

Public Law 101-309
101st Congress

Joint Resolution

June 18, 1990
[S. J. Res. 251]

Designating "Baltic Freedom Day".

- Whereas the people of the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have cherished the principles of religious and political freedom and have recently held mass demonstrations calling for freedom and independence;
- Whereas from 1918 to 1940, the Baltic States existed as independent, sovereign nations and as fully recognized members of the League of Nations;
- Whereas 1990 marks the 50th anniversary of the invasion, seizure, and illegal incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union against the national will and the desire for independence and freedom of the Baltic people;
- Whereas 1990 also marks the 50th anniversary of the continued policy of the United States of not recognizing the illegal forcible occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union;
- Whereas, due to Soviet and Nazi collusion, the Baltic States suffered a loss of one-third of their population by the end of World War II;
- Whereas, under Soviet occupation, the native Baltic peoples have been deported from their homelands to forced labor and concentration camps in Siberia and elsewhere;
- Whereas the people of the Baltic States have unique indigenous cultures, national traditions, and languages, which have been threatened by decades of russification;
- Whereas the Soviet Union has introduced into the Baltic States ecologically unsound industries without proper safeguards, and the presence of those industries has critically endangered the environment and well-being of the Baltic people;
- Whereas, as part of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign of openness, restructuring, and democratization, the Soviet leaders have officially acknowledged the illegality of the secret protocols to the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which led to the Soviet military invasion of the Baltic States in 1940;
- Whereas, in the spirit of openness and democratization, the Baltic peoples are affirming their right, upheld both by international law and by the Soviet Constitution, to restore full independence through parliamentary and peaceful means; and
- Whereas the United States, as a member of the United Nations, has repeatedly upheld the right of nations to self-determination: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—

- (1) the Congress recognizes the continuing desire and right of the people of the Baltic States for freedom and independence;
- (2) the Congress, in keeping with the policy of the United States to deny recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, urges the Soviet Union to recognize the sovereignty of the Baltic States and to yield to the rightful demands of the

Baltic peoples for independence from foreign domination and oppression, as guaranteed by Principle Eight of the Helsinki Accords, to which the Soviet Union is a signatory;

(3) June 14, 1990, the anniversary of the first mass deportation of the Baltic peoples from their homelands in 1941, is designated as "Baltic Freedom Day", as a symbol of the solidarity of the people of the United States with the aspirations of the captive Baltic people; and

(4) the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe Baltic Freedom Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, and to submit to the Congress within 60 days a statement articulating specific actions the United States Government is taking, in fulfillment of the intent of the non-recognition principle to—

(A) support the peaceful restoration of the independence of the Baltic States; and

(B) to encourage Soviet support for a peaceful transition to independence and democracy in the Baltic States.

Approved June 18, 1990.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 251:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 136 (1990):

Feb. 26, considered and passed Senate.

June 12, considered and passed House.