Public Law 98-39
98th Congress

June 13, 1983
[H.J. Res. 201]

Joint Resolution

Designating June 14, 1983, as "Baltic Freedom Day".

Whereas the people of the Baltic Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have cherished the principles of religious and political freedom and independence; and

Whereas the Baltic Republics have existed as independent, sovereign nations belonging to and fully recognized by the League of Nations; and

Whereas the people of the Baltic Republics have individual and separate cultures, national traditions, and languages distinctively foreign to those of Russia; and

Whereas the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) in 1940 did illegally seize and occupy the Baltic Republics and by force incorporate them against their national will and contrary to their desire for independence and sovereignty into the U.S.S.R.; and

Whereas the U.S.S.R. since 1940 has systematically removed native Baltic peoples from their homelands by deporting them to Siberia and caused great masses of Russians to relocate in the Republics, thus threatening the Baltic cultures with extinction; and

Whereas the U.S.S.R. has imposed upon the captive people of the Baltic Republics an oppressive political system which has destroyed every vestige of democracy, civil liberties, and religious freedom; and

Whereas the people of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia find themselves today subjugated by the U.S.S.R., locked into a union they deplore, denied basic human rights, and persecuted for daring to protest; and

Whereas the United States stands as a champion of liberty, dedicated to the principles of national self-determination, human rights, and religious freedom, and opposed to oppression and imperialism; and

Whereas the United States, as a member of the United Nations, has repeatedly voted with a majority of that international body to uphold the right of other countries of the world, including those in Africa and Asia, to determine their fates and be free of foreign domination; and

Whereas the U.S.S.R. has steadfastly refused to return to the people of the Baltic States the right to exist as independent republics separate and apart from the U.S.S.R. or permit a return of personal, political, and religious freedoms: Now, therefore, be it

Baltic Freedom Day.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress of the United States recognizes the continuing desire and the right of the people of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia for freedom and independence from the domination of the U.S.S.R. and deplores the refusal of the U.S.S.R. to recognize the sovereignty of the Baltic Republics and to yield to their rightful demands for independence from foreign domination and oppression and that the fourteenth day of June

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1983, the anniversary of the mass deportation of Baltic peoples from their homelands in 1941, be designated "Baltic Freedom Day" as a symbol of the solidarity of the American people with the aspirations of the enslaved Baltic people and that the President of the United States be authorized and requested to issue a proclamation for the observance of Baltic Freedom Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved June 13, 1983.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 201 (S.J. Res. 43):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 129 (1983):
Mar. 23, S.J. Res. 43 considered and passed Senate.
June 9, H.J. Res. 201 considered and passed House.
June 10, considered and passed Senate.