

I also want to note that I am strongly encouraged by President Lee's appeal yesterday to convene a summit between the top leadership of Taiwan and the PRC. We only need recall the tensions between Taiwan and the PRC prior to the election of President Lee to understand the need for such a summit. A new dialog and communication between top leadership of the island and the mainland is essential not only for their relationship, but also for the maintenance of peace, stability and economic growth in the region.

I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 154 and the historic democratic process which Taiwan has undertaken.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this measure, and want to thank Mr. FUNDERBURK for originally introducing it in the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, and Chairman GILMAN for expediting the legislation to the floor for passage.

Mr. Speaker, the Chinese people on Taiwan have come a long way. Over a 10-year period of time, they have succeeded in instituting many of the democratic principles that we have enjoyed in this country for over 200 years. And they have done this through the hard work, perseverance and vision of one man: President Lee Teng-Hui. President Lee, who is the first native-born Taiwanese to govern Taiwan, has done remarkable things for his country and countrymen in this short span of time.

Therefore, on March 23, 1996, President Lee was the first man in Chinese history to be popularly elected president of Taiwan. That is no small feat, considering Taiwan's recent history, as well as other adversities he had to overcome—in particular, China's bellicose attitude toward Taiwan's impending election. However, those adversities were overcome, and President Lee was elected with a vote of 54 percent—validating his leadership and allowing him to continue forward with his progressive policies.

The American people have stood by Taiwan over the years, and I believe will continue to do so, as they continue to grow and mature into a full-fledged democracy. I have nothing but admiration and applause for President Lee and the people of Taiwan, and I recognize that the friendship between our two countries is a very special one, and should remain as such. I therefore tip my hat to President Lee on his election, and congratulate the Taiwanese people on achieving another great victory in the fight for freedom and democracy.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, since we have no objection.

In fact, we strongly support this resolution. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WICKER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 154, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution to congratulate the Re-

public of China on Taiwan on the occasion of its first direct and democratic presidential election and the inauguration of its president."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 154.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### CONGRATULATING SIERRA LEONE DEMOCRATIC MULTIPARTY ELECTIONS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 160) congratulating the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone on the success of their recent democratic multiparty elections.

The Clerk read as follows:

#### H. CON. RES. 160

Whereas since 1991 the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone have endured a horrific civil war that has killed thousands of individuals and displaced more than half the population of the country;

Whereas for the first time in almost 30 years, the Republic of Sierra Leone held its first truly democratic multiparty elections to elect a president and parliament and put an end to military rule;

Whereas the elections held on February 26, 1996, and the subsequent runoff election held on March 15, 1996, were deemed by international and domestic observers to be free and fair and legitimate expressions of the will of the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

Whereas success of the newly elected democratic government led by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah could have a positive effect on the West African Neighbors of the Republic of Sierra Leone; and

Whereas the historic event of democratic multiparty elections in the Republic of Sierra Leone should be honored: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—*

(1) congratulates the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone for holding their first democratic multiparty presidential and parliamentary elections in nearly 30 years;

(2) encourages all people of the Republic of Sierra Leone to continue to negotiate an end to the civil war and to work together after taking the critical first step of holding democratic elections in that country;

(3) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to help nations move toward freedom and democracy; and

(4) further reaffirms that the United States is committed to encouraging peace, democracy, and economic development on the African continent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN] will each be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN].

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 160, introduced by our good colleague from New York, a member of our Committee on International Relations, Mr. HOUGHTON, congratulates the people of Sierra Leone on the success of their recent multiparty democratic elections. The people of Sierra Leone have endured 4 years of brutal civil war and have showed great courage earlier this year. Voters stood in line, often for many hours, to participate in the presidential election and the following runoff election. The newly elected government is now negotiating with rebels on the long-term peace agreement.

I do not think it is unreasonable to claim that Sierra Leone is an emerging success story in Africa. It is also a powerful rebuttal to those who believe that the entire developing world is sliding into chaos and humanitarian disaster.

Despite the failures of neighboring Liberia, the people of Sierra Leone have shown they have the courage and determination to bring order to their society. I commend the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] for introducing this resolution, and I urge support for the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON].

