

GUN SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I do identify with the comments of my colleague, a livable community where our families are healthy.

I wanted to reference just for a moment a concern about the health of American families. One-third of a century ago, the automobile was the focus of our concern. Ralph Nader published a famous book on "Safe At Any Speed," and this Congress, the Federal Government, the industry, embarked upon an aggressive program to make the automobile safer. As a result of extensive data collection, reengineering, legal regulation and, of course, the automobile for years has been personalized so it could only be operated by somebody authorized to use it, today we have seen spectacular increases in automobile safety and a reduction in deaths despite the fact that miles traveled have exploded.

Today, in many communities, gun violence is now surpassing the automobile as the major source of accidental death. Today, I sponsored a forum on Capitol Hill with three leading experts to deal with gun violence. For every 90 minutes in this country, another child dies. The evidence was overwhelming from these experts that gun violence can in fact be reduced.

We had testimony from Professor Stephen Teret of the Johns Hopkins Center for Public Policy and Research; Dr. Steve Hargarten of the Firearm Injury Center at the Medical College of Wisconsin; and Dr. Garen Wintemute of the Violence Prevention Research Program at the University of California-Davis. What these gentlemen were able to demonstrate is that we can in fact take simple steps to do something about the epidemic of gun violence in our community.

First and foremost, we can promote policies that promote safe gun storage. Starting with the State of Florida, 15 States now have enacted legislation that promotes responsible gun ownership and safe gun storage and we have seen a resulting reduction in firearm violence among children.

Second, it does make a difference if we prevent criminals from gaining access to guns at the front end, and there is persuasive evidence that by extending the prohibitions under the Brady law to more criminals, to prevent them from access to guns, that we can have a reduction in their use of guns in their hands.

Finally, there was attention given to something that is often ignored, the design of weapons in the United States. Indeed, it is a sad commentary that there are more restrictions over the product safety of toy guns than of real guns. There is no reason for us to manufacture and sell guns in this country today that do not tell you whether or not there is a bullet in the chamber.

There is no reason today that we have to have guns with automatic clips that when you disengage the clip that it does not sweep the bullet from the chamber. For a few cents to a few dollars, guns can be built that provide this safety device. Many have it. Tragically, too many do not.

Last, and I think most significant, there is no longer any reason for us not to personalize a gun just like we personalize a car with a key, so that somebody who steals that gun, somebody who wrestles a gun away from a law enforcement professional would have that gun disabled. The technology is available today and it is sad that we have not yet taken steps to make sure that it is available to us.

The same strategy that resulted in a dramatic reduction in automobile fatalities in this country can be employed to reduce gun violence. Get good information instead of spreading it over a dozen different agencies in the Federal Government. Have the courage to use and analyze that information and to implement policies that will make a difference for America's families. It is my fervent hope that as we talk about ways to make our communities more livable that we will take safe, simple, commonsense steps to reduce gun violence for the sake of our children. I hope this Congress has the courage to act.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise proudly to celebrate Greek Independence Day, an event which marked the symbolic rebirth of democracy.

On March 25, 1821, Greece finally rebelled against more than four hundred years of Turkish oppression. The revolution of 1821 brought independence to Greece and emboldened those who still sought freedom across the world. I commemorate Greek Independence Day each year for the same reasons we celebrate our fourth of July. It proved that a united people, through sheer will and perseverance, can prevail against tyranny. The lessons the Greeks and our colonial forefathers taught us provide strength to victims of persecution throughout the world today.

The Greek people, like our colonists, sought the right to govern themselves and determine their country's destiny. In drafting our constitution, American colonial leaders cited Greek and Roman sources. The very basis of our constitution derives from Aristotle and was put into practice in ancient Rome. Our Founding Fathers emulated the efforts of the ancient Greeks in order to establish a balance of powers. The framers sought to avoid the disintegration of government which marked other political systems throughout history. Polybius, an ancient Greek, wrote: "when one part, having grown out of proportion to the others, aims at supremacy and tends to become too dominant, none of the three is absolute."

And so, today, we celebrate the independence of Greece and the principles of democ-

racy that have endured through the present day.

By honoring the Greek struggle for independence, we reaffirm the values and ideas that make our nation great. We also remember why freedom is so important. Abraham Lincoln said "what has once happened will invariably happen again, when the same circumstances which combined to produce it, shall again combine in the same way."

I want to provide some background on Greek Independence Day for the benefit of our colleagues who are not familiar with it. The war of independence, as many call it, began on March 25, 1821. Alexander Ypsilantis and 4,500 volunteers assembled near the Russian border to launch an insurrection against four centuries of Ottoman rule. The Turkish army initially massacred the Greek volunteers, who were poorly organized and insufficiently armed.

When news of Greek uprisings spread, the Turks killed Greek clergymen, clerics, and laity in a frightening display of force. In a vicious act of vengeance in 1822, the Turks invaded the island of Chios and slaughtered 25,000 of the local residents. The invaders enslaved half the island's population of 100,000.

Although the Greeks lacked training, their leaders redoubled efforts to gain independence. "Eleftheria i thanatos"—liberty or death—became the Greek patriots' battle cry. Although many died, they were undeterred from their ultimate goal.

