to the rich diversity of the area.

Mr. Speaker, I join the people of Greece and those of Greek ancestry around the world celebrating Greek Independence Day.

I salute all of them for the tremendous contributions to freedom and human dignity which they have made.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Greek Independence Day, a national day of celebration of Greek democracy.

This day marks the beginning of the revolution which freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire. The Greeks were finally liberated after year of oppressive treatment and civil rights violations. Their communities were slowly deteriorating schools and churches were being closed down, and Christian and Jewish boys were kidnapped and raised as Moslems to serve the Sultan.

I spent eight magnificent days last August in Greece and Cyprus. There is no better way to learn about the troubles of Cyprus and the splendors of Greece than to speak directly with the people who live there.

I enjoyed my visit to Athens very much, and learned a great deal about the history of Greece. Greece is one of only three nations in the world allied with the United States in every major international conflict this century. During the early 1900's one in every four Greek males between the ages of 15 and 45 immigrated to the United States. Through their extraordinary compatibility with the people of America, Greek-Americans have made tremendous contributions to the United States.

The American Revolution became one of the ideals of the Greeks as they fought for their independence in the 1820's Greek intellectuals translated the American Declaration of Independence and drew from it in drafting their declaration of freedom.

In 1953, after Greece's post-World War II struggle against the Communist rebels, President Dwight D. Eisenhower appropriately said. ''. . . Greece asked a favor except the opportunity to stand for those rights which it believed, and it gave to the world an example of battle, a battle that thrilled the hearts of all free men and free women everywhere.''

Mr. Speaker, as a supporter of issues of concern to the Greek-American community, I am proud to recognize this population and their day of pride and freedom. Greek civilization touches our lives as Americans, and enhances the culture and traditions of this great Nation.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased once again to recognize and celebrate Greek Independence Day, commemorating the successful struggle of the Greek people for national sovereignty. Since that time, Greece and the United States have enjoyed a close relationship, characterized by a shared commitment to democracy, peace, and respect for human rights. The ancient Greek civilization was the birthplace of democracy and we as a nation are proud to carry on the principles which were first created there.

We are especially proud to have had Greece as our ally during this last century's upheavals. Greece has been our ally in every major international conflict during this time, and has always acquitted itself with bravery and honor. In particular we recognize the valiant resistance to Axis occupation as commemorated by ''OXI'' day and the refusal of the Greeks to cooperate with or accede to the Holocaust. We also celebrate the heroism and determination shown by Greek soldiers in the crucial Battle of Crete, a turning point in the struggle for democracy and against fascism and oppression.

The many Greek-Americans who have participated in the economic, cultural, and political life of America are testimony to the special relationship between our two peoples. The celebrations for Greek Independence Day which occur both in Greece and all across America demonstrate the spirit of civic pride and participation which have enriched both of our cultures.

I am glad to have this opportunity to once again celebrate Greek culture and toast the Greek people. I had the opportunity late last year to demonstrate my commitment to preserving the territorial integrity of Greece by cosponsoring a resolution expressing our recognition of Greece's claim to the Imia islands. I will continue to support our Greek allies in the future and express my best wishes to all those who are now celebrating the 177th Greek Independence Day.

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to mark the 177th anniversary of Greek independence, when Greece set themselves free from the jaws of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. I thank my colleagues, Congressman BILIRAKIS and Congresswoman MALONEY, for their steadfast leadership on Greek issues and for organizing this Special Order to recognize this historic event.

As the shining star of modern civilization, Greece has made a tremendous contribution throughout its history to not only Western Europe and the United States, but also the world. As the birthplace of democracy, Greece was the role model for the foundation of the democratic government and freedom the United States has enjoyed for over two hundred years. With their vast interest in expanding their own knowledge, the Greeks have also increased cultural awareness throughout the world. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe perhaps said it best, ''Of all peoples, the Greeks have dreamt the dream of life best.''

