

by funneling money through the children of rich donors.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that if we try to swallow campaign finance reform whole instead of taking smaller bites, we ultimately choke. Instead, we should adopt what I believe this is, a more realistic and commonsense approach to focus on getting the job done. That is what I think the American people want, and that is what my bill offers. Again, three steps, if the camera can pick this up, one, two, and three, that is all there is to it, but it goes a long way, I believe, toward commonsense reform, reform we can do now. I urge my colleagues to become cosponsors.

THE HONG KONG REVERSION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, in less than 5 months nearly a century of British rule will end and Hong Kong will become a special administrative region of China. Nobody knows exactly what will happen in Hong Kong on that night or in ensuing months and years. This reversion is unprecedented in its complexity.

Hong Kong, one of the world's most efficient economies, will become part of an emerging giant that has yet to integrate itself fully into the world economy and the international community and which has only begun to experiment with democracy at the village level.

The United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China have largely agreed upon the basic rules for Hong Kong's reversion in the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984. For its part, China has agreed to grant Hong Kong more autonomy than international law requires.

In Hong Kong's Constitution, the basic law of 1989, the National People's Congress unveiled a one-country, two-system arrangement for 50 years. During that time, Hong Kong is supposed to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in the areas of foreign affairs and defense.

It is rumored that over 7,000 journalists from around the world will be on hand at midnight on June 30, 1997, to witness the official handover. Presumably those journalists will be there to observe whether the transition goes smoothly. Already the press coverage in Hong Kong has become intense.

In large part, the attention focused on Hong Kong by the international press has been fueled by misguided or heavy-handed efforts by the Chinese Government to disband the current legislative council and replace it with the provisional legislature, to alter civil rights protections in Hong Kong, and to improperly influence the extremely efficient and extraordinarily important civil service of Hong Kong.

Today, with a number of colleagues, I am introducing the Hong Kong Rever-

sion Act that will aid Congress in wading through all of the important issues and this complex transition by building on the Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992. It will require assessments and reports by the Secretary of State in very specific areas so that the President can determine whether to maintain current United States law and policies involving Hong Kong.

In addition, I am especially pleased to report that a team of specialists from the Library of Congress, led by Kerry Dumbaugh, has, at my request, just completed an excellent comprehensive report entitled "Hong Kong's Reversion to China: Implications for the United States." This excellent report will also greatly assist the Congress in this important task, so I am allowing the Library of Congress to make this report publicly available today.

Mr. Speaker, this Member invites the cosponsorship and support of this legislation by any and all of my colleagues. Original cosponsors include the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN], the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BARRETT], the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER], the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA], the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CRANE], the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. KOLBE], and the gentleman from California [Mr. COX].

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF LITHUANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the people of Lithuania, who, through tireless perseverance, are celebrating their independence on Sunday, February 16.

Referred to as the crossroads of Europe, with the geographical center of Europe just to the north of the capital of Vilnius, Lithuania is a fascinating and diverse country rich in history and tradition. I am proud to be a descendant of a Lithuanian immigrant to the United States. My great grandfather, Casper Shimkus, came to this country in hopes of finding the American Dream. It is my pleasure to carry on his name and his Lithuanian heritage, a heritage strong in work ethic, personal responsibility, and the ability to overcome adversity.

As Americans, there are certain rights we take for granted, all of which can be found in our Bill of Rights. Lithuanians have struggled for these rights, a struggle which has expanded the centuries.

Since the founding of the first Lithuanian state in 1236, Lithuania has

been occupied by czarist Russia for a majority of the time, an occupation which lasted continuously from 1795 to 1915. During that time, the people of Lithuania were subjected to many hardships, including being unable to use the Latin alphabet, lack of religious freedom, and desecration of their cultural identity.

With the collapse of czarist Russia at the end of World War I, Lithuanians took advantage of the opportunity to regain their independence. On February 16, 1918, the Lithuanian National Council met and declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence. After defending itself against foreign armies traveling across the territory after the war, by the early 1920's Lithuania was a free nation rebuilding its own political culture and economic life.

This freedom was short-lived for the Lithuanian people. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany entered into a pact which placed Lithuania in the Soviets' sphere of influence. On June 15, 1940, in violation of international law, the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania. The occupation by the Soviet Union lasted for about 1 year until Nazi Germany forced the Soviets out and then occupied this country.

□ 1545

It was during the next 3 years of Nazi occupation that most of Lithuania's 200,000 Jewish citizens were murdered. After the fall of Nazi Germany, the Soviets stepped in and again occupied Lithuania. However, the idea of an independent Lithuania never died. In the late 1980's, as changes were taking place throughout the Soviet Union, Lithuanians organized a powerful independence movement.

After four decades of suppression of their culture and heritage, the Lithuanian people rose up in peaceful protest. The continued protest and push for independence finally culminated in 1990, with proindependence candidates winning a clear majority in elections to the Parliament of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. On March 11, 1990, the reestablishment of an independent Lithuanian State was proclaimed. After a final, unsuccessful coup attempt by a few Soviet military units in 1991, Lithuania took its rightful place in the international community as a vibrant, independent country.

Now led by a parliamentary democracy, the determined Lithuanian people are beginning to feel the full benefits of freedom, religious freedom, a taste of democracy, and movement toward an effective free market economy. The United States must lend its full support to not only Lithuania, but to all the Baltic States now. This is not the time for our administration to waver on its position toward the Baltics.

With the instability of the political situation in Russia, it is in the long-term interest of the United States to promote democracy and free markets

in the region, in hopes that it may counteract possible instability. It is now time for the United States to recognize the struggle the Lithuanians have had for freedom and democracy, and support these brave people for their determination and moral principles they exemplify, rather than sidestep the issue so that we do not jeopardize our relationship with Russia.