Many acts of heroism fill this history of the Greek war for independence. I would like to share some of these stories with you. Theodoros Kolokotronis was the leader of the Klephts, resilient Greeks who refused to submit to Turkish domination. The Klephts attacked from their mountain strongholds by surprise, battering their oppressors into submission. Kolokotronis assembled an army of 7,000 men who prevented their rivals from replenishing their provisions.

Another great battle took place near Corinth. After a few weeks, the Turks were eventually defeated. Kolokotronis was successful because ordinary citizens displayed extraordinary courage and morale. Despite the odds, Kolokotronis managed to capture Tripolitsa and engineer the Greek victory over the Turkish army of Dramali, which had invaded the Peloponnese with 30,000 men.

Another wave of rebellion against Turkish oppression was ignited by the Suliotes, villagers who took refuge from Turkish authorities in the mountains of Epirus. The fiercely patriotic Suliotes bravely fought the Turks in several battles. News of their victories spread throughout the region and encouraged other villages to revolt. When the Suliote women, left alone, learned that Turkish troops were fast approaching their village, they began to dance the "Syrto," a patriotic Greek dance. One by one, they committed suicide by throwing themselves and their children off Mount Zalongo. They chose to die rather than surrender and face slavery.

I recount these stories because they underscore Greece's absolute commitment to independence. As we all know, the price of liberty can be very high . . . hundreds of thousands of lives. Socrates, Plato, Pericles, and many other great minds throughout history warned that we maintain democracy only at great cost. The freedom we enjoy today is due to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past.

To continue living freely, we must also live responsibly. If people are to govern themselves democratically, then they must also govern themselves responsibly. The same holds true for nations. If not, either anarchy or tyranny will follow.

Even as we speak, tensions persist around the globe, particularly between Greece and Turkey. One cannot enjoy the fruit of freedom without first planting the seeds of peace. Unfortunately, the struggle for peace continues in the republic of Cyprus today.

Turkey still illegally occupies a large part of Cyprus, as it has since its brutal invasion—code named “Attila”—in 1974. Since the invasion, 1,614 Greek-Cypriots and five Americans have been missing. Because of congressional influence, our government discovered the remains of one of these Americans—a young boy, Andrew Kasapis, last year.

Free people everywhere share a moral obligation to promote democracy and end oppression. The United States has exerted its influence to promote peace in the middle east and northern Ireland. Now it is time to do the same in Cyprus.

The United States cannot be the world's policeman, but we must help others who share our passion for liberty and peace. Our nation has always been willing to fight for freedom for others. We must not—and cannot—remain idle while Cyprus remains divided.

The U.S. did not remain neutral when imperialism shook Europe's foundations during world war I. The U.S. did not fail to act when the clouds of German and Japanese atrocity descended upon the world during world war II. Throughout the history of the United States, we have answered freedom's call. As the leader of the free world, our nation must continue to actively oppose tyranny.

Finding a fair resolution for Cyprus will help stabilize a region marked more often by conflict than accord. Turkey continues to refute U.N. resolutions on Cyprus. Turkey's position contradicts the goals of seeking a peaceful solution in the island republic.

In the Aegean, Turkey more recently violated international law by claiming territorial ownership of the Grecian islet of Imia. Turkey blatantly disregarded previous treaties which clearly recognize Greece's sovereignty over Imia. Tensions between Greece and Turkey on this matter continue today. I have joined Congressman Pallone in introducing legislation expressing the sense of congress that Imia is a sovereign territory of Greece under international law.

Turkey also has failed to properly protect the ecumenical patriarchate in Istanbul. In 1997, his all holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, graced the congress with his visit here. The Patriarch is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, including five million Americans. He was honored by the Congress, which awarded him the Congressional Gold Medal. It is important to remember that while the Patriarch spreads his message of peace throughout the entire world, the ecumenical patriarchate in Istanbul has been repeatedly subjected to terrorist attacks. My legislation urging the U.S. government to provide protection to the Patriarchate and its personnel became law last year. Unfortunately, the administration has failed to convince Turkey that we are serious about this matter.

Our nation has the influence to encourage Turkey to abide by international law and to re-

spect Greek sovereignty. I only hope we have the corresponding will. To continue to permit aggression against Greece and Cyprus dishonors the legacy of Greek independence and the values we hold so dear.

Mr. Speaker, we celebrate Greek independence to reaffirm the common democratic heritage we share. Greek Independence Day, like the Fourth of July, reminds us that we have the duty to defend liberty—whatever the cost. To maintain our freedom, we can take neither it nor its architects for granted. That is why we honor those who secured independence for Greece so many years ago.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, the American people join with the people of Greece in celebrating the 178th anniversary of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire.

The bedrock of our close relationship with Greece is our mutual devotion to freedom and democracy and our unshakable determination to fight, if need be, to protect these rights. Greek philosophers and political leaders—Cleisthenes and Pericles and their successors—had great influence upon America's Founding Fathers in their creation of these United States.

We, as a nation, owe a great debt to Greece. “To the ancient Greeks,” Thomas Jefferson said, “we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves (American colonists) out of Gothic darkness.”

