

Currently, no funding source exists to restore watershed projects, and local sponsors do not have the resources to attempt to save these dams. H.R. 728 establishes financial assistance for the assessment and rehabilitation of small watershed dams over the next ten years. With federal cost sharing, local sponsors will now have the opportunity to repair these crucial watersheds.

The necessity of federal attention to this problem is critical, and I thank my friend and Oklahoma colleague Mr. LUCAS for his leadership of this matter and his support and commitment to the restoration of these structures. I call upon my colleagues to recognize the importance of this legislation with their support of H.R. 728.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 728, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read:

"A bill to amend the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide cost share assistance for the rehabilitation of structural measures constructed as part of water resource projects previously funded by the Secretary under such Act or related laws, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 728, the bill just adopted.

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

There was no objection.

CONGRATULATING REPUBLIC OF LATVIA ON 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF REESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENCE FROM FORMER SOVIET UNION

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 319) congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the 10th anniversary of the reestablishment of its independence from the rule of the former Soviet Union.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 319

Whereas the United States had never recognized the forcible incorporation of the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the former Soviet Union;

Whereas the declaration on May 4, 1990, of the reestablishment of full sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Latvia furthered the disintegration of the former Soviet Union;

Whereas Latvia since then has successfully built democracy, passed legislation on human and minority rights that conform to European and international norms, ensured the rule of law, developed a free market economy, and consistently pursued a course of integration into the community of free and democratic nations by seeking membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and

Whereas Latvia, as a result of the progress of its political and economic reforms, has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution toward the maintenance of international peace and stability by, among other actions, its participation in NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) congratulates Latvia on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the reestablishment of its independence and the role it played in the disintegration of the former Soviet Union; and

(2) commends Latvia for its success in implementing political and economic reforms, which may further speed the process of that country's integration into European and Western institutions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 319.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises in very strong support for H. Con. Res. 319, a resolution congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the 10th anniversary of the reestablishment of its independence from the former Soviet Union. This Member is pleased to be a cosponsor of this important statement of support.

Mr. Speaker, the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia had been prosperous and progressive independent nations, a set of three nations, prior to the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, an agreement that heralded 5 decades of repression.

The United States, of course, never recognized this unlawful act of international aggression. By 1990, the Soviet terror machine no longer held sway, and the long-standing courage and determination of the Latvian people was finally rewarded with freedom. Again, it was the United States that was among the first to recognize their independence when they broke free.

No one could have predicted the rapid reintegration with the West. Free elec-

tions have now become the norm, and the Saeima acts as a fully-functioning parliament. Inflation has been reduced, and Latvia has made major strides in privatization.

While the export market to Russia has collapsed, important new trading partnerships have been found in Poland, Germany and the West. Much remains to be done, but Latvians and Latvian-Americans can take justifiable pride at what has thus far been accomplished in Latvia.

For our part, the United States continues to work for the Baltic nations to deepen and broaden our relationship. As but one example, NATO military officers, including Americans, continue to work with the Latvian military directly and through NATO's Partnership For Peace program.

Latvia-Americans should also be proud of their contributions, with some retired military officers actually serving in key positions in the Latvian Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defense.

As the NATO Summit in Washington, D.C. last year concluded, Latvia joined in the Enhanced and More Operational Partnership, EMOP, a program designed to speed the day when Latvia can become a full contributing member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The goal, which this Member strongly endorses, is to move beyond the expressions of support and facilitate the concrete steps that will result in Latvia's further integration into the West.

In other areas of cooperation, Peace Corps volunteers now teach Latvian schools and help Latvian small businessmen and women with such basic tasks as accounting and marketing. This Member is particularly pleased that the United States has created a Baltic American Enterprise Fund designed to underwrite fledgling entrepreneurs from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

Finally, this Member would point out that the House of Representatives has been and is assisting the Latvian Saeima with such basic necessities as law books and computers, various kinds of library assistance.

In 1995, this Member was part of a bipartisan House task force which approved and oversaw this assistance to this parliamentary body, as we did in the other two Baltic States, and visited Latvia for that and other foreign policy security purposes. It should be noted, additionally, that such assistance most assuredly is not a hand-out. Rather, we are offering a helping hand to a nation with historically close ties to the United States. We are helping Latvians build a future where their country can continue to progress in its rightful place as a full member of the European family of democratic nations.

Mr. Speaker, this Member congratulates, in particular, the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for crafting a resolution that merits

the support of all Members of this body. This Member urges support for H. Con. Res. 319.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me at the outset congratulate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for crafting this very excellent resolution. I want to thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) for his eloquent and cogent and strong statement. I want to associate myself with the comments of the gentleman from Nebraska, and I call on all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 319.

As we congratulate Latvia on the 10th anniversary of its renewed independence, I think it is important to recognize proudly that the United States stood on principle at the time of the beginning of the Second World War in refusing to accept the incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia into the Soviet Union.

Not many of our fellow citizens know that the embassies of these three Baltic countries continued to function during the long decades of both the Second World War and the Cold War here in Washington, D.C., underscoring the principled commitment of the United States under Republican and Democratic administrations to the independence of the Baltic States.

