ADDRESS OF AMBASSADOR GÉZA JESZENSZKY ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VISIT TO AMERICA BY HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER LAJOS KOSSUTH

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago the Hungarian embassy, along with the American Hungarian Federation of Metropolitan Washington, D.C., and the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, organized a meeting to honor Lajos Kossuth, the influential Hungarian statesman and an advocate for democratic ideals in Hungary in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The event commemorated Kossuth's celebrated visit to America 150 years ago. Following an invitation from the President of the United States, Kossuth arrived in New York City on December 5, 1851, marking the beginning of a six-month tour of the country.

During his time here, Kossuth gave several hundred speeches throughout the United States, including separate addresses in both houses of Congress. Kossuth received praise by many notable American political leaders and intellectuals, including William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, and Abraham Lincoln. In response to Kossuth's visit, approximately 250 poems, dozens of books, hundreds of pamphlets, and thousands of editorials were written about him.

Mr. Speaker, since I was born in Hungary, the legacy of Lajos Kossuth holds a special place in my heart. But by no means are the ideals and values of this noble man limited to a specific country. He devoted his life to fight for and defend democracy, freedom, and human liberties. Kossuth has been named, alongside George Washington, as a symbol of ''universal human values.'' I do not hesitate to echo this sentiment and encourage all of us to learn more about Kossuth and the causes he held dear.

In that vein, I would like to share with my colleagues the excellent speech given by the Hungarian Ambassador to the United States Géza Jeszenszky at the event to honor Kossuth. Jeszensky's speech, entitled, ''150 Years of Influence of Louis Kossuth, Governor-President of Hungary,'' gives an excellent overview of Kossuth's visit to the United States and its lasting influence on America. I would like to share his remarks with my colleagues, and request that they be placed in the RECORD.

150 YEARS OF INFLUENCE OF LOUIS KOSSUTH, GOVERNOR-PRESIDENT OF HUNGARY

(By Ambassador Géza Jeszenszky)

Congressman Lantos, Mrs. Lantos, Your Excellency Ambassador Poptodorova, distinguished other members of the Diplomatic Corps, Leaders of the American Hungarian community, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends:

Senator Seward of New York described Kossuth in the U.S. Senate on Dec. 8, 1851 as ''a personage whose name and fame at this time fills the eye and ear of the world.''

Hungary had many great statesmen and other luminaries in her checkered history, but Kossuth stands out among them. Like George Washington, he was regarded as the father of the nation already in his lifetime. He was the first Hungarian political leader to make it into world history, on his visits he was admired and welcomed in England, France, the U.S. and in Italy by enthusiastic crowds. At least 100,000 turned out to great him in New York City on Broadway. He was a star matched by few politicians.

Kossuth is considered as one of the great orators of all times. He could capture his audience in Hungarian, German, Latin and English, too. He also knew a lot about the history and constitution of America. As the editor of the first popular daily newspaper in Hungary he established the reputation of the U.S. as a most successful country and a political model.

The democratic revolution in 1848, inspired and led by Kossuth, transformed Hungary from a neglected and oppressed province of the Habsburgs into a modern constitutional and independent state. The armed attack on it by the Habsburg Army led to a War of Independence, and it was followed with keen interest by millions in Europe and America. Following a series of spectacular victories in the spring the Hungarian Parliament elected Kossuth Governor-President on April 14, 1849. The U.S. sent an envoy, Mr. Dudley Mann, with the intention of recognizing Hungary's independence. That was forestalled by the Russian intervention—for the first, but not for the last time! President Zachary Taylor was an enthusiastic supporter of the cause of Hungary—his reports and instructions to the Senate at the end of 1849 testify that.

The bloody reprisals following the surrender of the Hungarian Army in August 1849 even increased the sympathy worldwide—this is another painful parallel with 1956.

There were a number of prominent members of the U.S. Congress who took a very strong interest in Hungary in those days, most notably Senator Cass of Michigan (who in early 1850 moved to break diplomatic relations with Austria), and Senator Webster of Massachusetts. There was even a move in the House of Representatives to censure the President and the Secretary of State for failing to recognize the independence of Hungary in due time.