Greece is the birthplace of American democracy. We will always remember the words of Pericles:

Our administration favors the many instead of the few: this is why it is called a democracy. The laws afford equal justice to all alike in their private disputes, but we do not ignore the claims of excellence. When a citizen distinguishes himself, then he will be called to serve the state, in preference to others, not as a matter of privilege, but as a reward of merit; and poverty is no bar.

Democracy has been called the fastest growing form of government in the world. As we prepare to enter the 21st century, an increasing number of countries are throwing off the yoke of dictatorship and evolving into fledgling democracies.

In a broad sense the English poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley declared: “We are all Greeks! Our laws, our literature, our religion, our art, have their roots in Greece.”

I congratulate the people of Greece and wish them a Happy National Birthday.

Mr. VISCOSKY. I join my colleagues today to recognize the 178th anniversary of Greek Independence Day. As the U.S. Representative of a region with over 5,000 people of Greek descent, I know that this important event will be joyously celebrated throughout Northwest Indiana.

I would like to honor not only this important day in Greek history, but the strong and unique relationship that exists today between the United States and Greece. The development of modern democracy has its roots in ancient Athens. The writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and others were the first to espouse the basic tenets of a government of the people and by the people. While these ideals were not always followed in ancient Greece, these writings provided a roadmap for later governments in their attempts to establish democracy in their countries.

The Founding Fathers of the United States were particularly influenced by the writings of

the ancient Greeks on democracy. A careful reading of “The Federalist Papers” reveals the significant part the early Greeks played in the formation of our government. Thomas Jefferson called upon his studies of the Greek tradition of democracy when he drafted the Declaration of Independence, espousing the ideals of a government representative of and accountable to the people. Decades later, these ideas were a catalyst in the Greek uprising and successful independence movement against the Ottoman Empire—the event we celebrate today.

On March 25, 1821, the Archbishop of Patros blessed the Greek flag at the Aghia Laura monastery, marking the proclamation of Greek independence. It took eleven years for the Greeks to finally defeat the Ottomans and gain their true independence. After this long struggle against an oppressive regime, Greece returned to the democratic ideals that its ancestors had developed centuries before.

Today, this country's relationship with Greece is as strong as ever. Greece has been our ardent supporter in every major international conflict of this century, and they play an important role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. Greece is also a key participant in the United Nations peacekeeping force in Bosnia, providing troops and supplies. In turn, the United States has worked to attain a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Cyprus, the island nation that was brutally invaded by Turkey in 1974.

Mr. Speaker, I would thank our colleagues, Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mrs. MALONEY, for organizing this Special Order, and I join all of our House colleagues in recognizing Greek Independence Day. I salute the spirit of democracy and family that distinguish the Greek people, as well as their courage in breaking the bonds of oppression 178 years ago. I look forward to many more years of cooperation and friendship between our two nations.

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join in this special order commemorating Greek Independence Day. Congress recognizes Greek Independence Day each year because the struggle of the Greek people to win their freedom was an inspirational epic worthy of commemoration by all free people.

Americans, whose forbearers had to fight for their own freedom in the 1700s, have always been sympathetic to oppressed people around the world who fight to win their independence. Many Americans supported the struggles of the people of Central and South America to throw off the yoke of imperial Spain in the 1800s, for example. Americans in recent times have supported the efforts of the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to end their domination by that evil empire. And the United States strongly supported the movement to end colonial rule in the wake of World War II. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that many Americans supported the struggle of the Greek people when, in 1821, they undertook to free themselves and their lands from the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

The war for Greek Independence lasted nearly ten years, and many lives were lost. In the end, however, the Greek people won their freedom and established an independent nation. The Greek people's struggle was a popular cause in the United States not just because it echoed our own relatively recent

struggle against an imperial power, but because Americans educated in the classics associated Greece with its heritage as the ancient birthplace of democracy and western culture.

Greece today is a trusted and valued ally of the United States, and many people of Greek ancestry are hardworking, productive American citizens. I am pleased to join my colleagues and our country's Greek-American citizens in celebrating Greek Independence Day.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise on the floor of this chamber of American democracy in honor of Greek Independence Day.

Today we are marking the 178th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Turkish Ottoman Empire and the 51st anniversary since the Greek people regained their independence after Nazi occupation in World War II.

This is a day that rings with the bells of liberty, the songs of freedom, and the choirs of democracy.

All the world looks to Greece as the fountain and inspiration for every modern-day democracy, including our own.

Greece is one of only three nations, beyond the former British Empire, that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict this century. Over 600,000 Greeks died fighting on the side of the Allies in World War II and in the civil war that followed—that's nine percent of the entire population of Greece at that time.

During the early 1900s, one in every four Greek males between the ages of 15 and 45 departed for the United States, the "founding fathers," if you will, of today's very successful Greek-American community. According to U.S. census data, the first Greeks who became U.S. citizens ranked only 18th of the 24 nationalities in education attainment. Their children, however, leapt to the top by 1970 to rank number one among American ethnic nationalities.

Among those Greek-Americans who have made major contributions to our national and international life are Dr. George Papnicolaou, who invented the Pap test for cancer; Dr. George Korzias, who developed L-dopa to combat Parkinson's disease; Maria Callas, the Brooklyn-born soprano, considered the greatest opera diva of all time; and Pete Sampras, the number one tennis player in the world for the past several years.

