

This is an appropriate recognition of his service to Chicago and the people of Illinois and, frankly, Mr. Speaker, it is a very appropriate thank you for a lifetime of public service to the people of Chicago.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this body to vote for this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Government Reform, I join the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) in the consideration of H.R. 1377, legislation naming a post office located at 9308 South Chicago Avenue as the John J. Buchanan Post Office Building.

This measure, introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) on April 13, 1999, passed the House by a voice vote on May 24, 1999.

On November 3, 1999 the Senate Government Affairs Committee ordered H.R. 1377 to be reported favorably with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

On November 4, 1999, the bill was reported to the Senate with an amendment to H.R. 1377; subsequently passed the Senate unanimously with an amendment on November 19, 1999.

It is my understanding that the amendment involved the selection of a post office nearer to Mr. Buchanan's home.

H.R. 1377, as originally passed by the Committee on Government Reform and the House, designated the John J. Buchanan Post Office at 13234 South Baltimore Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. As amended in the Senate, the John J. Buchanan Post Office will now be located at 9308 South Chicago Avenue in Chicago, Illinois.

Mr. Buchanan, a City of Chicago alderman, recently retired as a life-long resident and public servant of Chicago's 10th Ward. He has lived and served Chicago his entire life. He serves on the board of directors of several community organizations, including the Hedgewisch Chamber of Commerce, South Chicago YMCA and Trinity Hospital Governing Council.

I am pleased to join my colleague in the passage of H.R. 1377, as amended in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, 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. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 1377.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 396

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed from the list of cosponsors of House Resolution 396.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY IN NORTHERN EUROPE ACT OF 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4249) to foster cross-border cooperation and environmental cleanup in Northern Europe, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4249

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Cross-Border Cooperation and Environmental Safety in Northern Europe Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) Northern Europe is an increasingly vital part of Europe and one that offers great opportunities for United States investment.

(2) Northern Europe offers an excellent opportunity to make progress toward the United States vision of a secure, prosperous, and stable Europe, in part because of—

(A) historical tradition of regional cooperation;

(B) the opportunity to engage Russia in positive, cooperative activities with its neighbors to the west;

(C) commitment by the Baltic states to regional cooperation and integration into western institutions; and

(D) longstanding, strong ties with the United States.

(3) The United States Northern Europe Initiative (NEI) provides the conceptual and operational framework for United States policy in the region, focused on developing a regional network of cooperation in the important areas of business and trade promotion, law enforcement, the environment, energy, civil society, and public health.

(4) A central objective of the United States Northern Europe Initiative is to promote cross-border cooperation among the countries in the region.

(5) A wide variety of regional and cross-border projects have been initiated under the United States Northern Europe Initiative since the Initiative was established in 1997, including the following:

(A) A United States-Lithuanian training program for entrepreneurs from Belarus and Kaliningrad.

(B) The Great Lakes-Baltic Sea Partnership program that is being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency.

(C) A Center of Excellence for Treatment of Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis in Riga, Latvia.

(D) A regional HIV/AIDS strategy being developed under United States and Finnish leadership.

(E) Multiple efforts to combat organized crime, including regional seminars for police officers and prosecutors.

(F) Programs to encourage reform of the Baltic electricity market and encourage United States investment in such market.

(G) Language and job training programs for Russian-speaking minorities in Latvia and Estonia to promote social integration in those countries.

(H) A mentoring partnership program for woman entrepreneurs in the northwest region of Russia and the Baltic states, as part of broader efforts to promote women's participation in political and economic life.

(6) Norway, Sweden, and Finland have made considerable efforts to provide assistance to the newly independent Baltic states and to the Northwest region of Russia. In particular, the United States notes the request placed before the European Union by Finland in 1999 for the creation and extensive funding by the European Union of a "Northern Dimension" Initiative to substantially address the problems that now exist in Northern Europe with regard to economic development, protection of the environment, the safety and containment of nuclear materials, and other issues.

(7) The United States commends the endorsement of the "Northern Dimension" Initiative by the European Council at its meeting in Helsinki, Finland in December 1999 and calls on the European Union to act on that endorsement through the provision of substantial funding for the Initiative.

(8) While the European Union, its member states, and other European countries should clearly take the lead in addressing the challenges posed in Northern Europe, in particular through appropriate yet substantial assistance provided by the European Union, the United States-Northern Europe Initiative, and this Act are intended to supplement such efforts and build on the considerable assistance that the United States has already provided to the Baltic states and the Russian Federation. Partnership with other countries in the region means modest United States investment can have significant impact.