The death of President Taylor was a blow to the Hungarians as well. His successor, President Fillmore was more reserved, but his Secretary of State became Webster, an admirer of Kossuth. In Spring 1851 Senator Foot of Mississippi moved to send a warship for Kossuth to bring him over to the States from his exile in Turkey. The Senate concurred, and the frigate Mississippi was dispatched.

Kossuth arrived in New York on December 4, 1851. He was welcomed by huge crowds, both there and subsequently in Philadelphia and Baltimore. The exiled Head of State came to the United States with far higher aims than raising money for the continuation of the Hungarian War of Independence. While he fully understood why the Founding Fathers of the Republic warned against entangling alliances, he hoped to bring about a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy: to convince the country that the time came for taking an active role in international affairs, commensurate with its strength, and to make Americans realize the interdependence of Europe and the U.S., that the Atlantic was no longer a barrier but rather a link, that freedom and democracy in Europe was also a vital interest for the American Republic, and, finally, that the two English-speaking countries must be allied so that they could jointly prevent tyrannical, authoritarian countries like Russia from suppressing the striving of subject nations for freedom.

The effort to bring about a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy, to abandon neutrality and isolationism was bound to fail in 1852—but wasn't Kossuth's only a premature but sound idea? Sixty-six years later, in 1917, the U.S. acted along such lines, and ninety years later the Atlantic Charter came to embody the principles first advocated by the Hungarian leader.

While Kossuth's first speeches in New York were received most warmly by crowded audiences, they cooled the enthusiasm of quite a few in Congress. On Dec. 2, 1851 the President expressed his wish that Congress should decide on how to receive the Hungarian statesman. A heated debate started on the following day. Foote's move for an official reception was opposed by Southern Democrats and by radical free-soilers, who saw a contradiction between welcoming a foreign freedom-fighter while denying freedom to slaves. Conservatives denounced Kossuth as a revolutionary. The debate ran for eight days! Charles Sumner of Massachusetts called Kossuth ''a living Washington,'' while Senator Seward of New York gave a moving testimony of his significance, as follows: ''Mr. President, in the course of human events, we see the nations of Europe struggling to throw off the despotic systems of government, and attempting to establish a government based upon the principles of republicanism or of constitutional monarchy. Whenever such efforts are made, it invariably happens that the existing despotisms of Europe endeavor to suppress the high and holy endeavor, and to subdue the people by whom it is made. The consequence is that despotism has one common cause; and it results that the cause of civil and constitutional liberty has, in all countries, become one common cause—the common cause of mankind against despotism. Now, whatever nation leads the way at any time—at any crisis—in this contest for civil liberty, it becomes, as we perceive, the representative of all the nations of the earth. We once occupied that noble and interesting position, and we engaged the sympathies of civilized men throughout the world. No one can deny that now, or recently, Hungary took that position. We had a messenger on the spot ready to acknowledge her independence; and this our own proceeding show that we, in common with the friends of civil liberty elsewhere, hailed Hungary as such a representative of the nations of the earth.''

Senator Cass said that while denouncing Russia's intervention was morally imperative, it did not mean that the U.S. would send a fleet to European waters. Stephen Douglas called attention to the fact that Kossuth challenged European absolutism, the antipode of the basic principles the U.S. had been built upon and that he was a representative of world freedom. (Today we might use the expression ''a world whole and free.'') Finally on Dec. 12 the Senate adopted Seward's motion with Shield's (Ill.) modification: Kossuth was to be received exactly like Lafayette had been. There was 36 vote for that and 6—from the South—against. The House of Representatives concurred on Dec. 15: 181 for and 16 against, with Rep. Smith from Alabama saying that if Kossuth continued to agitate against friendly Austria he should be arrested! All that shows that while the country came under the spell of the Hungarian leader, Congress overwhelmingly concurring, sectional interests and ideological concerns acted as a brake even in what was hardly more than a symbolic gesture.