I also want to honor the contributions made by Greek-Americans in my own district in central Massachusetts. Since the turn of the century, over 5,000 Greek men, women and children have made Worcester, Massachusetts their home. Greek-Americans like Mrs. Katherine Singas, the owner of Worcester House of Pizza, and retired high school principal Christopher Dionis have contributed significantly to all aspects of civic life and community affairs.

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Spyridon in Worcester, under the leadership of Father Dean Paleologos, reminds us of this vibrant Greek-American community. In Worcester, this important day is celebrated by teaching children to recite poetry and songs commemorating their past and their heritage. Discussion groups are held to honor the memory and history of the heroic deeds and patriotism of the Greek and Greek-American men and

women who fought and died for the freedom I and my constituents enjoy today.

Similar celebrations are held throughout my district—in Fall River and Dartmouth, in Attleboro and Seekonk.

No one standing on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives can fail to honor the contributions of Greece to American democracy, freedom, literature and philosophy. Throughout this Capitol and this city, everywhere you might look, you will see homage to Greek ideas and ideals. They are engraved on our buildings, enshrined in our laws, and they surely influenced the minds and hearts of the men and women who founded this nation.

Greece is enjoying a new era of prosperity and looking forward to joining the European Economic and Monetary Union by January 1, 2001. The most recent report of the organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued in Paris on January 14, 1999, concludes that "thanks to continuous efforts in recent years, the target date seems to be feasible for Greece." And like many of my House colleagues, I am looking forward to the 2004 Olympic Games, which will return to their home in Greece for the first time in 108 years. I'm sure that the Athens Games will help heal the wounds of the current scandals affecting the International Olympic Committee.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS]—a fine example of the contribution Greek heritage continues to make to American democracy—and to the gentlelady from New York [Mrs. CAROLYN MALONEY] for organizing this special order on this historic occasion.

I would like to remind them that, if Massachusetts would have had its way, we might have had two Greek-Americans as President of the United States. And so I thank them for their leadership of the Hellenic Caucus and for all their fine efforts to educate and involve other Members on the issues challenging Greek and U.S. policy today.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, today, I wish to celebrate an important day in Greek history, the 178th anniversary of Greece's independence. I wish to thank my colleagues from Florida and New York for taking the initiative to organize this special order to honor Greece on this important day and for organizing the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues. I am pleased to be part each year of this organized and concerted effort to speak out on those issues which are important to Greece, Cyprus, and our constituents of Hellenic descent.

Greek and American history are closely linked. Both nations owe a large part of their national identity today, to the influence of the other in the past. When Thomas Jefferson was writing the Declaration of Independence and our founding fathers were writing our Constitution, they drew upon the work of Greek scholars and philosophers. Indeed, our system of Democracy could never have existed without the influence of these ancient Greek scholars. Similarly, Greece looked to the United States and the American Revolution as a point of inspiration when it began its struggle for independence on March 25, 1821.

Furthermore, modern Greek culture has become a vital part of the culture of the United States through the entrance of Greek immigrants into the United States. Their hard work has made a tremendous impact on their communities. In my own state of Rhode Island,

there are incredibly strong and productive Greek communities in Providence, Pawtucket, and Newport. In these cities, Greek immigrants built businesses, neighborhoods, churches, schools, and raised families. Our country is richer because of all that communities such as these have given.

Because of the influence of Ancient Greece upon our founding fathers, the contributions of Greek immigrants to American culture, and the American influence of a Greece's struggle of independence, it is quite fitting that we celebrate the anniversary of Greece's independence. Again, I thank my colleagues for all their hard work in making this Special Order possible and look forward to further work with the Hellenic Caucus.

Ms. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 178th anniversary of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire, and to celebrate the shared democratic heritage of Greece and the United States. I thank Congressman BILIRAKIS and Congresswoman MALONEY for organizing this special order and for their leadership on issues of importance to the Greek-American community.

On March 25, 1821, after more than 400 years of Ottoman Turk domination, Greece declared its independence and resumed its rightful place in the world as a beacon of democracy.

The people of Greece and the United States share a common bond in their commitment to democracy. Our Founding Fathers looked to the teachings of Greek philosophy in their struggle for freedom and democracy. And the American experience in turn inspired the Greek people who fought so hard for independence 176 years ago.

This bond between our two peoples stretches beyond the philosophy of democracy. The relationship between the U.S. and Greece has grown stronger and stronger through the years, and Greece remains today one of our most important allies.

And the contribution Greece makes to life in America is even stronger than the ties between our two countries. Greek-Americans are a vital part of our cultural heritage. My district in New York would not be what it is today without the valuable contributions made by the Greek-American community.

I am proud to stand today in commemoration of Greek independence and in recognition of the contribution Greece and Greek-Americans have made to our country.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Greek Independence Day. A member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I join my colleagues in saluting the strong and enduring ties between the United States and Greece.