Since Greece achieved independence, their relationship with the United States has only grown stronger. In the beginning, Greece fashioned guaranteed freedom for the people after our Declaration of Independence. During World War II, more than 600,000 Greek soldiers died fighting against the Axis powers, illustrating Greece's commitment to the United States and freedom loving people everywhere. Although their struggle continued after World War II with their fight against Communist rebels, Greece was still able to stabilize the future and strength of their country.

Today, the relationship between the United States and Greece continues to prosper. The recent visit of Foreign Minister Theodore Pangalos to the United States illustrates the lasting harmony our two governments have on a number of issues affecting both our nations.

Since coming to Congress, I have had the pleasure of representing a number of Greek-Americans in the Seventh District of New York. Their influence and active participation in the life of their communities has fostered economic, political and social growth throughout New York City.

As we celebrate Greek independence, we must keep in mind the struggle for freedom and demand for human rights continues on the island of Cyprus. I am confident the work by Richard Holbrooke and Tom Miller will create the chance for peace to be a reality on an island that has been home to division and violence for far, far too long.

Mr. Speaker, on this occasion of commemorating the unique relationship between the United States and Greece, I encourage my colleagues to join me as a member of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus. Members of the Caucus have the opportunity to work on a number of issues affecting Greeks and Greek-Americans in a bipartisan manner.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me assure my colleagues I intend to continue my strong commitment to Greek communities in my district, the country, and throughout the world. Their strength and dedication to democracy has provided a strong and stable country and has made Greece the democracy it is today.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this occasion on which we salute the great nation and people of Greece, the Hellenic Republic as they celebrate the 177th anniversary of Greece's independence. I commend the gentleman from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, for taking the initiative once again to ensure that members have the opportunity to convey our thoughts on this important day. The United States and Greece have enjoyed a long and close relationship. The people of the United States recognize and revere Greece as the cradle of the democratic tradition that has allowed this country to rise to the heights of its greatness.

We are fortunate to have benefitted from the contributions of those immigrants from Greece who have contributed their toil, their knowledge and their culture to our American civilization, and we appreciate the warmth of the citizens of Greece reflected in the welcome they provide to Americans who are fortunate enough to be able to visit the shores of Greece, its beautiful islands and countryside.

Greece plays an important role in helping to stabilize the Balkans, one of the more dangerous neighborhoods of Europe. I was privileged yesterday to host a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Greece, Theodoros Pangalos, during which we reviewed the issues affecting Greek-American relations. I am pleased to report that the state of our relations is healthy. On this occasion let us call on our government to exercise even-handedness between our two important NATO allies in the eastern Mediterranean, Greece and Turkey.

I hope that all of our colleagues and fellow citizens will avail themselves of this occasion to reflect upon the blessings of democracy, for which we will be forever indebted to the ancient Hellenes, and upon our good fortune today in having such a close and reliable ally as the great nation of Greece.

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, as the people of Greece celebrate the 177th anniversary of their struggle for independence, I join my colleagues in commemorating this day, and in extending heartfelt congratulations to the people of Greece and to those of Greek descent everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, the culture, history, and political philosophy of our country are deeply steeped in the Greek tradition. Greece, the cradle of democracy, inspired our Founding Fathers as they struggled to fashion the American form of government. In turn, the American Revolution inspired Greeks fighting to gain their freedom after 400 years of rule by the Ottoman Empire.

As we speak, the influence of Greek art and architecture surrounds us in our classically-inspired Capitol. And who can ignore the fact that our country has grown culturally richer and economically stronger because of the presence and contribution of countless Greek immigrants? In California's 36th district, which I represent, Greek Americans are a vibrant part of a culturally-diverse community—the South Bay would be less than what it is today were it not for the wide-ranging civic contributions of Greek-Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the familial ties between the United States and Greece are mirrored in the close political cooperation our countries share. As members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United States and Greece work together to ensure security on Europe's southern flank. As newspaper headlines sadly remind us, south eastern Europe continues to experience political turbulence, and US-Greek cooperation remains an essential element in bringing stability to this part of the world. I remain committed to strengthening U.S.-Greek ties, and to working on issues of interest to the Greek American community, including a permanent solution to the Cyprus problem.