Kossuth's train arrived in Washington on Dec. 30. He was received by Senators Shield and Seward. Secretary Webster immediately visited him in his hotel, followed by the mayor and a large number of politicians and various associations, delegations. The House was still debating about the details of his reception. On the next day, Dec. 31, Kossuth

called upon President Fillmore. In a masterly speech he presented the case of Hungary, calling for help. The President expected only a courtesy call, so in his answer he told that he personally sympathized with Hungarian independence, but the policy of the Union would not abandon the traditions. This should not have been a surprise, but nevertheless it was a cold shower for Kossuth.

On Jan. 7 Cass, Shields and Seward presented him to the Senate, and on the same day the House appointed three members to show him to the House. Kossuth's answer to the welcoming words of the Speaker was brief but telling. ''It is a remarkable fact in the history of mankind, that while, through all the past, honors were bestowed upon glory, and glory was attached only to success, the legislative authorities of this great republic bestow the highest honors upon a persecuted exile, not conspicuous by glory, not favored by success, but engaged in a just cause.

There is a triumph of republican principles in this fact. Sir, in my own and my country's name, I thank the House of Representatives of the United States for the honor of this cordial welcome.''

On that evening a banquet was given by both Houses in Kossuth's honor, with 250 attending, including Webster and two other members of the cabinet. Kossuth gave a noncontroversial speech: ''Happy is your great country, Sir, for being so warmly attached to that great principle of self-government. Upon this foundation your fathers raised a home for freedom more glorious than the world has ever seen. Happy is your great country, Sir, that it was selected by the blessing of the Lord to prove the glorious practicability of a federative union of many sovereign states, all preserving their state-rights and their self-government, and yet united in one. Every star beaming with its own lustre, but altogether one constellation on mankind's canopy.''

Despite a few dissenting voices Kossuth's reception in Congress was exceptional in both form and substance. Since the political aims of the Hungarian leader could not be met by the legislature, he took his message to the country, embarking on a tour that took him as far as St. Louis in the West, New Orleans in the South and Boston in the North. There were moving outpourings of sympathy, and occasionally even the idea of intervention was endorsed. Much of the financial contributions were, however, spent by the local hosts on lavish hospitality—to the grief of Governor Kossuth.

In an epilogue added to the reprinted version of a volume of Kossuth's speeches published in 1852 Professor Béla Várdy reminds us: ''Millions of Americans came under his spell . . . dozens of books, hundreds of pamphlets, and thousands of articles and essays, as well as nearly two hundred poems were written to him or about him.'' The names of Emerson, Longfellow, Horace Greeley, James Russel Lowell, Harriet Beecher Stowe stand out among those authors. But undoubtedly the greatest person who was inspired by the exiled Hungarian leader was Abraham Lincoln. On January 9, 1852, Lincoln said in the legislature of Illinois: ''We recognize in Governor Kossuth of Hungary the most worthy and distinguished representative of the cause of civil and religious liberty on the continent of Europe.''

Perhaps the most memorable speech of Kossuth was delivered in Columbus, Ohio, to the legislature on February 7: ''Almost every century has had one predominant idea which imparted a common direction to the activity of nations. This predominant idea is the spirit of the age, invisible yet omnipresent, impregnable, all-pervading, scorned, abused, opposed yet omnipotent. The spirit of our age is Democracy. All for the people and all by the people. Nothing about the people without the people. That is democracy, and that is the ruling tendency of the spirit of our age.'' It is quite probable that these words were remembered by Lincoln, as the Gettysburg Address echoes Kossuth's definition of democracy.

The influence of Kossuth in the U.S. did not come to an end with his departure in July 1852. His contemporaries, the crowds and also the politicians remembered him for a long time. Many children were named after him. Generations of Americans grew up associating Hungary with Kossuth and liberty. Both Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt showed a remarkable knowledge of and sympathy to Hungary, most probably going back to 1848 and Kossuth's memory.