The link between our two great nations stretches back to the very beginning of the United States' days as an independent nation. Our founding fathers, recognizing the compelling example set by Greece's experience with democracy, were inspired by the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers. Indeed, our own experiment with democracy has proven successful to a large extent because of what we learned from the Greeks. The Greek influence can be seen throughout our society even as we gaze upon the architecture of this great building in which we serve.

Today, as we rise in tribute to the 178th anniversary of the beginning of Greece's struggle for independence, we are reminded of the importance of maintaining strong ties with

Greece and its people. As a member of NATO, Greece has shown a commitment to the same values of international peace and security to which the United States aspires.

One of the great men from my home state of Massachusetts was Charles Eliot Norton. Norton, a professor at Harvard, was devoted to strengthening the ties between Greece and the United States. In 1879, he founded the Archaeological Institute of America, in an effort to foster greater appreciation of the treasures of Greek history. As Norton said, "A knowledge of Greek thought and life, and of the arts in which the Greeks expressed their thought and sentiment, is essential to high culture. A man may know everything else, but without this knowledge he remains ignorant of the best intellectual and moral achievements of his own race."

These words are as true today as when Norton wrote them in 1885. The modern Greek nation continues to be an inspiration to the United States and the rest of the world. I look forward to joining in this weekend's related ceremonies in the Boston area, and I am pleased to be able to offer my congratulations to the people of Greece on this happy occasion.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 177th anniversary of Greek independence. There are, of course, no final victories in the long struggle to extend the principles of equality and democracy. Thus, we should take advantage of every appropriate opportunity to celebrate the triumphs of freedom over tyranny.

In this spirit, our annual remembrance of the Greek delivery from Ottoman oppression merits special attention, for it was Aristotle himself who said, "Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal." In effect, we celebrate the 177 years that have followed the redemption of Aristotle's ancient promise.

As we listen to the urgent bulletins from the Balkans, we are reminded every day of the fragility of the ancient Greek ideal. Wherever tyranny and ethnic cleansing prevail, the principles of equality and democracy are under siege. Listen once again to the profound wisdom of Aristotle: "If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost."

On this day, let us remember how intimately intertwined are the histories of the United States and Greece. Look at the Declaration of Independence. Look at the Constitution of the United States. Look at the very architecture of our beautiful Capitol. Greek to the core, all of them. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson was quite explicit about our connectedness: "To the ancient Greeks," declared our third President, "we are indebted for the light which led ourselves out of Gothic darkness."

In turn, America has opened its heart to multitudes of Greek immigrants and has, of course, reaped the rewards of that enlightened generosity. In San Francisco, certainly, we have reaped enormous benefits from the vibrant presence of our spirited Greek-American community. And Americans also responded with the Marshall Plan, immediately following World War II, to the plight of a seriously weakened and imperiled Greece.

As we brood today over the darkening skies in the Balkan countries, we should pause for a moment to give thanks for the continuing relevance of ancient Greece and the continuing example of modern Greece.

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, today marks a great anniversary for every Greek citizen and those who cherish Democracy and freedom worldwide. 178 years ago on this date, courageous Greeks, determined to cast off the chains of oppression, rose up against the Ottoman Empire and firmly sounded the cry of freedom. It was fitting that the nation that gave the world the very concept of democracy was to be a free and sovereign land once again.

Sadly, like all struggles for freedom, good people lose their lives striving to uphold what they believe. It is important that we as a democracy never forget the sacrifices of those brave individuals whose selfless sacrifices and dedication to democratic ideals gave us the freedoms and liberties we enjoy today.

I salute those gallant Greeks who stood against oppression so many years ago today and with happiness and joy for Greek citizens worldwide.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise to acknowledge and celebrate the 178th Greek Independence Day. This great day in Greek history commemorates the successful struggle of the Greek people for national sovereignty. It is no secret that the United States and Greece have shared a close relationship since Greece's independence. In fact, Greece is one of the very few countries in the world that has stood alongside the United States during every major conflict of this last century.

The United States shares many common threads with Greece, including a commitment to democracy, peace, and respect for human rights. I think it's safe to say that the Founding Fathers of Greece and the United States would be proud of the tremendous achievements of both nations as well as their closeness. The strong bond that is shared by these two countries is now approaching its third century, and as we rapidly approach the twenty-first century, I think its imperative that we recognize countries such as Greece that are eager to move into the next millennium hand-in-hand with the United States.

Greek-Americans all around the country are celebrating this great day for their homeland. Parades, dances, songs and feasts will be occurring all over this country in celebration of Greek independence. The celebrations both here and in Greece will no doubt demonstrate the fortitude of its people. Throughout the past 200 years there have been repeated challenges to the independence of Greece, yet its people have stridently fought to maintain both their democracy and independence—and the United States and its people have been proud to stand by her and provide strength, assistance and friendship to overcome those struggles.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to once again celebrate Greek culture and toast the Greek people. It is an honor to rise and commemorate the 178th Greek Independence Day. On this day we celebrate more than just Greece's independence, we celebrate Greece as a country and as a friend.

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 178th anniversary of Greek independence. This date marks the beginning in 1821 of the successful revolution to restore

the ideals of democracy to the Greek people after almost 400 years of oppression and persecution under the Ottoman Empire.