I thank my colleague, Mr. BILIRAKIS, for his leadership in organizing this special order to highlight the important contributions of Greece to our country, and once again congratulate the people of Greece on this memorable occasion.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 177th anniversary of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire, and to celebrate the shared democratic heritage of Greece and the United States. I thank Congressman BILIRAKIS and Congresswoman MALONEY for organizing this special order and for their leadership on issues of importance to the Greek-American community.

On March 25, 1821, after more than 400 years of Ottoman Turk domination, Greece declared its independence and resumed its rightful place in the world as a beacon of democracy.

The people of Greece and the United States share a common bond in their commitment to democracy. Our Founding Fathers looked to the teachings of Greek philosophy in their struggle for freedom and democracy. And the American experience in turn inspired the Greek people who fought so hard for independence 176 years ago.

This bond between our two peoples stretches beyond the philosophy of democracy. The relationship between the U.S. and Greece has grown stronger and stronger through the years, and Greece remains today one of our most important allies.

And the contribution Greece makes to life in America is even stronger than the ties between our two countries. Greek-Americans are a vital part of our cultural heritage. My district in New York would not be what it is today without the valuable contributions made by the Greek-American community.

I am proud to stand today in commemoration of Greek independence and in recognition of the contribution Greece and Greek-Americans have made to our country.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Ms. MALONEY and Mr. BILIRAKIS for organizing this Special Order. As I rise to join with them in the celebration of the 177th anniversary of Greek Independence Day, I am reminded of the words of the great 20th century Greek writer and philosopher Nikos Kazantzakis: ''What first truly stirred my soul was not fear or pain, nor was it pleasure or games; it was the yearning for freedom.'' Deep within the Greek soul is this unmistakable blueprint for democratic freedoms. It is what propelled the Greek people to revolt against the scourge of the Ottoman Empire which plunged one of the world's most enlightened societies into a Dark Ages that spanned 400 years.

Today, as we celebrate this anniversary we find ourselves revisiting history. The story of Greek Independence is inextricably linked to the terror of Turkish oppression on the island of Cyprus. When the Greeks began their war of independence on March 25th, 1821 the people of Cyprus were singled out for a particular form of bloody retribution, meant to send a message to the rest of occupied Greece. Naturally, the Cypriots were sympathetic to the Greek cause, and were among the first to offer whatever support they could. For this they were sternly punished by the Turkish authorities. The island's Turkish governor was particularly brutal. On July 9th, 1821 he ordered a massacre to begin with the torture and murder of the Archbishop of Cyprus, Kyprianos, his three bishops, and many other members of the clergy and civilians. The Archbishop was hanged from a fig tree outside his residence. The killing and torture continued until December of the same year.

This anniversary of Greek Independence is observed, as it has since 1974, with the notable inclusion of Turkey's bloody invasion of Cyprus in that year. Although the Greek and Cypriot governments have shown a willingness to resolve the issues that undermine a stable peace in the region, the Turkish government continues to dodge the critical questions at hand.

While we celebrate the principles of democracy given to us by the ancient Greeks; While we commemorate the actions of the brave Greeks who fought for their birthright 177 years ago; we must acknowledge that the island of Cyprus is divided and under siege, and until this act of Turkish aggression is reversed, our joy is muted and our sense of outrage sharpened.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues today in commemorating the 177th anniversary Greek Independence Day.

I wish to thank Congressman MIKE BILIRAKIS and Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY for calling the special order to raise the public's awareness of the history of Greece and the important role Greece has played in the United States and the world.