(9) The United States Northern Europe Initiative's focus on regional environmental challenges is particularly important. Northern Europe is home to significant environmental problems, particularly the threat posed by nuclear waste from Russian submarines, icebreakers, and nuclear reactors.

(10) In particular, 21,000 spent fuel assemblies from Russian submarines are lying exposed near Andreyeva Bay, nearly 60 dangerously decrepit nuclear submarines, many in danger of sinking, are languishing in the Murmansk area of Northwest Russia, whole reactors and radioactive liquid waste are stored on unsafe floating barges, and there are significant risks of marine and atmospheric contamination from accidents arising from loss of electricity or fire on deteriorating, poorly monitored nuclear submarines.

(11) This waste poses a threat to the safety and stability of Northern Europe and to countries of the Eurasian continent.

(12)(A) In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency has facilitated the expansion and upgrading of a facility for the treatment of low-level liquid radioactive waste from the decommissioning of nuclear submarines docked at naval facilities in the Arctic region of Russia.

(B) The Environmental Protection Agency has also initiated a project to construct an 80-ton prototype cask for the storage and transport of civilian-controlled spent nuclear fuel, much of it damaged and currently stored onboard an aging vessel anchored in Murmansk Harbor. Currently in the design phase, this project is scheduled for completion in 2000.

(13) Working with the countries in the region to address these environmental problems remains vital to the long-term national interest of the United States.

(14) The United States and other countries are currently negotiating a number of agreements with Russia which will provide internationally accepted legal protections for the United States and other countries that provide nuclear waste management assistance to Russia. Regrettably, it has not yet been possible to resolve remaining differences over liability, taxation of assistance, privileges and immunities for foreign contractors, and audit rights.

(15) Concluding these agreements is vital to the continued provision of such assistance and to the possible development of new programs.

(16) With the election of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the opportunity presents itself to surmount these problems, to conclude these outstanding agreements, and to allow assistance programs to move forward to alleviate this problem.

(17) The United States Government is currently studying whether dismantlement of multi-purpose submarines is in the national interest.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to demonstrate concrete support for continued cross-border cooperation in Northern Europe and immediate efforts to assist in the clean up of nuclear waste in that region.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States-Northern Europe Initiative is a sound framework for future United States involvement in Northern Europe;

(2) the European Union should move expeditiously to authorize and fund the proposed "Northern Dimension" Initiative at appropriate yet substantial levels of assistance;

(3) the United States should continue to support a wide-ranging strengthening of democratic and civic institutions on a regional basis to provide a foundation for political stability and investment opportunities, including cross-border exchanges, in Northern Europe;

(4) the United States should demonstrate continued commitment to address environmental security challenges in Northwest Russia, in cooperation with partners in the region;

(5) recently-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin should rapidly conclude pending nuclear waste management agreements to enable assistance programs to go forward; and

(6) assistance to Russia on nuclear waste management should only be provided after issues related to liability, taxation of assistance, privileges and immunities for foreign contractors, and audit rights have been resolved.

SEC. 4. SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES NORTHERN EUROPE INITIATIVE PROJECTS.

(a) **AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS FROM EAST EUROPEAN AND THE BALTIC STATES ASSISTANCE.**—Of the amounts available for fiscal year 2001 to carry out the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 for assistance and for related programs for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, not less than \$2,000,000 shall be used for projects described in subsection (c).

(b) **AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS FROM INDEPENDENT STATES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION ASSISTANCE.**—Of the amounts available for fiscal year 2001 to carry out the provisions of chapter 11 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 for assistance for the independent states of the former Soviet Union and related programs, not less than \$2,000,000 shall be used for the projects described in subsection (c).

(c) **PROJECTS DESCRIBED.**—The projects described in this subsection are United States Northern Europe Initiative projects relating to environmental cleanup, law enforcement, public health, energy, business and trade promotion, and civil society.

SEC. 5. REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, shall prepare and submit to the Congress a report on—

(1) the threat to the environmental security of the countries of Northern Europe and other countries of Europe and Asia presented by Russian marine nuclear reactors, waste, and contamination; and

(2) identifying the possibilities for new and expanded United States and multilateral assistance programs for environmental cleanup in Northwest Russia, including technical exchanges and private-public partnerships.

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **NORTHERN EUROPE.**—The term "Northern Europe" means the northwest region of the Russian Federation (including Kaliningrad), the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Finland, the Republic of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Poland, and the Kingdom of Sweden.