(Mr. HOUGHTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for this opportunity to talk on behalf of Sierra Leone. A lot of us have been concerned about Africa, a lot of us have looked for leadership there, and we really have found it in the magnificent result of the elections in Sierra Leone to which the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] has referred. I would like to particularly thank, if I could, Bob Van Wicklin, in my office, who has been there, who has helped create the staff work, and has pointed up some of the necessities of our working strongly with that country.

Also I would like to thank, if I could, the 86 cosponsors, particularly the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT], the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT], the gentleman from New York [Mr. ACKERMAN], the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE], the gentleman from Florida [Mr. HASTINGS], the gentleman from New York [Mr. ENGEL], the gentleman from the Virgin Islands, [Mr. FRAZER], and so many others, and also, although I cannot mention the names, several Members of the Senate, ranking about 53 in number.

This bill is not complicated. It is noncontroversial and it is bipartisan. It simply congratulates the people of the West Africa Nation of Sierra Leone, who held their first democratic election this last year, for the first time until over 30 years, an extraordinary turnaround. People used to refer to Sierra Leone as really the pit of Africa. Many never thought there would be any opportunity for it to emerge from the darkness. Now it has.

The new President, President Kabbah, has recently negotiated, for those who are not knowledgeable here, a ceasefire to the civil war in that country with the Revolutionary United Front. Our hope is that not only Sierra Leone will be successful, but also it will be the magnet which attracts democracy to other countries, like Niger, Liberia, Guinea, and Nigeria, countries that are having a great deal of trouble here.

Let me if could just for a moment mention a few things. There really is hope in Africa. For the first time in sub-Sahara Africa in years and years and years the income per person has gone up 1 percent over last year. That does not sound very much, 1 percent, but it is really significant, because it is the first time that the income has increased in years. Usually you are taking a look at a negative figure.

In democracies, that has increased greater than in nondemocracies. In certain nondemocracies, particularly the ones that are total out-and-out dictatorships, that has gone down. So there is a correlation here.

There is a drive towards political freedom, which is more than just the politics of it. It has to do with the well-being of individuals. There have been 30 elections over the last year, over the past 5 years in Africa, and many times this has resulted in greater maturity, openness and integration, not just to themselves and not to just the African market, but the world markets. The flow of capital for the poor countries is four times what it used to be. As a matter of fact, it is about \$187 billion per year over the last five years. As it stands now, in terms of the poorer countries of this world, one-third of the world's foreign investment is going into those countries. It is a very helpful sign.

So if Africa and the boom it is experiencing is going to represent some of the finest things we are looking for, we have got to support countries like Sierra Leone. That is what this particular resolution does, and I hope there will be full support of it.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for his sponsorship of this measure and for his very eloquent statement.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this resolution, and commend the chairman of the committee

for bringing this timely and well-deserved tribute to the people of Sierra Leone before the House. I particularly want to extend my appreciation to the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] for his informative and insightful remarks, and for his very caring attitude on the part of the Third World peoples of Africa.

This spring's elections were deemed free and fair by international observers, and a democratically elected president now does govern Sierra Leone. This election is especially noteworthy in that an African military government held elections and peacefully turned over power. So we want this example to serve as a model for other such nations, and that is why this resolution is particularly important. We hope that will also give impetus to the peace talks that are currently occurring in Sierra Leone. So we urge strong support for this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT].

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Virginia for yielding time for the purposes of debate on this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that resolutions of this kind tend to have no substantive value, so quite often I just ignore them and keep going. But this time, this resolution was introduced by my good friend from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], and it started me thinking that while there is no substantive content to the resolution, it does give us an opportunity to do some important things related to democracy, and, aside from the partisanship that quite often exists in this body, it gives us time to debate, in fact discuss, the merits of democracy in this world, and to talk about some of the value that we place in democracy and the value of a democratic election.

It is hard for us to imagine in this country a country that can go 30 years without having a democratic election. We take the ability to stand on this floor and outside this building and say what we want for granted. We take the democratic process and democratic elections for granted sometimes. But the value of democracy should never be assumed. It is captured quite eloquently by the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] in is "Dear Colleague" about this resolution, in which he says, "This is worthy of our consideration and important to the United States' national interest of seeing democracy triumph over tyranny around the world."

The people of Sierra Leone are eager to follow us down the path of democracy, and we forget that so often we are trying to get people to follow us down that path, because so often we dwell on the negative aspects of our democracy and forget that, as one person said, democracy is the worst form of government that we can have, except all the other forms of government.