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Mr. Speaker, Latvia, along with Lithuania and Estonia, has made enormous progress in developing an economy that was stifled by the nonfunctional Soviet system and building an increasingly democratic and open and free society. I have had the privilege and the pleasure of visiting Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia during the crucial days of their attempted breaking away from Soviet control; and I have had the privilege of visiting in the Baltics repeatedly since, most recently just a few months ago.

It is reassuring, Mr. Speaker, that democracy is taking hold; that the orientation of Latvia and her two Baltic neighbors to democratic principles is strong; their desire to become admitted to the Europe Union is great; to become members of NATO; these are all manifestations of positive developments.

There is one aspect of development in these three countries that I would like to touch upon, which is as yet unfinished business. At the time of the early days of the Second World War, the Baltic states were whipsawed between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. As the German forces occupied the Baltic states, understandably perhaps, large numbers of citizens in these countries greeted the Nazis with joy because they represented liberation from the Soviet Union. Many joined Nazi military units.

Now, time has gone on, and most of the members of these military units

are no longer alive. But some are, and it has been critical to remind our friends in the Baltic states that it is their moral and legal obligation to bring the perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice, irrespective of their age and medical condition.

I have had the privilege of working with the presidents of all three Baltic countries and with members of parliament and, on the whole, I want to commend them for approaching this important remaining assignment from the dark period of the Second World War with diligence and sincere commitment. There is no doubt in my mind that under the current leadership of these three countries, with three strong democratically oriented presidents and strong democratically controlled parliaments, this job will be done and the three Baltic states will occupy their proper role in the family of democratic nations within the framework of the European Union and within the framework of NATO.

It is in that spirit that I want to congratulate the people of Latvia and the government of Latvia for the remarkable progress they have made during the course of the last decade, and I strongly urge all of my colleagues to approve this resolution.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to commend the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the distinguished gentleman who gave a very articulate extemporaneous remark. He has followed the history of these Baltic states, and he has certainly followed their evolution since in fact they have gained their freedom; and I thank him for his outstanding remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), the distinguished gentleman who, by his activism, by his leadership, and by his heritage has been recognized already in his time here in the House as a leader on matters related to the Baltic states.

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 319, congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the 10th anniversary of the reestablishment, and I underscore reestablishment, of its independence from Russia.

I want to take this opportunity also to thank my colleagues, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), but especially the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), who is the conscience of the House and who has been a good friend as we negotiated these new areas, which are uncharted waters for me. And I would be remiss if I did not mention the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), who is the co-chair of the Baltic Caucus. I appreciate

his friendship and support, as well as all of the original cosponsors of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Latvia lost its freedom on August 23, 1939, when Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R. signed a nonaggression pact and the Baltic states were placed in the Soviet sphere of influence. By August 1940, the nation had been placed under Soviet military occupation and was incorporated as a republic of the U.S.S.R. The United States never recognized the incorporation of these independent countries into the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation currently has no claims on these independent countries today.

For the subsequent 50 years, the brave people of Latvia endured the slaughter of innocent citizens, deportations to Siberia, and heavy political oppression. Despite these hardships, the Latvian people kept independence alive in their minds and spirits, resisting occupation in silent and public ways, serving as a secret weapon against the tyranny of the Soviet Union.

On May 4, 1990, the people of Latvia solidified their full sovereignty, which served to further the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In just one decade, Latvia has successfully pursued policies to build a strong democracy, protect human rights, expand the rule of law, develop a free market system, and pursue a course of integration into the community of free and democratic nations, including the seeking of membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Latvia, together with the Republics of Estonia and Lithuania, continues to make a significant contribution toward maintaining peace and stability in the surrounding region, notably in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. I applaud their participation and signature on the Vilnius statement signed on May 19 of this year, especially their commitment to individual liberty, the free market, and the rule of law.

Latvia is a nation that has made tremendous progress since its independence and has unlimited potential and optimism for the future. The story of Latvian independence deserves to be widely acknowledged and remembered as a successful nonviolent model for social and political change.

In the United States, we have imperfect individuals attempting to form a more perfect union. In Latvia, the attempt by imperfect individuals to form a more perfect democracy should be commended. That is why I urge my colleagues to join with me in passing House Concurrent Resolution 319 and remembering the good people of Latvia for all their perseverance and triumph over the monstrosity of communism.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank my very good friend, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), for his most generous comments, as

well as my very good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman for his remarks earlier, and also the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), as I said, for his leadership and his outstanding statement.

I take particular pleasure in being able to manage this legislation. Not only do we have a significant Lithuanian community in both Lincoln and Omaha, and a small Estonian one in Lincoln; but we have a relatively larger community of Latvians in Lincoln. They came to Nebraska in the early part of the 20th century for freedom, to escape religious persecution, and for economic benefits.

As a part of that immigration, shortly following that was a young dissident from Latvia. His name was Karlis Ulmanis. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska, he worked for some time in Nebraska and Texas before returning to Latvia. There he became the president of Latvia between World War I and World War II.