(2) **UNITED STATES NORTHERN EUROPE INITIATIVE.**—The term "United States Northern Europe Initiative" means the framework agreement established in 1997 between the United States and the countries of Northern Europe to promote stability in the Baltic Sea region and to strengthen key institutions and security structures of the United States and the countries of Northern Europe.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

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 H.R. 4249, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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, H.R. 4249, introduced by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), seeks to focus on the policies of our Nation and the European Union with regard to Northern Europe, an area that includes the Baltic region and the northwestern region of Russia. I have been concerned that the European Union, while acknowledging the extensive problems that exist today in its own backyard in Northern Europe, has yet to take action to provide the kind of substantial aid that will be needed if those problems are going to be properly addressed.

My distinguished colleague from Connecticut has graciously incorporated into his bill provisions I suggested that make it clear that the European Union must take the lead in addressing those problems and must, in particular, provide the substantial aid that is going to be needed to deal with that.

In my view, any assistance provided at this point by our Nation should be clearly understood by the European Union to be a supplement to its aid, not a substitute for the substantial EU assistance that is going to be required.

I have no objection to our Nation lending a hand on those problems. In fact, the gentleman's bill points out the U.S.-Northern Europe Initiative already exists and has already been funded under our foreign aid program for 3 years at the present time, since the President already has the authority to conduct the activities envisioned in this bill under the SEED Act of 1989 and the Freedom Support Act of 1992, and the authority to provide funding for those activities, and the President has used that authority.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the gentleman's intent with the introduction of this bill is, however, to highlight his concern about the problems faced by the countries of Northern Europe, and I share his concern. I hasten to take this opportunity to point out that the United States has provided considerable aid to support reforms and to address problems in the region, and that the United States has also endowed several foundations in those countries of the region where its aid program has been phased out.

Mr. Speaker, such U.S.-endowed foundations include the Baltic American Enterprise Fund, the Baltic American Partnership Fund and the Polish American Freedom Foundation. In addition, while our Freedom Support Act aid program, our Nunn-Lugar demilitarization program, our large food aid program, our enriched uranium purchase program and other forms of aid all continue today in Russia, we have also set up an enterprise fund in that nation that I am certain will last for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, we should not overlook all that the United States has done in Eastern Europe since 1989 and all that the United States is still doing in that region today. It is, therefore, my hope that this bill, if adopted by this Congress, will serve to signal our concern over remaining problems in the region of Northern Europe but will also serve as a clear call on the European Union to take the lead in addressing those problems.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill. First, let me just thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) for all of his work and his bipartisan efforts in allowing this bill to come to the floor.

An environmental threat looms over our allies in Europe and the emerging democracies in the Baltic region. Twenty-one thousand spent fuel assemblies from Russian submarines are lying exposed. Nearly 60 dangerously decrepit nuclear submarines, many in danger of sinking, are languishing in northwest Russia. Whole reactors and radioactive liquid waste are stored on unsafe floating barges and there are significant risks of marine and atmospheric contamination from accidents arising from loss of electricity or fire on deteriorating, poorly monitored nuclear submarines.

This waste poses a threat to the safety and the stability of Northern Europe and to countries of the Eurasian continent. A fire or explosion on one of these subs could spread contamination over a wide area. Theft of plutonium from a submarine could become a proliferation issue.

This important bill, introduced by our foresighted ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, ensures that at least \$4 million will be spent on environmental cleanup and cross-border cooperation in this region.

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It also mandates a study on this potential environmental crisis that threatens regional environmental stability and therefore the United States' national interests in the region.

By mandating a report to address the severity of this situation and by urging President Putin to make progress on concluding liability issues to move forward on nuclear waste management issues, this bill makes a very important contribution to proactively preventing a security crisis in Northern Europe before it erupts.

Just as our foreign policy must address regions in crisis in Europe and around the world, likewise, we cannot afford to neglect areas that appear to be stable but may have problems that lie beneath the surface.

Northern Europe has made progress over the last few years, particularly among the Balkan states, but the division itself of the Cold War and the legacy of the Soviet Union damaged trust and a sense of community which flourished in this region in the past.

This bill reaffirms support for Northern Europe's initiative, and it also seeks to continue the progress towards rebuilding confidence and security in the region. So for those of us who are very much opposed to nuclear proliferation and who support the environment, we urge our colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the committee for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation. H.R. 4249 authorizes \$4 million from a variety of sources: The Eastern European Democracy Act, or SEED, of 1989; the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; and the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992.

It does this to support worthwhile projects under the U.S.-Northern European initiative in the areas of environmental clean-up, law enforcement, public health, energy, business and trade promotion, and civil society.

