

I hope that everyone out there will become better informed about this and will convey to their Representatives what they would like them to do in solving the problems that have been brought up by this very special case of Specialist New.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE AND VULTURE AWARDS "COME SHOP WITH ME CAMPAIGN" UPDATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, a little over a year ago, our Jobs and Fair Trade Caucus brought together a small coalition of working women, consumer groups, and Members of Congress to launch what we have called the come shop with me campaign, a campaign to educate the American consumer about the link between the loss of U.S. jobs here at home, high prices, static wages, sweatshop working conditions in the developing world and even in some places here in this country and the record profits being made by certain multinational companies which keep U.S. prices high while relentlessly moving our jobs offshore.

We illustrated this link between loss of U.S. jobs and trade by targeting specific corporations, going to stores and checking prices, scouring annual reports and newspaper clippings, and most importantly, talking to consumers and workers, getting their side of the story.

Mr. Speaker, today we embark on a golden eagle campaign to recognize and reward fine U.S. companies that exemplify the best that is in us as a nation. Simultaneously, we will identify those companies and chief executive officers whose behavior is not exemplary and deserve to be labeled only as corporate vultures.

The corporate vulture label will be given to American corporations which are in need of vast improvement. These are the ones which exploit our marketplace yet have downsized their work forces, which have outsourced most of their production to foreign countries, which use sweatshop labor abroad and then import these transshipped goods back to the United States, keeping their prices high here at home and maintaining a shell company in our country, even while enjoying all of the benefits of being called an American company.

The vulture, a predator and a scavenger, is an appropriate symbol for identifying U.S. corporations that exploit foreign workers while getting fat on the backs of American consumers and giving back almost nothing in return.

□ 1515

But let us begin on the positive side of the ledger with our first award, the

Golden Eagle Award, and we will do one of these each month between now and the end of this fiscal year. This very prestigious Golden Eagle Award recognizes a U.S. firm and its chief executive officer who exemplified the best in business behavior. We are proud of them as citizens of this great country. The Golden Eagle Award will be presented to a U.S. firm that treats its workers with dignity while making decent profits, resists the tide of downsizing and outsourcing production, contributes to the strengthening of our communities, charges a reasonable price for its products, and remains and prospers in the United States of America.

I am very pleased to present the first Golden Eagle Award on behalf of our caucus, along with a new U.S. flag flown over our Capitol, to Malden Mills in Methuen, MA, and more specifically I would like to present the first Golden Eagle Award to Aaron Feuerstein, the 70-year-old owner of Malden Mills whom the local press there has hailed as the saint in New England.

On December 11 last year a major fire struck Malden Mills, the company Mr. Feuerstein's grandfather founded in 1906, burning down 3 of 9 buildings and idling 1,800 employees, three-quarters of the work force at that company. But instead of laying off his work force and pulling up stakes for Mexico, as so many other textile and apparel firms have done across this land, Mel Feuerstein promised he would pay the workers their wages and, even more incredibly, their health care benefits, for 30 days, and when it became obvious that more time was needed, he extended the period to 60 days and then to 90 days.

When asked why he did it, Mr. Feuerstein replied simply, "Because I consider the employees standing in front of me as the most valuable asset Malden Mills has. I don't consider them as just an expense which can be cut."

What makes Mr. Feuerstein's story all the more remarkable is that he stayed in Methuen, MA, even in the face of adversity while most of his much larger competitors, some of the names you will even recognize, Sara Lee, Fruit of the Loom, continue to close plants in this country and give pink slips to workers and move their production offshore.

Over the past 20 years 292,300 workers, mostly women, have lost their jobs in our Nation in the textile and apparel industries. Forty percent of that industry in our country is without a job. But Aaron Feuerstein, and he is not a multinational, has tried to hold out, treated his workers well and has continued to make a profit. He is a shining example of what it means to be a good corporate citizen in the United States and try to struggle uphill against the vultures of the mega corporations that would like to snuff him out of business.

Mr. Feuerstein truly deserves our praise as a patriotic citizen. Along with our first Golden Eagle Award, we

will mail to him today this brand new flag flown in his honor and his firm's honor over this Capitol of the United States. Mr. Feuerstein, thank you, thank you for your decency and for your leadership as a corporate citizen of this Nation.