Many people believe that Greece's greatest gift to the United States and to the world is the government system of democracy. That is indeed a great gift which has brought much happiness to the world. But the world needs to know that democracy is not easily attained or kept.

When we celebrate Greek Independence Day, we need to note that March 25 is not the day when all of Greece gained its independence. March 25 was the day that Athens and a small portion of Greece gained independence and then areas populated by Greeks were liberated one by one until we have the Greece of today.

The Greek people, through their history, have shown an indomitable will to fight for their freedom. The Greek victories are well known throughout history. There was the Greek war for independence that freed part of Greece from the Ottoman Empire and later during World War II, they fought against the Nazi invaders. But Greeks have also suffered less known tragedies that would have broken the spirit or destroyed a lesser people.

One famous battle had the Greek Spartans defending against a Persian invasion. the Greeks said ''molon lave'' to the invaders.

''Molon lave,'' means ''come and get them'' and in 480 B.C. it was the response that 300 Greek Spartans gave to the Persian Army, who numbered in the tens of thousands, when the Persians offered mercy, if the Spartans would hand over their weapons and surrender.

The Greek Spartans said ''molon lave'' or come and get them.

The Spartans would not hand over their weapons and surrender, because they would be handing over their dreams of being a free people. They would not hand over their dreams of a free Sparta. They fought for those dreams.

That city state of Sparta grew, and is now part of Greece, and that famous battle is part of Greek history and Greek tradition.

Greeks, Greek Cypriots and Greek Americans all come from that same strong tradition.

Today Greek minorities in Turkey and other places in Eastern Europe are suffering political and religious persecution. Just a few months ago a bomb was thrown at the Ecumenical Patriarchate and exploded injuring a church deacon and damaging the cathedral. These repeated attacks on Greek minorities must stop.

We need to raise public awareness of the difficulties faced by our democratic birth place.

In addition to reminding the American people of our roots to the cradle of democracy in Greece, we need to continue raising the public's awareness of the constant threat Greeks live under in Eastern Europe.

On this day that we commemorate Greek independence, it is important to note that the most important and urgent problem facing the international Greek community is Cyprus.

The next few months will bring Cyprus the greatest opportunity for peace, and the greatest risk for further violence.

We have heard this in years past, but I believe it certainly applies today.

Finding a solution to the Cyprus problem has become a priority to the United States and to the international community.

The House has adopted House Concurrent Resolution 81, which I cosponsored, which states clearly and firmly that ''The status quo on Cyprus is unacceptable and is detrimental to the interests of the United States in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond.''

I introduced H. Con. Res. 181 last year to help relieve the suffering of the enclaved Greek Cypriots and am considering similar legislation in this Congress. We must end the senseless persecution of these brave people. I thank the 60 Members who have co-sponsored and I will work with them to move this legislation forward.

The Greek Cypriots in occupied northern Cyprus live under intolerable inhuman conditions since their land was occupied by a military force. Tensions continue to rise around Cyprus and I urge the administration to apply the same degree of commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the Cyprus crisis that it applied to the Bosnian crisis.

I commend the administration for the appointment of Special Presidential Emissary For Cyprus, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and for assigning Tom Miller to work with Ambassador Holbrooke to negotiate a peaceful solution for Cyprus.

I believe a solution of the Cyprus problem is crucial to the safety of Greece and all Greeks living in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Speaker, the link between the United States and Greece is a strong bond and I believe the United States should thank the Greek

people for not just being a good ally to America but for their gifts of our heritage of democracy and individual liberty. I am happy to join my colleagues in celebrating this joyous anniversary.

Again, I thank my friends Congressman BILIRAKIS and Congresswoman MALONEY for calling this special order and for their leadership on Hellenic issues.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Florida for yet again taking the leadership to organize this special order which provides us the opportunity to celebrate one of greatest days in the history of Greece, our close ally.