There are two other things that I want to cover very quickly, and that is democracy is not easy in other parts of the world, and there are challenges that democracies face around the world. We ought to take every opportunity to encourage and congratulate other countries who are following us down this path. So I want to applaud this resolution for that purpose.

Finally, there are adjoining countries, countries that adjoin Sierra Leone or are in close proximity to them, where democracies are now struggling, the country of Nigeria, the country of Liberia. Both have ongoing struggles that illustrate better than I could ever talk about the challenges that face democracies in this world. So if we can encourage Sierra Leone to expand this concept to those adjoining countries, to those democracies that are facing challenges, then that is an important objective that we ought try to support.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], and encourage my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT], another member of our Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on International Relations and the Subcommittee on Africa, I rise in strong support of this resolution congratulating the people of Sierra Leone on the success of the recent democratic multiparty elections.

□ 1515

I want to commend my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York, Mr. HOUGHTON, who has introduced this legislation; also, the distinguished chairwoman of the subcommittee itself, the gentlewoman from Florida, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I would also like to extend commendations across the aisle to the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. MORAN, who has shown significant leadership in this area. Many people have worked very hard to bring this forward today.

The March 15 democratic Presidential parliamentary elections marked an historic day in Sierra Leone. After nearly 30 years of one-party rule, civil war and military dictatorships, nearly 75 percent of the Sierra Leone citizenry, at great personal risk, went to the polls to cast their votes. Since that election, a cease-fire has been negotiated to end the fighting that has led to the deaths of more than 10,000 individuals and also left more than 4.5 million homeless. This resolution encourages the people of Sierra Leone to continue those negotiations and to work for a lasting peace.

Mr. Speaker, when a nation, in the face of so much adversity, is able to

take such a giant step forward toward democracy, it should be commended, and I am pleased to be able to join my colleagues in doing so.

Again, I thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] for his work on this issue and I urge the adoption of this resolution.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the very distinguished statesman from New York [Mr. PAYNE], to share with us a small part of his encyclopedic knowledge of the peoples and countries of Africa.

(Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for that kind introduction, and I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 160 sponsored by my good friend, the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON].

I also want to congratulate the people of Sierra Leone on their democratic elections held on the 26th and 27th of February of this year, the first time in over 31 years that the people of that country have had free elections.

Sierra Leone gained its independence in 1961 from Britain and since that time it has had a government that showed very little compassion for its people. Relief agencies estimate that half of the country's 4 million people are refugees. The life expectancy is 42 years, and the once diamond trade has virtually dissipated into the hands of the military government.

However, thanks to many concerned individuals, we have seen a successful election. I would like to pay tribute to two individuals, Derhanu Dinka, the United Nations special representative to Sierra Leone who played a key role in this election, and James Jonah, a former senior United Nations official from Sierra Leone who returned back to his country to help save it.

Let me speak of Mr. Jonah's role of bringing country peace to Sierra Leone. Mr. Jonah returned home at the military's invitation to head an electoral commission and surprised the army by keeping his promise to hold honest elections.

Many times Mr. Jonah's determination almost cost him his life when he refused to raise the minimum wage required for Presidential candidates so that it would not discriminate against any other candidates. Many contributions were made by both Mr. Jonah and others who worked so hard.

Others also contributed to the success of the elections. There were groups of international and domestic election monitors who stayed there to be sure that the elections were transparent, open and free.

Despite deadly conflicts between citizens and those seeking to disrupt the elections in Bo and Kenema, the electoral process was largely peaceful and the people refused to allow a group of thugs who came in to disrupt the election to allow that to happen. They

came out and said that we want to vote, and they voted, and it was fair and it was free. So I commend the people of Sierra Leone for this tremendous election.

Let me just say in conclusion that there have been successful elections in a number of countries in Africa. We saw the 30-year leader, Kenneth Kuanden in Zambia, who stood for elections, take the defeat and move out to his village. We saw a 35-year President in Malawi, Life President Banda, they called him Life President because he was expected to be there for life, allowed multiparty elections. He lost and he also returned to his village.

We see peace now in Mozambique where we have had recent elections, where the Renamo forces and the government have come together. In Angola, UNITA and the FLMA, President dos Santos' government have come to have a government of unity. Still problems, but they are working on it.

In Namibia, the SWAPO organization have come in and taken hold of the government and those elections and are moving to a true democracy.