By contrast, we have chosen to designate the Nike Corp. as the first recipient of our corporate vulture label. Nike has shut down all of its production in this country. It does not even produce one athletic shoe in the United States of America, even while it earns billions in profits off this marketplace. In fact, their profits have quadrupled, gone up over 4 times over the past 5 years, by aggressively marketing, and I underline the word "marketing," many of their shoe products and marketing them to some of our most impressionable young people.

The company now commands over one-half, one-half of the men's athletic shoe market in this country. Not a bad racket if you are Nike, paying your women workers in Indonesia and China 12 cents an hour while charging our kids and our families \$135 to \$150 a pair for shoes, but not a good deal if you are a downsized American worker who used to make those shoes in Maine or in California, or a consumer who has to pay those high prices. Not a good deal for them. Or how about if you are an anonymous Chinese woman worker whose government makes its money off the sweat of your work? Not a good deal for you either.

Now Nike would like you to believe that they are a great American company. In fact, they have been spending \$250 million a year out of the money they make off of you trying to convince you how good they really are. They bought so much advertising it is hard to turn on television without seeing it. Nike has virtually bought off the entire American sporting world to delude the American consumer about what is really going on here.

The truth of the matter is that all of Nike's 75,000 production workers, mostly poverty-stricken women and hungry girls, are in countries like Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea, countries which are notorious for their sweat shop working conditions and bleeding all they can out of their people until they are finished with them. Then they throw them out the door, and there is another million people who are hungry, lined up to replace them to work for 10 cents an hour.

Now here at home Nike threatens to tear up our communities with their relentless marketing to our most vulnerable kids. You know what is happening. In some places in this country our children are killing one another for these shoes. As Phil Mushnick, a sports writer for the New York Post, courageously pointed out when he refused to endorse Nike shoes, he said, "I saw the prices going from \$40 to \$90 to \$100 and then \$150, and in full cognizance that people were dying for these shoes, inner city kids, too, the kids that Nike was

targeting with their inner city role model marketing binge."

For this our caucus can think of no other company more deserving of the label "corporate vulture" than Nike Corp.

Now Mr. Philip Knight, the chairman of the board of that company and its chief executive officer, took home compensation of over \$1.5 million last year, not including his stock bonuses and other benefits and perks. I often ask myself whether this type of individual has any conscience left or if he ever had any, to profit personally off the meager wages paid to Asian women and the U.S. workers he has sent to the unemployment lines. Mr. Knight and Nike, for you our caucus designates the "vulture" label.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to place in the RECORD this evening in our battle, continuing battle for job creation in this country to give our workers and our communities a fair shake in the international market, some information on a bill moving through this Congress that Members should know about. It concerns our patent laws, the very basis for our collective intelligence as a people, the foundation of our new products where the genius for America's future lies.

The U.S. patent system is under attack, and the United States, without question, has the largest body of intellectual property in the world, protected from the time of George Washington and created by the first Congress of the United States. If this system is weakened, and there are many who would like to see that it is, America's job creation capacity will be even more seriously eroded.

Today I rise to point out that one of the bills moving in this Congress is a grave threat to our traditional patent system; that bill number, H.R. 2533, with a very innocuous title, "The U.S. Intellectual Property Organization Act of 1995."

Why am I concerned about it? Because why should our Nation pass a law that puts us at a greater competitive disadvantage with our trade competitors around the world? H.R. 2533 is tantamount to selling off our national heritage bit by bit. H.R. 2533 would subject our patent examiners to undue pressure by special interests by removing their current civil service status.

You know, there ought to be some things in this town not for sale.

H.R. 2533 would undermine the Constitution of this country by removing the Patent Office as a core Federal function, and congressional oversight in that bill becomes almost nil.

I ask my colleagues to pay attention to this bill, oppose H.R. 2533, and support H.R. 359, which restores patent terms and gives our patent and inventors, the geniuses of our country who are inventing our future, the kind of protection and respect that the Government of the United States and the people of the United States owe them.