I also want to commend the Gentleman from Florida and the Gentleman from New York for organizing the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues. I am pleased to be part of an organized and concerted effort to speak out on those issues which are important to Greece, Cyprus, and our constituents of Hellenic descent.

Our war for independence was an example for Greece to begin its own struggle for freedom on March 25, 1821. And so it is appropriate for us to take time to celebrate the beginning of Greece's struggle for independence from the cruel oppression of the Ottoman Empire. Just as American colonists were an inspiration for revolution, the Athenian democracy was an inspiration to our revolutionaries.

The bonds between these two countries are long and strong. As the years run into decades, and the decades run into centuries we realize and appreciate the great debt that America owes to Greece for founding the principles of democracy. We pay tribute to this every day when we meet and debate and freely share ideas.

Further, there is much to be attributed to the hard work of the sons and daughters of Greece who have come to the United States have made a tremendous impact on their communities. In my own state of Rhode Island, there are remarkably strong and productive Greek communities. Since the turn of the century, Greek immigrants have moved into Providence, Pawtucket, and Newport, Rhode Island. There they built business, neighborhoods, churches, schools, and raised families. Today, the grandchildren of those immigrants are leaders in our state, and Rhode Island is richer because of all they have given.

Today, we celebrate what Ancient Greece gave to founding our nation and what Greek-Americans have given in the development of the United States. Again, I thank my colleagues for all of their hard work in making this Special Order possible and look forward to further work with the Hellenic Caucus.

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to take part once again in this annual special order celebrating the anniversary of Greek independence.

As a Member of Congress representing a district with a vibrant Greek-American community, I can testify personally to the many contributions that Greek Americans have made to our nation. Today is a day when the more than 1 million Greek Americans join the people of Greece in remembering and reflecting upon an event that took place 177 years ago—the beginning of the fight for Greek Independence.

It is only fitting that each year, the Congress of the United States pays tribute to the establishment of the modern nation of Greece, the land that was the cradle of democracy. The ancient city-states of Greece made many seminal contributions to western civilization. Western architecture, literature, science, and philosophy can each trace much of their heritage to the people of ancient Greece. But perhaps ancient Greece's most important gift to the modern world was the creation of the concept of democratic self-government. The Founding Fathers of this country, educated in the classics, looked back to, among others, the ancient Greeks for their inspiration in breaking from England's domination and creating a new, democratic nation in North America.

And yet, two hundred years ago when our country was newly established, Greece—once the cradle of democracy—no longer enjoyed the benefits of self-government. In 1821, most of Greece was, in fact, part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire had dominated the Greek people for over 400 years, and the Ottoman Government's corrupt, autocratic rule was becoming increasingly oppressive.

Unwilling to tolerate Ottoman domination any longer, Greek patriots rose up against the Ottomans in March of 1821. The Greek struggle for independence lasted for nearly ten long years, but the Greek people never wavered in their fight for freedom.

The struggle of the courageous Greek patriots against an overwhelming imperial power won the hearts of many influential figures in Western Europe and the United States. Europeans and Americans identified with the descendants of the nation that had done so much to shape western civilization. Eventually, the French, British, and Russian governments declared their support for Greek independence, and together, they pressured the Ottoman Empire to recognize Greece as an independent state in 1829.

Mr. Speaker, these Greek patriots fought and died for the same principles of freedom and self-government that inspired the Founding Fathers. Consequently, it is appropriate that we remember them today, the 177th anniversary of the advent of Greek independence. I am pleased to join my colleagues in celebrating this very special day.

Mr. BATEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues today in recognizing the 177th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greeks from the subjugation of Ottoman rule.

On March 25, 1821 Greek patriots began their long struggle for freedom and won independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829. Throughout their history, the Greeks have defended democracy and remain a valued member of the international community. During World War II, the Greeks fought courageously and suffered severe casualties in their efforts to fend off Nazi armies. With the cessation of hostilities at the conclusion of WWII, democracy in Greece was threatened by the forces of communism, a resistance in which the United States was proud to support. Although faced with many challenges, the people of Greece have demonstrated their resolve, courage, and fortitude. Their dedication to freedom has ensured the ultimate success of democracy in modern-day Greece.

