

of the Czech Republic. In fact, in honor of the liberation of their city, the citizens of Pilsen will be dedicating a statue of General Patton on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of their city and all of Western Bohemia.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, in just a few days, we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the victorious end of World War II in Europe, and the President will mark this important historic anniversary by visiting Holland and Russia for special commemorative events. It is very appropriate, Madam Speaker, that in addition to recognizing that all-important date, we recognize the liberation of the Czech people who have gone through so much in their search for liberty.

Our resolution calls attention to the role of American military forces in the liberation of Bohemia and the city of Pilsen in the very last days of the Second World War.

Madam Speaker, 10 years ago, on the 50th anniversary of this event, it was my privilege to represent the United States in Bohemia commemorating this historic occasion, and I sensed firsthand the warm friendship and gratitude the people of the Czech Republic have for the United States and for our role in liberating them. The strong friendship and the good relations between the United States and the Czech Republic were profoundly strengthened by the liberation of western Bohemia in May of 1949 under the leadership of General Patton and the Third Army he led, which included not only American, but also free Belgian and Czech troops.

Our resolution reaffirms the bonds of friendship between the American and the Czech people, which go back to the strong and enthusiastic support President Woodrow Wilson and the American people displayed for the establishment of Czechoslovakia at the end of the First World War.

In the last decade and a half, those ties have been further strengthened as we have welcomed the end of the Communist era in Central Europe. Eight years ago, it was my pleasure to fly to Independence, Missouri with the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, as well as the Foreign Ministers of Poland and Hungary, to witness the signing of Czechoslovakia's ascension to the North Atlantic Alliance.

The Czech people have faced domination by foreign rulers for centuries. The liberation of western Bohemia by the United States created the possibility of a new future for the Czech people, which they attempted to seize first in 1968 in the famous Prague spring which Soviet forces brutally suppressed, and then in 1989 when the Czech people prevailed. Our resolution honors not only their liberation, but their resilience and their commitment to free, open, and democratic societies.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution as we send our best greetings to the free people of a free Czech Republic.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), the author of the resolution.

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I am proud to have been a part of this resolution as we recognize the 60th anniversary of the victory in Europe and, really, the liberation of Western Bohemia as it signaled the end of the war in Europe and the defeat of the Third Reich.

On May 4, 1945, General George Patton gave the order for the American Third Army, consisting of 18 divisions and 500,000 men, to resume the allied offensive in Western Bohemia. The following day, Patton's Third Army liberated the city of Pilsen in the westernmost section of then Czechoslovakia. As the Americans entered Pilsen, flowers were strewn in their path and into vehicles for the troops. Young girls and old men and women ran out to kiss the soldiers. People who had been oppressed for all of the Nazi occupation and people who had had an underground resistance came out to welcome these soldiers.

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Even today, thousands of American veterans of the liberation of Western Bohemia will travel to Pilsen to honor their fallen comrades.

The people of the Czech Republic symbolize their friendship and gratitude toward the American soldiers who fought to secure their freedom, having graciously hosted thousands and countless veteran groups over the many years.

Between April 25 and May 9, 2005, some 50 communities across the western part of the Czech Republic will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of their liberation by the United States, Czech and Belgium soldiers under the command of General Patton.

The citizens of Pilsen will dedicate a statue of General Patton to be unveiled on the town square on the 60th anniversary of the liberation, commemorating the liberation. One footnote that is very significant for all of us, though, is that while America liberated Pilsen and the Czech Republic in 1945, in 1948, the Iron Curtain fell upon it.

And at that point, the historians and the photographers and the people who knew that America had played such a major role in their liberation, those people were sometimes arrested, often intimidated, and even the photographs of the liberation were destroyed. So for 3 years, the people of Czech Republic in Pilsen enjoyed the fresh air of liberation and freedom; and then from 1945 to 1948, that ended with the Iron Curtain.

And the Soviet Government came in and wiped out all traces of the Amer-

ican liberation, even to the extent of tearing down statues and changing the history books. And yet through the dark period, the many years and decades that followed, the people of the Czech Republic still remembered that day.

Maybe it was not in their textbooks, maybe they did not have access to the photographs anymore, and maybe the stories were held down to whispers; yet they still remember what happened. The Czech people, and Czechoslovakia, have had a great role in the development of the United States of America.

Czech immigrants are all over our country. Our country is better because of the Czech influence that we have. And because we were so significant in their liberation in 1945, they never let the Soviet Union wipe out the memory of our contribution to their country either.

I am proud to be going there on Thursday with a bipartisan delegation to present this resolution. And I am proud that Congress and this subcommittee is passing this bill, because it makes a very significant statement on what we feel and how we feel, what we feel about what happened in 1945, in 1948, and in 1989, and today as we celebrate this important anniversary with our Czech brothers and sisters.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, we have no additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) for his outstanding and very eloquent statement.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 195.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 195.

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

There was no objection.