Let me say to my colleagues, do not be fooled by the wolves at the door, and

let me say you might ask yourself the question, "Well, who would want to tamper with our patent system? In whose interests would it be to weaken the protections we give to our inventors?"

There is an article I am going to be placing in the RECORD called the National Security Report, lead article, "American Patent System Subject To Foreign Power Grab." There are plenty of powerful interests around the world that would like to own the competitive genius of this country, and they know the only way they can do that is by changing the laws.

In fact, the Constitution of the United States, and I quote from the article I am going to enter in the RECORD,

In the war for global economic dominance, the fiercest battles today are over intellectual property. Where nations once fought for control of trade routes and raw materials, they now fight for exclusive rights to ideas, innovations and inventions.

The article referred to is as follows:

[From the ROA National Security Report, Sept. 1995]

AMERICAN PATENT SYSTEM SUBJECT TO
FOREIGN POWER GRAB
(By Beverly Selby)

The recent book Patent Wars: The Battle To Own The World's Technology, best describes the reason for the current legislative struggle in the 104th Congress about intellectual property. It states, "In the war for global economic dominance, the fiercest battles today are over intellectual property. Where nations once fought for control of trade routes and raw materials, they now fight for exclusive rights to ideas, innovations and inventions."

In 1947, intellectual property comprised just under 10 percent of all U.S. exports; today, the estimate is that "intellectual property accounts for well over 50 percent of all American exports." The United States is a major player in the world community because it has the largest body of intellectual property in the world. Job creation opportunities are directly linked with the patent system which has been the secret of America's job creation and economic power for over 200 years.

Today, in the 104th Congress, the debate is about restoring the patent term, and other issues which will radically change the American patent system. Legislation has been introduced to restore the patent term, publish patent applications before a patent is issued, re-examine issued patents, and create a government Patent and Trademark Corporation.

On one side of the argument are multinational companies and foreign interests, and on the other are independent inventors, small businessmen, venture capitalists and universities. The major issue is the patent term. Several concerns have been raised about pending legislation and its effect on the American patent system.

Last year when Congress approved legislation implementing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a provision was included that dramatically changed the way the U.S. patents will be issued. Historically, patents have been awarded for a term of 17 years beginning when the Patent & Trademark Office (PTO) grants a patent to an applicant. However, beginning on 8 June of this year, the PTO will issue patents for a 20-year term beginning when the application was filed with the PTO.

The net effect of this change is to dramatically shorten the useful life of breakthrough

patents held by emerging companies, which have led to the creation of entire industries. Patents of highly technical, cutting-edge discoveries take years to issue. Under current law, such a delay in inconsequential as the patent holder is assured a minimum patent term of 17 years because the time does not begin to tick until the patent is issued. Not so with the new 20 year standard, as it often takes the PTO eight to nine years or even longer to issue a patent, leaving the patent holder with only a few years of protection, if any.

Given the vast amount of capital needed to sustain many high growth companies, retaining exclusive use of the underlying intellectual property for a full 17 years is imperative if any emerging company is to recover its costs and provide a competitive rate of return to its venture investors.

Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) has introduced legislation that would cure the problem of a shortened patent term. His bill, H.R. 359, would make U.S. patents valid for 17 years from date of issue, or 20 years from date of filing, whichever period is longer. During the course of the GATT debate last fall, United States Trade Representative Mickey Kantor agreed the Administration would not oppose legislation guaranteeing a minimum patent term of 17 years as it would not constitute a violation of the GATT agreement.

Many changes to the American patent laws were proposed in 1994. The patent term limitation was passed because it was piggybacked on the GATT-implementing legislation. This change in the patent term weakens the American patent system and penalizes the breakthrough patents. Also, these changes facilitate widespread copying of the more important inventions by foreign companies.

Three of these changes, when taken in combination, establish a disastrous scenario that clarifies the reason for the Japanese insistence that America adopt these changes. These three changes are (a) a patent term measured from the filing date (the GATT patent term), (b) publication in 18 months and (c) three party re-examination.