The United States is truly indebted to Greece for all its contributions to our society. Western art, architecture, literature, and philosophy stem from the numerous achievements of the ancient Greeks. The citizens of Greece occupy a unique and proud place in world history. Of all their contributions, the ideal of democracy has had the greatest impact on our world today. Greek democracy has undeniably formed the foundation of the government of the United States. It is appropriate that during the Greek war for independence, they looked to our Declaration of Independence to guild them in the struggle to rediscover democracy.

In closing, I would like to note that no nation has contributed more to modern Western civilization than Greece, and no nation has had to struggle harder or more often to preserve its liberties. I salute our friends in Greece and our many Greek-American citizens on this day of independence.

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Greece on the 177th anniversary of the revolution which freed the Greek people from the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Greece has remained under the Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years until it declared its independence in 1821. Just as our forefathers relied on the ancient Greek traditions of self-governance in their fight for independence, the Greeks looked to the ideals of our pioneers in declaring their own independence in 1821. Greek intellectuals translated the U.S. Declaration of Independence and used it as their own.

The Greek fight for independence has been highly regarded and closely followed by Americans throughout the years. In his 1922 message to the 17th Congress, President James Monroe praised the efforts of the Greek population in their fight for independence. ''A strong hope is entertained that these people will recover their independence, and resume their equal station among the nations of this earth,'' he said.

Greece and its people have always been close friends and allies of the United States. The Greeks have fought bravely by our side against oppression and for freedom and democracy throughout the 20th Century. Greeks and Greek-Americans have played an important role throughout history, people like Dr. George Papanicolaou who invented the pap test for cancer, and world famous soprano Maria Callas, have improved the quality of our lives. Let me extend my heart felt congratulations to Greece and its people on this important anniversary.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with both great pride and humility that I rise to join in the celebration of the 177th Anniversary of Greek Independence.

On March 25, 1821 the Greeks began their long struggle for independence from what then was the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire, present day Turkey, had ruled Greece for almost 400 years. Freedom from the Ottoman Turks' subjugation had been dreamed of for many generations prior to Bishop Germano of Patras hoisting the Greek flag over a Peloponnese monastery. This simple act of defiance marked the beginning of a long and bitter struggle for the Greek people, but a struggle that few rejected and many embraced.

Not only were the Greek patriots willing to fight for freedom, but they were willing to sacrifice their lives to ensure their independence. Their success was such during the first years of conflict that the Turks were surprised and confounded. To turn the tide of the war, the Sultan sought and received the help of Egyptian forces. And although the Greeks were

fighting what appeared a losing battle, they never yielded, they never ceased to believe, and they never gave up their hopes and dreams of independence.

Finally, with help from Britain, France, and Russia, in 1829, the Greeks not only routed the Egyptian and Turkish forces, but also demanded and received the Sultan's recognition of independence.

Mr. Speaker, we all in America are taught from childhood about the heroics of George Washington, Paul Revere, Patrick Henry, Lighthorse Harry Lee, John Paul Jones, and the Minutemen of Lexington and Concord. The individuals and events of our own War for Independence are known throughout the world.

But we should also take time to commemorate the struggles of the brave men and women of Greece who fought and died for their own independence. The Greek culture and heritage has greatly influenced our country and the world. It is the spirit of the Greeks who fought for independence that we commemorate and honor today. Because they stood up for freedom and honor and dignity, we in America and Greeks everywhere, owe them a great debt.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the people of Greece on this, the 177th anniversary of the start of the revolution that led to Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire. That conflict restored Greece's ancient and proud democratic tradition—a tradition that greatly influenced our own Founding Fathers.