One cannot stand in these chambers and participate in our system of representative democracy without recognizing the significant influence of the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers. In the words of Percy Bysshe Shelley, "We are all Greeks! Our laws, our literature, our religion, our art, have their roots in Greece." Tragically, despite the democratic writings and dialogues of great thinkers like Aristotle, Plato, and Polybius, the Ottoman Empire ignored those inspirational principles of equality, freedom, and self rule, and stripped Greek citizens of their civil rights.

Thankfully, freedom fighters in Greece prevailed and restored the principles and benefits of democracy to the Greek people. Much as ancient Greece influenced our founding fathers, so did the United States in its infancy inspire those rebels who struggled against the Ottoman rulers. In fact, Greek intellectuals translated the Declaration of Independence and used it as their own declaration.

Since then, Greece has also battled and triumphed over the spread of Communism, losing nine percent of its own population in the process. Throughout all of this strife and upheaval, Greece has remained a staunch and loyal ally to the United States; furthermore, as President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "Greece asked no favor except the opportunity to stand for those rights which it believed, and it gave to the world an example of battle . . . a battle that thrilled the hearts of all free men and free women everywhere."

I congratulate Greece on this day marking its 178th anniversary of independence, and I applaud the Greek people for their constant devotion to and fierce protection of the democratic principles of equality, freedom, and self rule. Let us all look to their example as inspiration in the continuing fight to promote and expand democracy throughout the world.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Greece, a trusted ally and partner of the United States, on the occasion of Greek Independence Day, which will be celebrated on March 25th.

It is especially fitting that we in the House of Representatives, the very embodiment of representative democracy, pay tribute to the accomplishments of a nation which gave us the gift of democracy and developed the concept of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Beginning with ancient Greece, the cradle of democracy, and extending all the way into modern times, the people of Greece have continued to give gifts of political philosophy, culture, and friendship to the world. The special relationship between the United States and Greece has been reinforced throughout our country's short history, from the emulation of ancient Greek democracy by our founding fathers to our steadfast alliance during every major international conflict in the 20th century and our partnership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In tribute to Greece—our partner in times of war and peace, our reliable friend, and a nation which has, over the millennia, contributed key political and social principles to world society—I rise on the occasion of the 178th anniversary of the revolution which led to Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire. For

the United States, this revolution was particularly auspicious, as it led to the creation of one of our most faithful allies.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am here with my colleagues to commemorate the 178th anniversary of Greek Independence Day which is a national day of celebration of Greek and American Democracy.

While commemorative resolutions are no longer allowed in the House, there is support for Greek Independence Day. Every year since 1986, a resolution has been cosponsored by over 50 Senators and passed in the Senate. The President has once again signed a proclamation this year recognizing this as Greek Independence Day, and I would like to insert a copy of this in the RECORD.

"Our Constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not a membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses," This could have been written by Thomas Jefferson, but it was written by Pericles in an address made in Greece 2,000 years ago.

Plato said, "Democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a kind of equality to equals and unequals alike." Isn't that a wonderful way to describe democracy?

Thomas Jefferson once said, ". . . to the ancient Greeks . . . we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves out of Gothic darkness."

Just as Greek ideas of democracy and individual liberties became the foundation of our government, the American Revolution became one of the ideals of the Greeks as they fought for their independence in the 1820's.

Greek intellectuals translated the Declaration of Independence of the United States and used it as their own declaration.

A Greek Commander in Chief (Petros Mavromichalis) appealed to the citizens of the United States, saying: "Having formed the resolution to live or die for freedom, we are drawn toward you by a just sympathy since it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode, and by you that she is prized as by our fathers. Hence, honoring her name, we invoke yours at the same time, trusting that in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you . . . it is for you, citizens of America, to crown this glory . . ."

Greece has been a long and trusted ally. In fact, they fought along side of us in every major international conflict this century.

During the early 1900s, one of every four Greek males between the ages of 15 and 45 departed for the United States. And, I might add that many of them settled in Astoria, Queens which I am fortunate enough to represent. Astoria is one of the largest and most vibrant communities of Greek and Cypriot Americans in this country.

It is truly one of my greatest pleasures as a Member of Congress to be able to participate in the life of this community, and the wonderful and vital Greek American friends that I have come to know are one of its greatest rewards.

I have also had the pleasure of establishing the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues with the gentleman from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS.

This caucus allows Members of the House to join together to find ways to work toward better United States-Greek and Cypriot relations.

We are here today because 177 years ago today, the revolution which freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire began. Greece had remained under the Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, and during this time the people were deprived of all civil rights.

Many volunteers from various localities in the United States sailed to Greece to participate in Greece's war for independence.

On this joyous occasion, we should also direct our attention to the island of Cyprus which, for 25 years now, has been striving for an end to its tragic division and the illegal Turkish occupation of 37 percent of its territory. Again, Cyprus is on the verge of becoming a flashpoint for regional conflict because of Turkey's hardline stance with unrealistic conditions to any peace talks.

It is now time to reaffirm our commitment to a peaceful solution. We must use Cyprus's EU accession as an impetus for positive progress and not let Turkey use it as an excuse for heightened tensions.

