

trade issues in regular order and not to put American jobs on the Fast Track abroad.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HAITIAN FLAG DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride and pleasure today to rise to inform the House, on this Friday, May 18, Haitians throughout the diaspora celebrated Haitian Flag Day.

Since the creation of the Haitian flag on May 18, 1803, the day has been observed as Haitian Flag Day to Haitian Americans throughout the diaspora. This day has become a source of pride synonymous with unity and a symbol of freedom and individual liberty for Haitian people.

Later this week, I will introduce legislation to commemorate this historic and celebrative event. The 18th of May, Haitian Flag Day, is the most celebrated holiday in Haiti.

Just to put this day in context for most Americans, there are some historical facts that I would like to share with you.

When Napoleon Bonaparte envisioned a great French empire in the New World, he had hoped to use the Mississippi Valley as a food and trade center to supply the island of Hispaniola. First, he had to restore French control of Hispaniola, where Haitian slaves under Toussaint L'Ouverture had seized power. Napoleon soon realized that Hispaniola must be abandoned. Accordingly, in April of 1803, he offered to sell Louisiana to the United States.

President Thomas Jefferson had already sent James Monroe and Robert R. Livingston to Paris to negotiate the purchase of a tract of land in the lower Mississippi, or at least guarantee of free navigation of the river. Surprised and delighted by the French offer of the whole territory, they immediately negotiated the treaty.

At one stroke, the United States would double in its size, an enormous tract of land would be open to settlement, and the free navigation of the Mississippi would be assured.

Although the Constitution did not specifically empower the Federal Government to acquire new territory by treaty, Jefferson concluded that the practical benefits to the Nation far outweighed the possible violation of the Constitution. The Senate concurred with this decision and voted ratification October 20, 1803, this all precipitated by the revolution of freed slaves on the island of Haiti.

The Spanish, who had never given up a physical possession of Louisiana to the French, did so in a ceremony at New Orleans on November 30, 1803. And in a second ceremony December 20, 1803, the French turned Louisiana over to the United States.

I would like to also honor those brave Haitians who fought for American independence at the siege of Savannah, Georgia, in 1779: The Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint-Domingue, a regiment of soldiers who formed one-tenth of the allied army before Savannah in the fall of 1779. This unit was comprised of over 500 free men of color from the island of Haiti and was the largest unit of men of African descent to fight in the American revolution.

The battle of Savannah, on October 9, 1779, reminds us that significant foreign resources of men, money and material contributed to the eventual success of the cause of American independence.

The presence of the Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint Domingue was made up of free men who volunteered for this expedition is startling to most people and surprising to most historians.

Men of African heritage were to be found on most battlefields of the revolution in large numbers. A subsequent unit of Haitians was part of the French and Spanish campaign against Pensacola, where they faced some of the same regiments of British troops that their comrades faced in Savannah.

Haiti, much smaller in population than the United States, was attacked by armies as large as those sent against America by Britain. The Haitian victory over the legions of Napoleon was achieved with much less foreign assistance than the United States enjoyed.

It is these types of historical events put in the context of our Nation today that we celebrate with the Haitian Americans in diaspora, their accomplishments and achievements in the growth and development of our Nation.

Many key figures in the Haitian War of Independence gained military experience and political insights through their participation in Savannah, most notably Henri Christophe, a youth at the time, but, in his adult years, a general of Haitian armies and King of his nation for 14 years.

There is little appreciation in the United States for the events that led to the formation of the Haitian nation. Influenced by both the events of the American Revolution and the rhetoric of the French Revolution, the people of Haiti began a struggle for self-government and liberty.

The first nation in the Western Hemisphere to form a government led by people of African descent, it was also the first nation to renounce slavery.

The Haitian national flag is indisputably a symbol of general pride whose origin is tightly linked to a history of struggle for freedom.

As you all already know, the Haitian flag was first presented in 1802 when Haiti was fighting against the French for independence

and it was realized that both armies fought under the same flag.

After the modification of the flag in 1807, the phrase "L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE", meaning that through unity we find strength, was adopted.

The Haitian constitution of 1987 describes the new flag as: Two (2) equal-sized horizontal bands: a blue one on top and a red one underneath; The coat of arms of the Republic shall be placed in the center on a white square; The coat of arms of the Republic will be a Palm tree surmounted by the liberty cap and under the palms a trophy with the legend: In Union there is Strength;

This weekend, I joined with hundreds of my Haitian constituents as we celebrated Haitian Flag Day together. For as long as I can remember, Haitians have gathered in my district of Brooklyn, NY to recognize this historic day.

I ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing the world's oldest black republic and the second-oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere celebrate the ideals of unity, strength and freedom embedded in the Haitian Flag by becoming a co-sponsor of the Haitian Flag Day resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ARMENIA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the people of Armenia on the May 12 Parliamentary elections. This is the first positive assessment of an election in the former Soviet Republic since it gained independence in 1991. This encouraging outcome will most certainly enhance and deepen U.S./Armenia relations, while also elevating Armenia's reputation regionally and internationally.

Over the past few months, U.S. administration officials in Washington and Yerevan have stressed the importance of these elections and explained that substantial improvement must be made. Based on public preliminary reports, Armenia has fulfilled the test set forth by the administration and received a free and fair stamp of approval.

The International Election Observation Mission issued a statement which read, in part, and I quote, "The election is assessed in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments, other international standards for democratic elections and national legislation."

I'm especially pleased that the U.S. Embassy in Armenia joined the chorus of praise with its own assessment which reads, and again I quote, "We