Most significantly, I think, H.R. 4249 highlights the enormously dangerous problem of Russian nuclear waste in the area of Murmansk and northwest Russia. In particular, hundreds of rusting and rotting decommissioned nuclear submarines and ships pose a threat, not just to Northern Europe, but to the entire world. Indeed, this waste may pose the most imminent environmental danger in the world today. There is an urgent need to address this critical problem because it literally could explode in our face.

Unfortunately, the bill also points out that it has not yet been possible to resolve remaining differences with Russia over liability, taxation of assistance, privileges and immunities for foreign contractors, and audit rights in regard to this waste, and concludes that these agreements are vital to continue provision of assistance.

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), distinguished ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, amended this bill in committee to make it clear that no assistance should be provided until these problems are adequately resolved.

In addition to the environmental problems, this bill will also provide funds to support the United States' Northern European initiative and projects under that initiative in areas such as civil society, law enforcement, business, energy, and public health.

While the bill remains very limited in providing seed funds, it will serve as an important indicator to the European Union of our interest and support for this initiative.

I would close by commending the gentleman from Connecticut for offering this important legislation, and urge our colleagues to support H.R. 4249.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4249, a bill I introduced to foster cooperation and environmental cleanup in Northern Europe. I thank Chairman GILMAN for his assistance with this legislation. I also thank all of the bipartisan co-sponsors of this bill, particularly my friend from Nebraska, Mr. BEREUTER, who spoke eloquently and forcefully in Committee on the threats that this bill addresses.

Many people thought that the problem of decaying Soviet-era nuclear submarines would

just disappear with the end of the Cold War, but the threat is real and it persists. My legislation seeks to address this problem and other regional challenges through the important framework of the Northern Europe Initiative (NEI). The NEI is a U.S. launched initiative to promote stability in the Baltic Sea region and to strengthen key institutions and security structures of the United States and the countries of Northern Europe.

The remarkable work of the Combined Threat Reduction Program, better known as Nunn-Lugar, has facilitated the dismantlement of 12 strategic missile submarines and 46 submarine launched ballistic missiles—those parts of the old Soviet fleet deemed most of a threat to U.S. National Security. But over 150 decaying nuclear submarines remain floating in Russian ports, vulnerable to theft and tampering.

Recent events show how dangerous this situation is for the region and therefore for U.S. National Security. Less than five months ago in January at a base near Vilyuchinsk, Russia, two sailors bribed a guard and boarded a decommissioned attack submarine, then broke into the reactor compartment and began removing cables and metal. According to press reports, while stealing these parts, the sailors could easily have caused a meltdown in the still-operating reactor of the submarine, if its control rods had not been bolted down by an engineer two days earlier so the thieves were unable to raise them.

Equally frightening was an event from September 1998 when a young Russian sailor commandeered an active duty Akula-class SSN that was docked at the Northern Fleet's Gadzhiyev Naval Base, killing eight of his colleagues in the process. He barricaded himself in the boat's torpedo room, where he was preparing to set fire to the vessel and detonate its torpedoes. When Murmansk Security troops stormed the torpedo compartment, they found the assailant dead, apparently killed by an explosion triggered by his attempt to set fire to the torpedoes.

Needless to say, had the torpedoes all detonated, a serious nuclear accident could have occurred.

My legislation calls on Russian President Putin to rapidly conclude pending nuclear waste management agreements to enable assistance programs from European sources to go forward. The bill also mandates a study from the Secretary of State to assess the environmental threat of decaying submarines to American allies in Europe and proliferation threats to the national security of the United States.

The bill also directs the U.S. Government to spend \$4 million of already budgeted money in Northern Europe on environmental cleanup and civil society projects under the framework of the Northern European Initiative. Included in this initiative are targeted but valuable programs such as:

A United States-Lithuanian training program for entrepreneurs from Belarus and Kaliningrad.

The Great Lakes-Baltic Sea partnership program that is being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency.

A Center of Excellence for Treatment of Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis in Riga, Latvia.

A regional HIV/AIDS strategy being developed under United States and Finnish leadership.

Northern Europe is an area that once pulsed with activity, long before the Cold War divided this region. It is a place where my parents came from—from modern day Lithuania and Belarus. These cross-border projects can take a small step to build back the trust and cooperation that flourished before dictators and armies split people apart.