The scenario for important breakthrough (e.g. high-tech) patent applications is disturbing. The breakthrough patent application is filed and then it is published in 18 months. Because of its importance, large multinational companies rally to oppose the breakthrough patent by filing prior art, and most likely by filing arguments opposing the issuance of the breakthrough patent. Because of the significantly longer pendency for important patents, the breakthrough patent is far from issuing when the oppositions are filed. The patent examiner, who is reluctant to issue a breakthrough patent having broad claims, enters new rejections based upon the prior art submitted by the opposition. This further increases the pendency time.

Currently, the patent officer permits the filing of multiple re-examinations in sequence. Therefore, to be consistent, the patent office will undoubtedly permit the filing of multiple oppositions in sequence, opposition after opposition, causing the examiner to enter new rejections as new art is cited, further delaying the issuance of the patent. Under the GATT patent term, the term of breakthrough patent applications is further reduced by the long pendency.

Because of the 18 month publication requirement, companies worldwide are able to copy and to develop the breakthrough technology while the patent application is still pending. As currently practiced in Japan, and as a direct result of the publication,

competitive products begin to appear in the marketplace and large companies "flood" the PTO with multitudes of mundane improvement patents on the breakthrough technology. As in Japan, these mundane improvement patents are often issued before the breakthrough patent because of the prosecution delays inherent with such a breakthrough patent, and because delaying oppositions are not filed for mundane improvement patents.

When and if the breakthrough patent finally issues, much of the GATT patent term has expired, and its patent owner will be competing with mature products in the marketplace and "floods" of mundane improvement patents based upon the patent owner's originally published breakthrough technology. However, this is far from the end of the ordeal for the patent owner. Now the competitors file a sequence of re-examinations, one after another. A re-examination is a post-issuance opposition. The company behind the re-examination is kept secret, and an attorney is usually named as the re-examination requester. A re-examination can take more than five years. After a re-examination is completed, another, and another, and another, can be filed. A patent cannot be realistically enforced while a re-examination is in progress. Hence, a sequence of re-examinations further dissipates the effective term of the patent.

Now, new legislation is in progress to make re-examinations third party proceedings. Presently, a re-examination is conducted by the patent examiner. The requester can file initial papers but is not permitted to intervene in the re-examination. The new legislation permits the requester to participate in the re-examination. This will change a re-examination into a form of litigation with a team of opposing attorneys arguing issues, filing briefs, and performing many other complex litigation activities. The PTO has trouble hiring and training qualified patent examiners; now the PTO will have to train patent examiners to be litigation judges.

Even worse, many breakthrough inventions come from small companies and individual inventors with limited resources. Matching up such a patent owner against a team of attorneys from a large foreign company will usually end in devastation of the breakthrough patent. Even if the patent owner prevails, another re-examination will be requested by another large company citing a different stack of prior art references and the attack will start all over again.

In Japan the combination of conditions has resulted in important technologies being exposed and unprotected: a patent term measured from the filing date (the GATT patent term), publication after 18 months, and third party oppositions. This has resulted in Japan becoming a nation of copiers. Now, those seeking to copy American technology are demanding legislation to deprive America of its innovative talents. America must stand firm behind its inventors, small businesses, research universities, and entrepreneurs, and not permit its intellectual property to be copied with impunity.

Research universities also share a long-standing interest and an active involvement in intellectual property issues that affect higher education. Since the passage of Public Law 96-517 (The Bayh-Dole Act) in 1980, research universities have been actively engaged in establishing patent protection for university-developed technology and subsequently licensing their patents to industry and small business. Innovations resulting from university research are deemed largely responsible for the spectacular growth of the biotechnology industry, and of significant importance to the microelectronics, com-

puter and health care industries. These innovations are culled from the fundamental scientific explorations of university faculty, students and research scientists and, as a result, tend to be at the cutting edge of scientific theory and practice. As a consequence, patent applications on university inventions have historically spent years in the PTO before ultimately issuing as patents.

University licensing programs are generally dependent upon patent protection to induce mature companies as well as small businesses and start-up company investors to take a financial risk on backing the further development of new, and often early-stage, technologies. Consequently, university technology transfer managers were indeed concerned to find that H.R. 5110, in implementing the GATT, had potentially shortened the long-established patent term of 17 years from date of patent issue, and had done so despite the fact that such action was not required by the GATT.