A positive contribution by Turkey to help resolve the situation in Cyprus would facilitate Turkey's aspirations to become a member of the European Union. We should use our influence in the region to help Turkey understand this.

Hopefully, soon we will also celebrate Cyprus Day when once again the entire island will be united.

However, the reason that we are here today is to celebrate the 178th anniversary of Greek Independence.

Daniel Webster said of this time in Greek history, "This [Greek] people, a people of intelligence, ingenuity, refinement, spirit, and enterprise, have been for centuries under the atrocious unparalleled Tartarian barbarism that ever oppressed the human race."

There has always been a special bond of friendship between our two countries, and I would like to leave you with a quote from Percy Shelley.

"We are all Greeks! Our laws, our literature, our religion, our art, have their roots in Greece."

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to mark the 178th anniversary of Greek independence from the Turkish Ottoman Empire. I would like to thank Congressman BILIRAKIS and Congresswoman MALONEY for their steadfast leadership on Greek issues and for organizing this Special Order to recognize this historic event.

Mr. Speaker, for over two centuries, the United States and Greece have enjoyed a strong and enduring relationship. During the Second World War, fighting alongside American troops, more than 600,000 Greek soldiers died fighting against the Axis powers illustrating Greece's strong commitment to the United States and freedom loving people everywhere. Today, Greece's commitment to peace and democracy throughout our world continues through their participation in NATO, modern history's most successful alliance.

Our bonds are deeper still, however, for we are joined by blood, culture, and a profound commitment to shared values. Greek ideals of democracy and freedom inspired our Nation's founders and breathed life into America's experiment with democratic self-government. Generations of Greek Americans have en-

riched every aspect of our national life, in the arts, sciences, business, politics and sports. Through hard work, love of family and community, they have contributed greatly to the prosperity and peace that we all enjoy as Americans today.

Mr. Speaker, I have the great honor of representing a number of Greek-Americans in the Seventh District of New York. Their influence and active participation in the life of their communities has fostered economic, political and social growth throughout New York City.

But as we celebrate Greek independence, we must keep in mind the ongoing struggle for freedom and demand for human rights on the island of Cyprus.

Turkey's tragic and illegal occupation of 37 percent of the island and continued unwillingness to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the crisis threatens to ignite renewed fighting on the island, which would be devastating to chances for a lasting peace. I believe the United States and the international community must remain steadfast in our resolve to bring peace and unity to an island that has been home to violence and division for far, far too long.

In closing Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate my strong commitment to Greek communities in my district, the country, and throughout the world. Their strength and dedication to democracy and peace in the world has made them a shining star of modern civilization.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlemen from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and the gentlelady from New York, Ms. MALONEY for organizing this Special Order to honor the 178th anniversary of Greece's independence. They are tireless in their promotion of close ties between the United States and Greece, and I have enjoyed working with them over the years to strengthen relations with one of America's greatest allies.

I would like to begin by congratulating Greece and the Greek community in America for 178 years of independence. I would also like to reaffirm the special relationship the United States has with Greece.

The issue I want to focus on tonight is Turkey's threat to use military force against Greece in response to the Ocalan affair. Settling differences with military force is an option to be used only as the last resort after all diplomatic channels have been exhausted. Turkey, however, seems to salivate at the prospect of a military confrontation with Greece. At every conceivable opportunity Ankara threatens Greece with the use of military force.

Shortly before the Ocalan affair erupted, Turkey threatened to attack Greece if Greece deploys the defensive S-300 missile system in Crete. That deployment is scheduled as part of a gesture put forward by the Cypriot government to defuse tensions in Cyprus over the initial plan to deploy that system on Cyprus. I should also add that part of the Cypriot plan to defuse that crisis and move the peace process forward includes a reiteration of the standing offer to demilitarize the island accompanied by a new offer to pay for a peace-keeping force following the demilitarization. This peaceful proposal has to date been rejected by the Turks, who, as I say seem interested only in threatening to use force against Greece.

As with all Turkish threats, the threat to use force in response to the Ocalan affair must be taken seriously. The endless stream of threats

to use force by Ankara are destabilizing to the already tense Mediterranean region, to NATO and ultimately to all of Europe. They are also counter to US interests. In my view the United States government needs to be much more forceful in communicating to the Turks that these threats are unacceptable and that there will be severe consequences to US-Turkey relations if Ankara resorts to the use of military force.

Many in Greece and the Greek community in the United States speculate that one of the reasons why Turkey has been issuing threats as of late is to spark another confrontation over sovereign Greek territory in the Aegean. "A short military confrontation," observes a recent editorial in the GreekAmerican on Turkey's claims to Greek territory "may be just the ticket."

Two years ago, Turkey was almost successful in sparking just such a confrontation over the Greek islets of Imia. The confrontation was avoided only after President Clinton personally intervened, but the issue is not resolved. Turkey continues to make unfounded claims of sovereignty over the islets of Imia. I am hopeful the Administration will be prepared to act swiftly should this issue again flare up. In order to keep it on the front burner, I introduced H Con Res 36 in February, which expresses the sense of Congress that the islets of Imia are sovereign territory under international law. It also states that Turkey should agree to bring this matter before the International Court of Justice at the Hague for a resolution.