He was long-tenured, and an outstanding and benevolent leader of Latvia during that period of time. When the Soviets came in, they seized him; and that is the last the world knew of what happened to Karlis Ulmanis.

Later, it was only justice that his grandnephew became the recent president of Latvia. For a period of time, his mother and he had to change their name in order to escape persecution from the Soviets. But the second Ulmanis did become a very distinguished and able president, and the Lincoln community is very pleased and proud of both the Ulmanises for their outstanding leadership of Latvia.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I thank my Latvian-American constituents for their outstanding support for the cause of freedom over the years for the Baltic states.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this resolution and to commend the success the Republic of Latvia has achieved since the May 4, 1990 reestablishment of its full sovereignty and independence from the former Soviet Union.

Since the declaration of its independence, Latvia has established a democratic government, passed legislation on human and minority rights, ensured the rule of law and sustained the development of its free market economy.

Latvia has also consistently pursued a course of integration into the community of free and democratic nations by seeking membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). I support admitting the Baltic states into NATO and I hope my colleagues here in the House will support their entry also in the next round of NATO expansion.

Latvia has made great strides over the last ten years and this resolution helps to highlight

this success. I thank Representative SHIMKUS for his efforts to bring House Concurrent Resolution 319 to the floor and the opportunity to congratulate Latvia on the last ten years of progress.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 319, which congratulates the Republic of Latvia on the 10th anniversary of its independence from the rule of the former Soviet regime.

I am certain that all of us in this Congress appreciate how difficult it has been for countries such as Latvia to move forward with badly-needed political and economic reforms over the last decade.

But, many of us can also recall the terrific challenges the Latvian people and their neighbors in Lithuania and Estonia had to overcome to regain their independence ten years ago.

This Resolution congratulates the Latvian people for their success—against all odds—in regaining their rightful independence, and commends them for carrying forward since then with the reforms that should lay the foundation for their full integration into European and Western institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Resolution and urge my colleagues to join in its adoption.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 319.

The question was taken.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONDEMNING 1994 ATTACK ON AMIA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 531) condemning the 1994 attack on the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, urging the Argentine Government to punish those responsible, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 531

Whereas on July 18, 1994, 86 innocent human beings were killed and 300 were wounded when the AMIA Jewish Community Center was bombed in Buenos Aires, Argentina;

Whereas the United States welcomes Argentine President Fernando de la Rúa's political will to pursue the investigation of the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Center to its ultimate conclusion;

Whereas circumstantial evidence attributes the attack to the terrorist group Hezbollah, based in Lebanon and sponsored by Iran;

Whereas evidence indicates that this bombing could not have been carried out

without local assistance from elements of the Argentine security forces, some of which are reported to be sympathetic to anti-Semitic positions and to have participated in the desecration of Jewish cemeteries in recent years;

Whereas additional evidence indicates that the tri-border area where Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil meet, and which is known to be rife with terrorist activity as well as drug and arms smuggling, was used to channel resources for the purpose of carrying out the bombing attack;

Whereas the 6 years since the bombing have been marked by efforts to minimize the involvement of these Argentine security elements;

Whereas Argentine officials have acknowledged that there was negligence in the initial phases of the investigation and that the institutional and political conditions must be created to advance the investigation of this terrorist attack;

Whereas failure to duly punish the culprits of this act serves merely to reward these terrorists and help spread the scourge of terrorism throughout the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas the democratic leaders of the Western Hemisphere issued mandates at the 1994 and 1998 Summits of the Americas that they condemn terrorism in all its forms and that they will, using all legal means, combat terrorist acts anywhere in the Americas with unity and vigor;

Whereas the Government of Argentina supports the 1996 Declaration of Lima To Prevent, Combat and Eliminate Terrorism, which refers to terrorism as a serious form of organized and systematic violence that is intended to generate chaos and fear among the population, results in death and destruction, and is a reprehensible criminal activity, as well as the 1998 Commitment of Mar del Plata which calls terrorist acts serious common crimes that erode peaceful and civilized coexistence, affect the rule of law and the exercise of democracy, and endanger the stability of democratically elected constitutional governments and the socioeconomic development of our countries;

Whereas the Government of Argentina was successful in enacting a law on cooperation from defendants in terrorist matters, a law that will be helpful in pursuing full prosecution in this and other terrorist cases; and

Whereas it is the long-standing policy of the United States to stand firm against terrorist attacks wherever and whenever they occur and to work with its allies to ensure that justice is done: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reiterates its condemnation of the attack on the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in July 1994, and honors the victims of this heinous act;

(2) strongly urges the Government of Argentina to fulfill its international obligations and its promise to the Argentine people by pursuing the local and international connections to this act of terrorism, wherever they may lead, and to duly punish all those who were involved;

(3) calls on the President to continue to raise this issue in bilateral discussions with Argentine officials and to underscore the United States concern regarding the 6-year delay in the resolution of this case;

(4) recommends that the United States Representative to the Organization of American States seek support from the countries comprising the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism to assist, if required by the Government of Argentina, in the investigation of this terrorist attack;

(5) encourages the President to direct United States law enforcement agencies to