Our interests in enhancing the successful transfer of university technology, and in helping to keep the U.S. as a front-runner in commercially exploiting new technologies, are not well-served by potentially diminishing the useful life of our patents in an effort to reap an unquantified benefit from harmonization with potentially less innovative nations who stand to gain from shorter patent terms.

These are but a few of the concerns of the independent inventor, venture capitalists and universities who are relying on their patents for income and to create new industries. What must be remembered is the fact that the U.S. system is unique and was created by the founding fathers as a means of generating jobs and prosperity for the country. To date, the United States is leading the world in fundamental patents, which are most often cited in patent literature worldwide.

These patents are the way to chart the prosperity and future for a nation because the patent holder will derive income over a period of time. From those patents spring new industries. At stake in the legislation now before Congress is whether the patent system should be used to benefit the American taxpayer and voter, or the world at large. The choice of the future is ours.—NSR

NSR FOCUS

Experts warn that the current debate in Congress on patent regulations can have a serious impact on the national security of our nation. Critics of the new system, which resulted from GATT negotiations and a deal cut with Japan last year, contend that foreign firms will gain access to American inventions, ultimately weakening the international competitiveness of the United States.

Robert Rines, an inventor and prominent Boston lawyer, claims that the new system is going to wreak havoc with breakthrough inventions, which, historically, have come from individual inventors or small firms, not from large corporations.

The U.S. system awards patents to the original inventor, not the first to file, as in other countries. Under the new 20-month publication provision, key concepts of an invention become available to anyone before the inventor has a chance to refile and win protection. That is why Japan, the multinationals and other big companies love it, and why, according to Rines, "the little guys are deathly afraid of it."

Beverly Selby's article is a fundamental document which clearly details the fear and concerns of the small businesses and American inventors, who, at the core of the U.S. innovative process, are faced with new pat-

ent provisions that fail to protect American technology and innovative small business—AACC

Ms. KAPTUR. I ask my colleagues again to support H.R. 359 and oppose H.R. 2533, and, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], who I understand has some remarks that he would like to make at this point.

□ 1530

INDEPENDENCE FOR THE BELARUS REPUBLIC

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to speak, if I could for a few minutes, on the issue of independence for the Belarus Republic.

Mr. Speaker, on March 22, 1996, Belarusan President, Aleksandr Lukashenka met with Russian President Boris Yeltsin to discuss a new union state. The following day, Lukashenka met with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to discuss the plan, which would politically, economically, and culturally tie Belarus with Russia.

The collapse of the Soviet Union humiliated and disgraced this former global superpower. The Russian Duma has recently voted to declare void the 1991 agreement dissolving the Soviet Union—a declaration which America must clearly not recognize as having any validity. Now, in an attempt to save face and regain some of the lost Soviet power, President Yeltsin and President Lukashenka are acting to reintegrate the independent Republic of Belarus with Russia. This new confederacy, open to all of the former Soviet Republics, would place Russia at its core. The two leaders discussed the possibility of one currency and a single constitution.

Belarus' geographical location puts it in a particularly vulnerable position for the reintegration plan. In addition, Belarusans were the last to leave the Soviet Union, while its government has been the most willing to rejoin forces with Russia.

According to Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, the new union with Belarus and Russia would "be built from two individual countries that would remain separate."

In response to this new plan, last Sunday 15,000 members of the Belarusan Popular Front marched in the Belarusan capital of Minsk in opposition to the threat of reintegration. These marchers fear that President Lukashenka will in fact relinquish Belarus' current democratic sovereignty.

As a supporter of the American-Belarusan community, and of those members of the Popular Front, I strongly believe that we must act to prevent this new union of Russia and Belarus. Accordingly, I am drafting a concurrent resolution that expresses the sense of Congress that we recognize March 24 as the anniversary of the proclamation of Belarusan independence, express our concern over the

Belarusian Governments' infringement on freedom of the press in direct violation of the Helsinki accords and the constitution of the Republic of Belarus, and state our misgivings about the proposed association between Russia and Belarus.

Mr. Speaker, it is particularly important at this moment in history that we proclaim our strong support for the Republic of Belarus and the other Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Events in both Moscow and in Minsk itself raise serious concerns about the long-term viability of an independent Belarus state and nation.