South Africa we saw the first non-racial elections held recently, and the Mandela government is moving forth trying to create opportunities.

Ethiopia has ended its long war, and with Mr. Meles Zenawi leading the government. Eritrea, Benin, and I could go on and on. But I want to point to the success of democracy. The world is taking what we have and we should be willing to share it and help with its development.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the value of House Congressional Resolution 160—a resolution congratulating the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone on the success of their recent democratic multiparty elections.

I would first like to commend our colleague, Mr. HOUGHTON, on his leadership in introducing this resolution, and note that this measure received unanimous support of the members of the Subcommittee on Africa.

The importance of this resolution is twofold. In the strictest sense, it serves to encourage the people of Sierra Leone to continue on the long and arduous journey toward political stabilization and the consolidation of an open, just society, and system of government.

However, its impact extends beyond the boundaries of this West African country.

This resolution serves as an inspiration to emerging and fragile democracies throughout the African continent. It serves to illustrate U.S. commitment to the promotion of democratic principles, as well as American resolve to support and guide emerging democracies through the process of reform and transition.

Normally, the focus tends to be on those African countries who succumb to their tumultuous pasts and choose violence as instruments of political change. This resolution compensates for this trend by focusing on a success and a positive outcome.

The people of Sierra Leone truly deserve our admiration for their commitment and determination to bring peace to their country and create an environment where democratic ideals could flourish as they have done.

For five years, anarchy and civil war have swept through this West African country like a bitter wind, claiming the lives of thousands. Twenty-nine years of dictatorship gradually stripped the country of its potential for growth and prosperity.

But, throughout, the people of Sierra Leone persevered. This year, they exerted their will, overcoming great obstacles in their quest for peace. They suffered in the cause of democracy, enduring beatings and mutilations to press ahead with the second round of Presidential elections of March 15. In the end, they were successful.

For their fantastic courage, the people of Sierra Leone merit our respect. They are at a threshold. The restoration of civilian democratic rule offers the best chance of peace and security in Sierra Leone. Thus, it is imperative that we praise the achievements of the people of Sierra Leone, and send an unequivocal message of support for their ongoing efforts to ensure a future of stability and growth for their country.

Thus, I urge my colleagues in the House to support this resolution.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in praising the people of Sierra Leone for their remarkable determination in the face of extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

By the simple act of voting this spring, they began to wrest their fate from the roving bands of rebel guerrillas that have driven more than half of the people of Sierra Leone out of their homes.

The individual acts of courage in coming to the voting booth—in not one, but two rounds of elections—echo loudly, especially in Africa where democracy too often is an elusive goal.

I believe that it helped both sides of the 5-year-old civil war to agree to a cease-fire, and I hope the leaders of both side of this civil war will follow the lead of their countrymen, and end their brutal conflict peacefully.

When peace comes, I hope that the 320,000 Sierra Leoneans who have taken refuge in Guinea and Liberia—and the 1.5 million who are displaced within their own borders—will return home.

And perhaps the sound of free and fair elections, the sound of peace, will echo into the chaos of Liberia, and throughout Africa.

Nearly 100 years ago, Daytonians were among the first missionaries to Sierra Leone. A Dayton company, Nord Resources, long has operated the Sierra Rutile mine, which is the nation's largest employer. The civil war closed the mine more than a year ago; ending the war would mean jobs once again for more than 2,000 people there.

I traveled to Sierra Leone 7 years ago, and found it to be a beautiful country. With the continued determination of its people—and with the encouragement of the United States—I believe that peace and prosperity is again within reach.

I commend Congressman HOUGHTON for his leadership in bringing the deserving efforts of Sierra Leone's voters to the attention of Congress. And I join him and many others from Dayton and throughout the United States in congratulating the people of Sierra Leone on their efforts to build democracy and peace.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WICKER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 160.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 160.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 205TH ANNIVERSARY OF POLAND'S FIRST CONSTITUTION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution 165 saluting and congratulating Polish people around the world as, on May 3, 1996, they commemorate the 205th anniversary of the adoption of Poland's first constitution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 165

Whereas, on May 3, 1996, Polish people around the world, including Americans of Polish descent, will celebrate the 205th anniversary of the adoption of the first Polish constitution;

Whereas American Revolutionary War hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko introduced the concept of constitutional democracy to his native country of Poland;