Again, I think it is important to keep examples like these in mind in the wake of the Ocalan affair and discount Turkey's attempt to slander Greece's commitment and readiness to resolve conflicts peacefully and in full accordance with international law. It is precisely this commitment to peace and democracy that we have must keep in mind as we celebrate 178 years of Greek independence. And I just want to point out, to its credit, the State Department has rejected Turkey's ridiculous assertion following Ocalan's capture that Greece supports terrorism.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, there is one last observation I want to make about the way the US government has handled the Ocalan affair. Notwithstanding its rejection of Turkey's propaganda regarding Greece, there are aspects of this case that are very troubling.

The US government's role in helping the Turks capture Ocalan is well documented. What troubles me about the American government's role is its willingness to help the Turk's capture Ocalan knowing full well the chances he will receive a fair trial are slim to none. Already the Turks have refused to allow Ocalan's attorney's to defend him. Instead the Turkish courts appointed 15 lawyers to defend him, two of which recently resigned after receiving death threats. Unsurprisingly, the other 13 are also expected to resign. Ankara has also decided to bypass its regular court system and bring Ocalan before some kind of three-judge tribunal with no jury and no foreign observers.

The US government's claim that it was trying to uphold justice is specious at best. In turning Ocalan over to the Turks, the American government saw an opportunity to curry favor with Ankara. In my view, this was done in support of an inexplicable American policy toward Ankara that overlooks a myriad of un-

conscionable Turkish policies—most notably those involving Cyprus and Armenia—in exchange for continued access to Turkish military facilities and airspace.

It is the willingness of the US government to ignore the notorious abuses and show trials in the Turkish judicial system that I find troubling. If the US government was truly interested in insuring justice be carried out in a fair manner, it should have helped deliver him to a court where fair judicial proceedings are the norm, such as the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

With that, I once again congratulate Greece on the anniversary of its independence and thank my colleagues once again for holding this Special Order.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is an occasion for celebrating the strong ties and traditions that bind America with our friends in Greece. I commend the gentleman from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, the co-chairman of our Hellenic Issues Caucus for his diligence in ensuring each year that the House mark this important day by way of a special order. In commemorating the 178th anniversary of the independence of Greece from the Ottoman overlords, we should bear in mind that it was to the practices and institutions of ancient Athens that our forefathers looked for an example and inspiration as they set in place the principles of democracy that have guided our great Nation and its people.

It was to our young nation, where the spirit of democracy was reborn in the modern era, that the people of Greece looked as they fought for and won their own independence in 1821.

Today, we are preparing for a new round of strife in the Balkans that could very likely involve the armed forces of our own country. We note with gratitude the efforts made by the government of Greece in trying to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Kosovo. The leaders of Greece have made numerous trips to Belgrade in an effort to persuade Milosevic that he must yield to the demands of the international community and cease his brutal policies against the people of Kosovo. Greece is also in the forefront of those countries providing assistance to the government of Albania, helping to restore order to Albania's society after the civil strife that nearly destroyed the country 2 years ago.

Since 1821 when the people of Greece triumphed in their heroic fight for independence, the people of Greece and the United States of America have been as one in the struggle to promote and protect democratic freedoms and human rights around the world. Today, as we face new challenges to that tradition in the Balkans and elsewhere, we value our friends in Greece for their continued support and encouragement. Accordingly, I urge that our colleagues continue the effort to keep the mutual spirit of friendship thriving. Yasou. Efkaristo!

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN HONOR OF WORLD WAR I VETERAN WILLIAM "CAPTAIN GLADY" OGLESBY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, a French author once said, "Freedom is a system based on courage."

Madam Speaker, the freedoms we enjoy today are built upon a foundation of courage, fostered by the individuals who served and sacrificed for America, our Nation's veterans.

Last September marked the 80th anniversary of Armistice Day, a day to commemorate the signing of the armistice which marked the end of World War I. The United States sent over 4.5 million troops into battle during the war and over 100,000 never came home. They gave their lives to protect our country and our freedom. World War I was called "the Great War" and was fought to make the world safe for democracy.

Today, we have approximately 3,200 living United States World War I veterans. I am proud that the Third District of North Carolina, which I have the honor to represent, is home to at least one of these courageous soldiers, a gentleman who joined his fellow Americans in the fight against tyranny, Mr. William Gladstone Oglesby.

Madam Speaker, on April 2, 1917, then President Woodrow Wilson called Congress into session to condemn German warfare as a "war against all nations." He said: "It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things we have always carried dear to our hearts."

Madam Speaker, President Wilson was speaking of democracy, freedom, and the brave men and women who risked their lives to protect it. Within 4 days, the United States had declared war against Germany. At the time, William Gladstone Oglesby of Morehead City, North Carolina, had just turned 21. Later that year, he would begin his service in the United States Army during the height of war. He would join the almost 2 million Americans sent across the ocean to fight alongside French soldiers and would serve in Company B, 322d Infantry Division as part of the American Expeditionary Forces.

Now, just shy of 103 years old, William Oglesby, or Captain Gladys as he is more commonly known, is one of the surviving World War I veterans to receive France's highest decoration, the Legion of Honor medal.