Today, Greece stands tall in the world community, with memberships in the EU, NATO, and dozens of other multilateral organizations. Its commitment to democracy is an example for all nations. I salute the Greek people on their achievement and proudly celebrate our joint democratic heritage.

Mr. PICKETT. Mr. Speaker, today Greeks and Greek Americans observe Greek Independence Day which marks the 177th anniversary of the revolution which freed Greece from the Ottoman Empire. History records the oppression and deprivation of human liberty to which the Greeks were subjected to during the period prior to the revolution. The Greek people were able to emerge from this period of their history and quickly reestablish their national identity and continue intact their cultural and religious institutions. It is a tribute to the spirit and determination of the Greek people that they prevailed in their struggle for liberty after such a long period.

Greek Independence Day, however, is not just a day of celebration for the Greek nation and for individuals of Greek descent, but rather, it is a day of triumph and celebration for democratic nations and proponents of democracy around the world. Today marks an occasion on which we can all celebrate and revere the birthplace of democracy and democratic ideals.

If you look at history and the teachings of the ancient Greek philosophers, you will quickly discover that it was the Greeks who introduced the notion of democracy into the political theories of the day. The ancient Greeks were the first to advance the principles that people should be equal before the law, that majorities should respect the rights of minorities, that men can govern their own affairs, and that merit should determine a person's place in society. Much of our own constitution is based upon the ideas and the theories recorded years ago by Pericles, Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers of ancient Greece.

In more modern times, the Greeks have continued to cherish their liberty and democratic institutions. More than 600,000 Greeks lost their lives fighting on the side of the Allies in World War II. Greece continues to this day its fundamental commitment to freedom and individual liberty.

So on this anniversary of Greek independence, I join with people of goodwill everywhere in recognizing the successful struggle by the Greek people to gain their independence, and in what their successful struggle means to freedom loving people throughout the world.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman for his very thoughtful statement. The time for our special order is ending. The bonds between our two countries have never been stronger.

As we prepare for the new millennium, we look forward to building on our partnership for democracy in our own countries and throughout the world. I thank my colleagues for participating in this special order.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FORD (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week, on account of on account of official business, participating with presidential delegation in Africa.

Mr. KLECZKA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today, on account of a family funeral.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week, on account of official business with the President of the United States in Africa.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week, on account of official business.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week, on account of official business.

Mr. ROTHMAN (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today, on account of family business.

Mr. WYNN (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today through Monday, March 30, on account of official business.

Mr. YATES (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today after 3:30 p.m., on account of physical reasons.

Mr. SAXTON (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today after 3:30 p.m., on account of personal matters.

Mr. HOUGHTON (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and the balance of the week, on account of official business.

Mr. EHRLICH (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today, on account of attending a funeral.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. PASCRELL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PASCRELL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. OBERSTAR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BERRY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON, for 5 minutes, today

The following Members (at the request of Mr. JONES) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. BURTON, for 5 minutes, March 26.

Mrs. MYRICK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RAMSTAD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HASTINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAPPAS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MICA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOX, for 5 minutes, today

The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. GOSS, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

Ms. SANCHEZ, and to include therein extraneous material, notwithstanding the fact that it exceeds two pages of the RECORD and is estimated by the Public Printer to cost $2,062.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. PASCRELL) and to include extraneous matter:

Mr. MANTON.

Mr. HAMILTON.

Mr. KANJORSKI.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida.

Mr. KUCINICH.

Mr. PICKETT.

Mr. LIPINSKI.

Mr. BENTSEN.

Mr. BERMAN.

Ms. PELOSI.

Mr. MENENDEZ.

Mr. VENTO.

Mr. KIND.

Mr. LANTOS.

Mr. MCDERMOTT.

Mr. DEUTSCH.

Mr. DINGELL.

Mr. FARR of California.

Ms. LOFGREN.

Mr. BARCIA.

Ms. ESHOO.

Mr. ETHERIDGE.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. JONES) and to include extraneous matter: