

American Business Development Center in celebration of the Lunar New Year, the largest and most festive of all celebrations in most of Asia. The Lunar New Year is a time when families and friends congregate, when social bonds are strengthened, and life celebrated.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year, Mr. Speaker, underscores many commonalities throughout our diverse cultures, like an appreciation for the cyclical nature of life and the need for reunion and renewal. I wish everyone in America and throughout Asia who celebrates this occasion a very happy New Year full of good fortune and good health.

This Lunar New Year 4698, which falls on February 5, is a special one marking the Year of the Dragon. In Chinese mythology, the Dragon is a symbol of supreme power, controlling the wind and rain to benefit the earth or, sometimes, unleashing a destructive typhoon.

Dragons, as we know, are found in Western mythology as well, carved on the helm of Viking ships and woven into children's stories about European Princesses and gallant knights. The Dragon, then, is very much a part of our world culture as is the celebration of the annual renewal of life.

Mr. Speaker, today in New York City, I joined the Asian American Business Development Center in celebrating the Lunar New Year. The Lunar New Year is a triumphant occasion for millions of people throughout the world. Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow Members of Congress to join me and the Asian American Business Development Center in celebration of this special holiday.

THE FOUR YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2000

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, on the fourth anniversary of the passage of the Telecommunications Act, the benefits of deregulation are plainly evident. Consumers are paying the lowest prices in history for telecommunications services and enjoying new technologies that were unimaginable just 4 years ago. The deregulation that resulted from the act has provided tremendous stimulation to the telecommunications industry and the American economy.

Unfortunately, future progress is being held hostage by a Federal agency resistant to change. The telecommunications industry now moves on Internet time but is regulated by an FCC that relies on Depression-era rules and regulations. The FCC is too big, too powerful, and too unresponsive to the mandates of the law, congressional intent, and the needs of the American consumer.

Congress thought it deregulated the telecommunications industry 4 years ago, and to a large extent we did. What we didn't know was the extent to which the FCC would subvert congressional intent and implement its own agenda. The prologue of the 1996 act states that its goal is to reduce regulation.

What we now know is that the only way to do so is to sharply curtail the power of the FCC.

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING DEMOCRACY IN MONTENEGRO

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week I chaired a hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe on promoting and protecting democracy in Montenegro. Montenegro is a small republic with only about 700,000 inhabitants, and yet it is among the strongest proponents of democratic change in the Balkans. As a result, Montenegro has the potential of being the target of the next phase of the Yugoslav conflict which began in 1991.

Montenegro, with a south Slavic population of Eastern Orthodox heritage, is the Only other former Yugoslav republic to have maintained ties in a federation with Serbia. Since 1997, Montenegro has moved toward democratic reform, and its leaders have distanced themselves from earlier involvement in the ethnic intolerance and violence which devastated neighboring Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. In contrast, the Belgrade regime of Slobodan Milosevic has become more entrenched in power and more determined to bring ruin to Serbia, if necessary to maintain this power. The divergence of paths has made the existing federation almost untenable, especially in the aftermath of last year's conflict in Kosovo. We now hear reports of a confrontation with Milosevic and possible conflict in Montenegro as a result.

One witness Janusz Bugajski of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, presented the conflict scenarios. He said: "Other than surrendering Montenegro altogether, Belgrade has three options: a military coup and occupation; the promotion of regional and ethnic conflicts; or the provocation of civil war. More likely Milosevic will engage in various provocations, intimidations and even assassinations to unbalance the Montenegrin leadership. He will endeavor to sow conflict between the parties in the governing coalition, heat up tensions in the Sandjak region of Montenegro by pitting Muslims against Christian Orthodox, and threaten to partition northern Montenegro if Podgorica [the capital of Montenegro] pushes toward statehood. The political environment will continue to heat up before the planned referendum" on independence.

In addition to the ongoing operations to keep the peace and provide justice and democratic governance in Bosnia and Kosovo, Mr. Speaker, the United States and the rest of the international community will face the challenge this year of promoting and protecting democracy in Montenegro. Srdjan Darmanovic, head of the Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Montenegro, said it is logical and understandable that the international community encourages the Montenegrin authorities to follow a policy of ambiguity on the republic's future. On the one hand, the international com-

munity already has the burden of two peace-keeping operations in the former Yugoslav region and doesn't want another, yet it does not want Milosevic to seize Montenegro and stop the democratic development taking place there. Darmonovic concluded, however, that this situation "creates a very narrow space in which the Montenegrin Government has to play a dangerous chess game with the Milosevic regime in which the price of failure or miscalculation could be very high. . . . The 'politics of ambiguity' has very dangerous limits. It cannot last forever."

Veselin Vukotic, head of the Center for Entrepreneurship in Montenegro, described the economic steps which Montenegro has taken to distance itself from Serbia. He said that Montenegrin citizens cannot wait for the day when Milosevic resigns, which may never come. Economic change must begin now. The introduction of the Deutsche mark as a second currency has allowed the Montenegrin economy to move away from that of Yugoslavia as a whole. This has led to a decrease in Serbian-Montenegrin commerce and permits Montenegro to receive outside assistance even as Serbia remains under international sanctions. Still, he noted that the Montenegrin economy needs to be transformed into a market economy. This will require transparency to deter the continuing problem of corruption, as well as the development of a more open society.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, Montenegro is no longer alone in seeking to base its future on multi-ethnic accord, democracy and openness, rather than the nationalism of the 1990s. Beginning in late 1998, a similar trend began in Macedonia, and now in Croatia, new government leaders were elected who will reverse the nationalist authoritarianism of the Tudjman years. Hopefully, this will resonate in Serbia itself, where change is needed. The bottom line, as the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Marc Grossman said in a conversation, is that there must be change in Serbia itself. As long as Milosevic is in power, there will be regional instability.

In testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services last week, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet made clear: "Of the many threats to peace and stability in the year ahead, the greatest remains Slobodan Milosevic—the world's only sitting president indicted for crimes against humanity. . . . He retains control of the security forces, military commands, and an effective media machine."

With good judgment and resolve, Mr. Speaker, conflict can be avoided in Montenegro, and those seeking conflict deterred. As democracy is strengthened in Montenegro, the international community can also give those in Serbia struggling to bring democracy to their republic a chance to succeed. The people of Serbia deserve support. Democracy-building is vital for Serbs, Montenegrins and others living in the entire southeastern region of Europe.

Mr. Speaker, in the past decade, those of us who follow world affairs have had an in-depth lesson in the history, geography and demography of southeastern Europe. Places like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo were little known and little understood. Unfortunately, too many policymakers became aware of them only as the news reports of ethnic cleansing began to pour in.