Last Sunday, I had the opportunity to attend a commemoration of the establishment of the anniversary of the Belarusian Republic, sponsored by the Belarusian American Association of New Jersey and held in New Brunswick, NJ. How ironic that the very day on which Belarusian-Americans were celebrating their heritage, Belarusians in Minsk were protesting the new union between Russia and Belarus.

On June 23, 1994, Belarus held its first multiparty Presidential elections since its independence, with a run-off election on July 10, 1994. The winner, Aleksandr Lukashanka, was a former Communist Party official and former head of the parliament's Anti-Corruption Committee. The Helsinki Commission, which observed the elections, proclaimed that the elections were conducted in conformance with international practices and that the results reflected the freely expressed will of the electorate. Unfortunately, those results have left the country with a President and government that has not shown the degree of commitment to democratic values, nor the independence from Moscow, that Belarusian-Americans and their friends had hoped for.

Last fall, Belarus suddenly made it to page 1 news when an American hot-air balloon was shot down in what seemed like an event out of the cold war. For an American public clearly not overly familiar with Belarus, this incident clearly put the country in a very bad light. Belarusian-Americans condemned this action, just as they have condemned the anti-democratic excesses of the new government in Minsk.

Clearly, Belarus is at an important crossroads. The unique language and culture of Belarus, which courageous Belarusians preserved during the years of Soviet domination, is now under attack—from no less a source than the Government of Belarus itself. While it is inevitable that the people of Belarus should feel some cultural affinity with their Russian neighbors, and seek to promote good relations in trade and other areas, the overly pro-Moscow tendencies of President Lukashanka should be questioned.

Meanwhile, the ongoing Russian military action in Chechnya raises serious questions about the possibility of imperialistic designs by Russia on

former nations under its empire—whether Czarist or Soviet. President Yeltsin, whose control over the situation seems to be less than secure, has bowed to nationalist and militarist forces in Moscow on the Chechnya question. Furthermore, President Yeltsin, whose health and popularity are both failing, may well be replaced by the Communist/Russian nationalist forces who have made no secret of their desire to reunite the old Soviet Empire.

While the official status of Chechnya as a part of the Russian Federation is different from the other independent former Soviet Republics, such as Belarus, Russian actions there are creating a very troubling precedent indicative of a desire by Moscow to reassert control over what the Russians call the near-abroad.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has sought to provide economic assistance to the Newly Independent States. Amid the pressures that many of these states are now under because of structural economic problems, ethnic tensions and the threat of Russian imperialism, we must maintain a strong commitment to helping these emerging nations achieve a democratic political system and a market economy. For nearly half a century, we devoted considerable sums to containing the Soviet threat. Now that the Soviet Union has collapsed, we have the opportunity, with much more modest levels of spending, to invest in the long-term stability of these formerly captive nations.

Unfortunately, events are working against us. On the one hand, neo-isolationist forces in Congress are trying to diminish the American commitment to supporting freedom and economic reconstruction in the former Soviet Empire. The Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that finally became law earlier this year, after a long delay over an unrelated issue, shows an obvious lessening of the enthusiasm for American involvement in the former Soviet Union that seemed so intense just a few years ago. On the other hand, the trends in Russia, Belarus and elsewhere against reform and towards the election of former Communists is giving our isolationist forces here strong ammunition.

March 25 is the actual date that Belarusians throughout the world salute the sacrifices and bravery of the members of the Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic, who in 1918 liberated their country from the harsh and oppressive Czarist and Soviet rule. Representatives of the United Councils of the First Belarusian Convention, meeting in the capital city of Minsk (Minsk), issued a proclamation of independence of the Belarusian National Republic, adopted a national flag with three horizontal stripes—white, red and white—and received widespread international recognition. For the first time since 1795, the Belarusian nation re-emerged as an

independent state. Despite the hardships from the First World War and the revolutionary turmoil in neighboring Russia, the Belarusian language, culture and national identity flourished.