In the late 19th and early 20th century hundreds of thousands of poor Hungarians arrived in the U.S. in search of employment and a better life. Most of them stayed here. For these downtrodden immigrant ''Hunkies'' Kossuth represented a hero, known and respected by their new country, no wonder that they named streets and buildings after him and erected statues to him, in Cleveland, New York, Pittsburgh and elsewhere. In World War II, the warship ''U.S.S. Kossuth'' was built on the donations of Hungarian-Americans.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 showed that Kossuth's spirit remained a force inspiring the people of Hungary. The symbol of the Revolution was the coat-of-arms used by Kossuth. The new fight of the Hungarians for freedom re-awakened sympathy throughout the U.S. Following its suppression, against by Russian arms, tens of Hungarian refugees were admitted and welcomed by America. Soon a stamp of Kossuth was issued in the ''Champions of Liberty'' series. Thirty-three years later the end of communism and Hungary's role in it was the realization of Kossuth's dreams of an independent and democratic country. Today Hungary is trying to live up to the high standards set by its great son.

In 1990, in the middle of another, now bloodless, Hungarian revolution, on the initiative of Congressman and Mrs. Annette Lantos, a bust was unveiled in the Capitol in a moving ceremony in the Rotunda. And now, 150 years after the visit of Governor-President Kossuth dozens of commemorations are held in the U.S. reminding the present generation of those stirring times. I am extremely grateful to the American people for having preserved the memory of our great leader and for giving me this unique opportunity to speak in this magnificent institution, recalling when Kossuth and Hungary filled the pages of the Congressional Record.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE VERY REV. PROTOPRESBYTER STEPHEN DUTKE ON THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORDINATION

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today to the Very Rev. Protopresbyter Stephen Dutke in celebration of his 60th anniversary of the Ordination to the Holy Priesthood. I am pleased to congratulate Father Dutke for his 60 years of distinguished service.

Father Dutke was born on January 3, 1917 in Nesquehoning, Pa, the son of Damian and Susan Dutke. He grew up in Elizabeth, NJ and graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School and Union Junior College in Cranford, NJ. He studied theology at the Diocesan Seminary of Christ the Saviour Seminary graduating in 1942. He married Mary Dzuback of Bayonne on May 3, 1942 and was ordained as an Orthodox priest by Bishop Orestes on May 10, 1942.

Father Dutke organized St. Mary's Church in Buffalo, NY serving as its first pastor. He also served as pastor to St. Michael's Church in Freeland, PA from November of 1947 to August of 1961, where he oversaw the construction of the new rectory, the decorating of the church and the construction of the parish recreation center in 1959. He was assigned to St. Michael's Church in Binghamton, NY in August of 1961, where he served as pastor until July of 1991 and continues to serve as pastor emeritus.

At St. Michael's, he spearheaded a $200,000 renovation project of the church for its 60th anniversary in 1964 as well as the creation of classrooms and a library for the Church School program at the recreation center. Throughout his pastorate, he distinguished himself by his selfless ministry to those who are ill and afflicted at home, local hospitals and nursing homes. He fostered 12 vocations to the Holy Priesthood including four men from Freeland and eight from Binghamton. For more than three decades, he served as director of the annual Diocesan Altar Boys Retreat, encouraging many boys to strengthen their faith and service to the church, both as laypeople and priests.

Father Dutke served as Director of the Diocesan Priests' Pension Plan, a member of the Diocesan Liturgical Music Commission, as a member of the Diocesan Consistory and Board of Trustees for more than 30 years. His All-Holiness Patriarch Dimitrious designated him as a Proto-Priest in 1966 and as a Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1989. Since his retirement in 1991, he has continued to assist at St. Michael's, serving one of the Sunday Liturgies, managing the annual Pirohi Project and continuing his pastoral work through visiting the sick at hospitals and nursing homes.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to salute Father Dutke for his many years of distinguished service to our community. It is my pleasure to join Father Dutke's friends, family and congregation in extending my deepest appreciation for his outstanding service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 129 I was unavoidably detained with other matters. Had I been present, I would have voted ''no.''