At this time, Lithuania is looking for an invitation for at least one Baltic country in the first round of NATO enlargement at the Madrid summit this July. This invitation would promote an alliance between Western ideas and the Baltic region, providing security so that the Baltic States may continue with their pro-Democratic reforms.

As Americans in the post-cold-war era, we all should be trying to promote peace, democracy, and free-market enterprise in the region, which could be achieved with the NATO expansion, including part of the Baltic States. It is for these reasons that I am a strong supporter of the concurrent resolution offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], recommending the integration of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into NATO.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all Lithuanians on their independence, and ask that my colleagues join in supporting this proud Nation. The fate of their liberty now rests on the determination of the Lithuanian people to preserve and protect a democratic government. As Americans, we should not only congratulate this country for their newly emerging democracy, but support their efforts to become a member of NATO.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. COX].

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois, and with my other colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, in recognizing Lithuanian Independence Day this Sunday.

Lithuanian independence, of course, is not something that the people of Lithuania and the people of the free world won from the Soviet Union. It is something that Lithuania declared for itself 79 years ago, in 1918. What Lithuania did in my lifetime, and something in which I am proud to have participated, was to reassert successfully that independence, to do so at a time when the Soviet Union was not so vulnerable as looking back in history it might appear to us it was.

At the end of the 21st century, it now must appear obvious to everyone that the Soviet Union was inevitably going to collapse of its own weight. But the Red army was very strong in the 1980's, and the Black Berets were very strong and intimidating in the 1980's.

The truth is that even under those policies of glasnost and perestroika, that Mikhail Gorbachev advanced with such public relations flare throughout the rest of the world, the boot of the Red army was heavy and brutal indeed.

I traveled to Lithuania just after what now is known by history as Bloody Sunday, and the Black Berets murdered so many Lithuanians who were working toward reestablishment of their independence that we will celebrate once again on Sunday.

The truth is that the free people, now the free people of Lithuania—and Freedom House has just rated Lithuania as a free nation objectively, using the standards they used to measure relative freedom throughout the world—the free people of Lithuania did something far more than establish their own independence, their own civil rights, their own civil liberties, their own human rights and personal liberties.

They did something for all of us. They helped tip the balance at that very, very key moment in history against communism, against the Soviet Empire; and Lithuania, more than any other people, is responsible for helping topple the Soviet Empire. Lithuania was part of that empire, unwillingly, of course. It was a captive nation.

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have enjoyed a special neighborly bond over a period of many, many years. This Sunday, on Lithuanian Independence Day, there will be hoisted in Vilnius not just the standard of the Lithuanian nation, but also its Baltic neighbors, Latvia and Estonia, to show Baltic solidarity. Lithuania wants very much to hasten its integration, its reintegration, into the community of Europe.

As my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] has so properly pointed out, that should include Europe's security arrangements, and it should include NATO. He and I and many of our colleagues in this body, Democrats and Republicans, have been urging that this 1999 date be accelerated, that we not prolong a process that should be taking place much more quickly, and that Hungary and Poland and the Czech Republic, for starters, be admitted to NATO on a much more rapid timetable, and that the Baltics very soon afterward be admitted as well.

Thinking back to the key events that led to the reassertion of Lithuania's independence, it is remarkable more than anything else to me to think of who was the unlikely general that led that battle against the Red army.

The most inspiring image for me is that of a piano teacher, a piano teacher at the Conservatory of Music in Vilnius. His name is Doctor, because he is that, of course, by his educational training, Vytautas Landsbergis. Vytautas Landsbergis headed up Sajudis, fighting for human rights, fighting for freedom, fighting for democracy, well before the successful reestablishment of Lithuanian independence.

I had a chance early on, after I got elected to Congress in 1989, to work with him in that fight. I had a chance to be with him on election night when he was elected President of Lithuania.

It was a very, very inspiring thing. But it was not very easy for me to get into Lithuania, because I and the handful of congressional colleagues, that attempted to travel to Lithuania with me as observers of this election, were kept out by the Soviet Union.

This was not some casual bureaucratic dismissal of the travel plans of some Members of Congress, this was a decision taken at the highest level by Edward Shevardnadze, who is the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, and by the Supreme Soviet, which voted to keep us out.

We were held in East Berlin for a prolonged period, until finally, around midnight on election night, we were able to get in, and President-elect Landsbergis and all of the Sajudis leaders who were with him met us on the tarmac in the middle of the night, and we embraced. It was very, very emotional. It was a thrill for the reason that I mentioned earlier, not just because there had been a free election in Lithuania, and because the people finally had spoken after so many years of being made slaves by their Communist overlords, but because here was the official commencement of the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

The rest of the world started to awaken to the fact that the Soviet Union was finished on that night. It has not been easy for Lithuania in the wake of that very emotional success. Lithuania has had to work hard to reestablish the rule of law and the fundamentals of free enterprise that make human prosperity possible. They have been doing a good job of it, but they can do a better job, and in future elections I think we will see the forces of democracy and the forces of free enterprise doing even better.

Integration into NATO, in my view, is a way to institutionalize that movement. It is very important for us to keep raising that point, because in 1997, that is one of the significant ways that our foreign policy and the foreign policy of Europe and the foreign policy of the Baltics intersect.

I will just remark to my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois, how proud I am to be here with a member of Lithuanian ancestry, direct Lithuanian ancestry, because it has been my privilege to be made an honorary Lithuanian. I have not done this by birth. But I am so proud of the associations that I have with Lithuanian-Americans and the people in Lithuania that I have met on my multiple trips there. I want to thank the gentleman very much, and offer my good wishes to him as he continues to be a leader on this subject in the Congress.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within