Unfortunately, the freedom and independence of the Belarusian nation did not last long. In 1921, Russia's Bolshevik regime invaded and conquered the newly independent state and renamed it the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. For the next 70 years, the Belarusian people endured a totalitarian Communists regime, denied the most basic civil and political rights. Millions of Belarusian nationals were exterminated. Although the Byelorussian SSR was officially considered a member of the United Nations since 1945, the country was in fact politically and militarily dominated by Moscow, with the Belarusians' aspirations for self-government and independence completed subverted.

The Belarusian Parliament initially declared its independence back in July of 1990. Following the attempted coup against Soviet President Gorbachev in August of 1991, the Speaker of the Belarusian Supreme council, Stanislav Shuskevich invited Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk to Belarus in December 1991 to finally bury the moribund Soviet Union. In its place was established the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] with Minsk as its administrative seat. Although the Belarusian Parliament, as with many other emerging East European democracies, was dominated by former Communists, protections for Belarusian culture, as well as basic human rights, were enacted.

Since my wife Sarah is part Belarusian, I have had the opportunity to become particularly familiar with this proud people. The Sixth Congressional District of New Jersey, which covers most of Middlesex County, is home to a significant Belarusian-American community. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Americans in general have had the opportunity to learn more about this distinct land and its culture. In 1994 President Clinton visited the Belarusian capital, and a variety of United States public and private sector initiatives have been launched in Belarus. Let us resolve to continue to improve the economic, security and cultural ties between the great peoples of the United States and the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. SPEAKER, I include for the RECORD the concurrent resolution.

The concurrent resolution referred to is as follows:

Whereas, the seedlings of an independent and democratic Belarus, for which generations of Belarusian patriots had fought and died, are now in danger of being swept away as a result of the policies of Belarusian President Alaksandr Lukashenka and the efforts of Russian nationalist leaders to reunite the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union;

Whereas, March 25 is the date that Belarusians throughout the world salute the

sacrifices and bravery of the members of the Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic, who in 1918 liberated their country from the harsh and oppressive Czarist and Soviet rule. Representatives of the United Councils of the First Belarusian Convention, meeting in Miensk (Minsk), on March 25, 1918, issued a proclamation of independence of the Belarusian National Republic, adopted a national flag with three horizontal stripes of white, red and white, and subsequently received widespread international recognition.

Whereas, the Russian Duma in March 1996 has voted to declare void the 1991 agreement dissolving the Soviet Union;

Whereas, the Government of President Lukashenka has monopolized the mass media, undermined the constitutional foundation for the separation of powers, suppressed the freedom of the press, defamed the national culture, narrowed the educational basis for patriotic upbringing of youth, maligned the Belarusian language, and undercut the ground for all-Belarusian unity.

Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That it is the Sense of the House of Representatives that, March 25 be recognized as the anniversary of the declaration of an Independent Belarusian State;

Be it further resolved, That the United States press the Government of President Lukashenka to abide by the provisions of the Helsinki Accords and the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and guarantee freedom of the press, allow for the flowering of Belarusian culture and enforce the separation of powers;

Be it further resolved, That the Congress of the United States join with the people of Belarus and Belarusians throughout the world in the defending the statehood and democracy of Belarus, sustaining the country's Constitution and preventing the loss by Belarus of its hard-won nationhood and its opportunity to survive as an equal and full-fledged member-state among the sovereign nations of the world.

COMMEMORATING THE ACCESSION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PROTOCOLS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE TREATY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I have just returned to Washington from the South Pacific, where I was privileged to be part of the U.S. delegation to the signing ceremonies for the Treaty of Rarotonga. I want to take this opportunity to inform our colleagues in Congress and the people of our great Nation of the historic event that took place this past Monday, March 25, 1996, in Suva, Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Government of the United States of America signed the protocols of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone [SPNFZ] Treaty, also known as the Rarotonga Treaty, formally evidencing America's unequivocal support for the nuclear free zone in the South Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, this action by our Government constitutes a great and momentous development in the history of relations between the United States

and the nations of the Pacific region. At the Suva ceremonies, the Governments of France and Great Britain joined us in signing the protocols of the SPNFZ Treaty.

□ 1545

With this development, Mr. Speaker, all of the world's nuclear powers are now signatories to the South Pacific Nuclear Treaty.