This legislation has been endorsed by proliferation and environmental watchdog groups with expertise in this area including Monterey Institute of International Studies, the Bellona Institute, the Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

One of the leading U.S. experts on the Russian Submarine issue, Dr. James Clay Moltz, Director of the NIS Nonproliferation Project at the Monterey Institute, said in support of this legislation:

The presence of large numbers of decommissioned but not defueled attack submarines in the Russian Northern Fleet poses serious environmental, proliferation-related, and security threats. These vessels are vulnerable to nuclear accidents from the ongoing theft of materials and control systems by impoverished sailors, the sinking of corroded vessels, and periodic electrical outages at Russian naval facilities. Given that many of these submarines were designed to carry nuclear-tipped cruise missiles and torpedoes, it is in U.S. interests to dismantle them as soon as possible.

My legislation states clearly that it is Europeans who must continue to take the lead. It is not necessary for the United States to spend large sums of money on these projects, but it is in our national interest to provide leadership and expertise on submarine dismantlement efforts. This is a case where our unparalleled experience in this field makes us the indispensable nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. LEE. 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. LATOURETTE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4249, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMENDING THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FOR CONDUCT OF ITS PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 251) commending the Republic of Croatia for the conduct of its parliamentary and presidential elections, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 251

Whereas the fourth Croatian parliamentary elections, held on January 3, 2000, marked Croatia's progress toward meeting

its commitments as a participating state of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and as a member of the Council of Europe;

Whereas Croatia's third presidential elections were conducted smoothly and professionally and concluded on February 7, 2000, with the landslide election of Stipe Mesic as the new President of the Republic of Croatia;

Whereas the free and fair elections in Croatia, and the following peaceful and orderly transfer of power from the old government to the new, is an example of democracy to the people of other nations in the region and a major contribution to the democratic development of southeastern Europe; and

Whereas the people of Croatia have made clear that they want Croatia to take its rightful place in the family of European democracies and to develop a closer and more constructive relationship with the Euro-Atlantic community of democratic nations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the people of the Republic of Croatia are to be congratulated on the successful elections and the outgoing Government of Croatia is to be commended for the democratic standards with which it managed the elections;

(2) the United States should support the efforts of the new Government of Croatia to increase its work on refugee return, privatization reform, accession to the World Trade Organization, media reform, and further cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to set an example to other countries in the region;

(3) the Congress strongly supports Croatia's commitment to western democratic standards and will give its full support to the new Government of Croatia to fully implement democratic reforms;

(4) the United States continues to promote Croatian-American economic, political, and military relations and welcomes Croatia as a partner in the cause of stability and democratization in south central Europe;

(5) the United States and the Republic of Croatia should work to establish a strategic partnership to include Croatia's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Partnership for Peace; and

(6) the countries of the European Union should develop closer relations with Croatia and, in particular, should help to expedite Croatia's accession into global and regional trade organizations, including the World Trade Organization.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) each will control 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.)

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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, this resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 251, was introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH). It is timely and appropriate. The people of Croatia have suffered through too many years of warfare, destruction, ethnic strife, and economic stagnation.

As this resolution points out, the elections held recently from the Croatian parliament and the Croatian presidency were indeed conducted in a fair, free, and Democratic manner, by all accounts that we have received. Just as important, however, is the fact that those elections brought to power a government that appears intent on moving Croatia forward in all respects.

I therefore believe and agree with the sponsor of the resolution that it would be worthwhile for the Congress to show its support at this time for the new government in the form of this resolution. The new Croatian government will face challenges in opening up its economy and in finding ways to make certain that its support for ethnic Croats in neighboring Bosnia does not lead Croatia to undermine the sovereignty of that state.

It is going to face serious challenges in other areas as well. This resolution will make it clear that the success in meeting those challenges should be met by American and European support for Croatia's full entry into the Pan American and trans-Atlantic community of nations.

I am pleased to note that Croatia has been invited just last week, Mr. Speaker, to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program. In that manner, the new Croatian government's good intentions are receiving important recognition.

This resolution will serve as another important signal of our support as Croatia's new government moves to fulfill its intentions, and will serve to highlight our hopes for Croatia's future success. I am optimistic that Croatia's days of warfare and destruction are over. We are hopeful that Croatia will now enter a stage of stability and prosperity.

Now is the time for Croatia to build its new democratic future. This resolution points to that fact and congratulates the Croatian people for so clearly choosing the path of democracy in their recent elections.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of this important resolution.

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

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

I rise in strong support of this resolution, Mr. Speaker. Just as the committee takes the time to criticize the outcome of election results that produce controversial governments, it also produces resolutions which commend the results of positive elections, such as the recent elections in Croatia in February.