Whereas the Polish constitution of 1791 was the first liberal constitution in Europe and represented Central-Eastern Europe's first attempt to end the feudal system of government;

Whereas this Polish constitution was designed to protect Poland's sovereignty and national unity and to create a progressive constitutional monarchy;

Whereas this Polish constitution was the first constitution in Central-Eastern Europe to secure individual and religious freedom for all persons in Poland;

Whereas this Polish constitution formed a government composed of distinct legislative, executive, and judicial powers;

Whereas this Polish constitution declared that "all power in civil society should be derived from the will of the people";

Whereas this Polish constitution revitalized the parliamentary system by placing preeminent lawmaking power in the House of Deputies, by subjecting the Sejm to majority rule, and by granting the Sejm the power to remove ministers, appoint commissars, and choose magistrates;

Whereas this Polish constitution provided for significant economic, social, and political reforms by removing inequalities between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, by recognizing town residents as "freemen" who had judicial autonomy and expanded rights, and by extending the protection of the law to

the peasantry who previously had no recourse against the arbitrary actions of feudal lords;

Whereas, although this Polish constitution was in effect for less than 2 years, its principles endured and it became the symbol around which a powerful new national consciousness was born, helping Poland to survive long periods of misfortune over the following 2 centuries; and

Whereas, in only the last 5 years, Poland has realized the promise held in the Polish constitution of 1791, has emerged as an independent nation after its people led the movement that resulted in historic changes in Central-Eastern Europe, and is moving toward full integration with the Euro-Atlantic community of nations: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—*

(1) the people of the United States salute and congratulate Polish people around the world, including Americans of Polish descent, on the adoption of the first Polish constitution;

(2) the people of the United States recognize Poland's rebirth as a free and independent nation in the spirit of the legacy of the Polish constitution of 1791; and

(3) the Congress authorizes and urges the President of the United States to call upon the Governors of the States, the leaders of local governments, and the people of the United States to join in this recognition with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN] will each be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN].

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 165, a resolution noting the 205th anniversary of the adoption of Poland's first Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, the Polish Constitution of 1791 stands as the first liberal Constitution in Europe, creating a constitutional monarchy.

Its adoption by the Polish nation marked an important step away from the feudal system of government that then prevailed throughout Eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, Poland soon fell victim to the imperialism of the Prussian, Russian, and Austrian empires, which divided the territory of Poland and ruled the Polish people for more than a century.

The Polish Constitution of 1791 became a symbol around which the Polish people rallied, however, and today—with the independence they regained earlier in this century and with the end of Communist dictatorship in Poland 7 years ago—the Polish people are now engaged in building a new constitutional democracy.

The Polish nation has undergone times of great difficulty and great destruction since 1791, but it has survived and, as a new democracy in Eastern Europe, appears to be well on its way toward integration into the trans-At-

lantic community of democratic States.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, not just as a recognition of Poland's historical striving toward democracy, but as a statement about Poland's future as a free, independent, and democratic State.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and commend the chairman of the committee for bringing it before the House, and the strong supporter of Polish interests, the gentleman from Buffalo, NY, Mr. JACK QUINN; and the other cosponsors, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. BORSKI, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. FLANAGAN, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. KLECZKA, and others.

It is appropriate that the House and the people of the United States congratulate the Polish people around the world, including Americans of Polish descent, on the 205th anniversary of the adoption of the first Polish constitution.

The, as now, Poland has been a leader in Europe. In 1989, Poland took the first steps toward breaking up the Warsaw Pact and held the first free elections in Eastern Europe. That led the way on comprehensive economic reform.

Poland is now striving to integrate itself fully into the family of western nations. All of us can take a measure of pride in Poland's achievements, which serve the U.S. interests in peace, security, and prosperity in Europe.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. QUINN], the original sponsor of this measure.

(Mr. QUINN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 165, a resolution honoring an important event in the development of democracy in Central-Eastern Europe and the world; the 205th anniversary of Poland's first Constitution of 1791.

On the third day of May, 1996, Polish people and Americans of Polish descent around the world celebrated the 205th anniversary of Poland's first Constitution.

The Polish Constitution of 1791, which became the first liberal constitution in Europe was preceded only by our own Constitution in 1787.

The 1791 Constitution sought an end to the feudal system of government, where a few monarchs and aristocrats governed Poland's majority.

American Revolutionary War hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko introduced the concept of a constitutional democracy to his native country of Poland, which