I want to express my deepest heartfelt appreciation to the House Committee on International Relations chairman, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the committee's ranking Democrat, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], for authorizing me to represent the Committee on International Relations and the U.S. Congress in this historic milestone achievement for the people of the Pacific. Coming from the Pacific, Mr. Speaker, I was deeply honored to have been extended this great privilege.

Mr. Speaker, for decades, the island nations have strived for U.S. accession to the SONFZ protocols, which symbolizes America's support of and respect for the South Pacific people's dream of a homeland free of nuclear weapons. To have played a small role in Washington over the past 8 years in bringing about the realization of these aspirations for the people of the Pacific has been a long and hard struggle, but indeed, a very worthy one.

At this time of celebration in the Pacific, I want to recognize and thank those who have contributed greatly over the years in a bipartisan spirit to this week's historic event. In particular, the following individuals must be recognized for their leadership, the former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asian-Pacific Affairs, the gentleman from New York and former Congressman, the Honorable Stephen Solarz; former Congressman and revered champion of Pacific interests, the gentleman from California and my very good friend, the Honorable Robert Lagomarsino; and the greatly respected member of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Iowa, currently chairman of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, the Honorable JIM LEACH.

I also want to express appreciation to my colleagues and Members of this great institution—Congressmen BEN GILMAN, LEE HAMILTON, CHRIS SMITH, HOWARD BERMAN, Congresswoman CONNIE MORELLA, Congressmen GARY ACKERMAN, RON DELLUMS, DOUG BEREUTER, TOM LANTOS, PETE STARK, MATTHEW MARTINEZ, BOB UNDERWOOD, and the distinguished delegation from the State of Hawaii, Senators DANIEL INOUE and DANIEL AKAKA, Congresswoman PATSY MINK, and my good friend, Congressman NEIL ABERCROMBIE—for supporting my efforts over the years for U.S. accession to the SPNFZ Treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the tremendous leadership role that

the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency [ACDA] has played in urging, since the Reagan administration, for U.S. support of the SPNFZ Treaty. ACDA has long been a crucial and vital part of several administrations' efforts to stop nuclear proliferation around the globe. While ACDA's mission is growing with greater importance—Start II implementation, chemical weapons convention ratification, and completion of the comprehensive test ban treaty negotiations and implementation—I find it an unfathomable tragedy that ACDA's funding is being butchered. Stopping proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must clearly be a top priority of our Government, and steps must be taken to ensure that ACDA will be given the resources necessary to accomplish this most urgent of missions.

Mr. Speaker, although we were not able to stop France from resuming their recent nuclear bomb detonations in the South Pacific, we should welcome the fact that Paris' irresponsible actions ignited worldwide protests and served as a catalyst for France to join the SPNFZ Treaty protocols.

Mr. Speaker, although we were not able to stop France from resuming their recent nuclear bomb detonations in the South Pacific, we should welcome the fact that Paris' irresponsible actions ignited worldwide protests and served as a catalyst for France to join the SPNFZ Treaty protocols in an attempt to defuse international condemnation.

Mr. Speaker, the international community's strong and visceral opposition to French nuclear testing sent a strong message that we have entered into a new post-cold-war era where nuclear testing and nuclear weapons development are increasingly viewed around the world as an unnecessary evil for preserving peace, stability, and freedom. Perhaps this is a lesson we can all take to heart on the eve of the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, it is about time that the three remaining nuclear powers have finally joined Russia and China, who ironically supported SPNFZ years ago, by acceding to the SPNFZ Treaty. The fact that all of the world's declared nuclear powers are now signatories to the treaty, establishing the South Pacific's vast nuclear-free zone, cannot but be perceived positively in Geneva, Switzerland, where the United Nations-sponsored Conference on Disarmament is under way. Joining the SPNFZ Treaty is proof of the nuclear powers' good faith commitment to progress on nuclear disarmament, that should bolster efforts to negotiate a genuine "zero-yield" Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty before the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of observations, as I have followed the question of nuclear testing for the past 8 years and diligently pursued this issue with my colleagues while serving as a member of the House Committee on International Relations. We proved in World