

the United Nations and the European Union, they had come within finger-touching distance of a settlement. All the sadder, then, that this week the Turkish-Cypriots' truculent leader, Rauf Denktash, rejected the UN's sensible proposals for a deal. The government in mainland Turkey must also share blame by failing to bludgeon Mr. Denktash into accepting the plan. A further gloomy outcome is that, while the island's Greek-run part will almost certainly join the EU on its own next year and the Turkish part will fester in isolation and poverty, mainland Turkey's own hopes of starting negotiations to join the Union have been dented too.

Both of the island's communities had a lot to gain. The Turks would have given back control of around 8% of the island's territory to the Greeks—a substantial chunk of the land taken in 1974 when the Turkish army intervened after a short-lived Greek-Cypriot coup on the island. The Turks, 18% of the population before the invasion, have since held 37% of the land. The Greek-Cypriots' new president, Tassos Papadopoulos, at first complained that the latest UN compromise did not adequately address his people's grievances. But he wisely accepted it. This time it is overwhelmingly Mr. Denktash's fault that a settlement has been blocked.

Indeed, the Turks had even more to gain than the Greeks. They would have kept a vast amount of autonomy in their still disproportionately large zone. They would have enjoyed an influx of EU cash had the whole island been joining the Union next year, not to mention the rapid lifting of sanctions long imposed by the EU against their breakaway statelet.

The Turkish government may have been too preoccupied by the political wrangling and tortuous diplomacy over Iraq (see article). Many of Turkey's still-too-influential generals see the Turkish-run bit of Cyprus as a strategic asset, while some Turkish politicians regard the island as a bargaining chip in Turkey's quest to join the EU. They are wrong. Turkey's failure to persuade Mr. Denktash to say yes to compromise will make it much harder for the EU to smile on its application, due for consideration at the end of next year, to start negotiations to join. Many governments are already queasy about the idea of Turkey as a fellow Euro-club member.

WHAT NEXT?

The UN's secretary-general, Kofi Annan, had suggested a ruse to force Mr. Denktash's hand and to strengthen that of the Greek-Cypriots' leader by holding a referendum on the proposals next month—on both sides of the island. Both communities would probably have said yes. But Mr. Denktash wrecked that idea too. If stalemate prevails, as seems likely, Mr. Annan says he will abandon all further efforts to settle Cyprus during his time as UN boss. It would then be up to the EU to reopen proceedings. By the end of this year the Turkish-Cypriots are due for a general election. Mr. Denktash's opponents on his own side of the island, who approved of Mr. Annan's plan, may well take power in parliament but the presidential term has a few years yet to run. One day, perhaps mercifully soon, the ailing Mr. Denktash will go. Then, maybe, a fair deal can at last be done. But a golden chance has been stupidly wasted.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of

the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to celebrate Greek Independence Day and the strong ties that bind the nation of Greece and the United States. 182 years ago exactly on this date, the people of Greece began a journey that would mark the symbolic rebirth of democracy in the land where those principles for human dignity were first espoused. They rebelled against more than 400 years, 400 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 that we celebrate our Fourth of July. It proved that a united people through sheer will and perseverance can prevail against tyranny.

Men such as Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Euripides developed the then unique notion that men could, if left to their own devices, lead themselves rather than be subject to the will of a sovereign. It was Aristotle who said: "We make war that we may live in peace," a timely statement considering today's events. On March 25, 1821, Archbishop Germanos of Patras embodied the spirit of those words when he raised the flag of freedom and was the first to declare Greece free.

Revolutions embody a sense of heroism, Mr. Speaker, bringing forth a greatness of the human spirit. As Thomas Jefferson once said: "To the ancient Greeks we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves, American colonists, out of Gothic darkness."

Quoting Jefferson on the anniversary of Greek independence is particularly appropriate. Jefferson and the rest of the Founding Fathers looked back to the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers for inspiration as they sought to craft a strong democratic state. In 1821, the Greeks looked to our Founding Fathers for inspiration when they began their journey toward freedom.

We all know that the price of liberty can be very high. History is replete with the names of the millions that have sacrificed for it. Many great scholars throughout history warn that we maintain democracy only at great

cost. The freedom we enjoy today is due, to a large degree, to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past in Greece, in America and all over the world.

Freedom is America's heart. It is central to our being, and from the beginning we have recognized that freedom is not just an American right. It is a God-given right to every citizen of the world.

Even as we commemorate Greek Independence Day, American servicemembers are fighting to liberate the Iraqi people who have suffered for decades under Saddam Hussein's brutal regime. We must never forget that freedom must be constantly guarded. It is a noble, but fragile, thing that can be stolen or snuffed out if not protected.

We cannot take for granted that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. We enjoy our freedom only because we have been willing to fight and die for it, just like our forefathers and the valiant Greeks in 1821.

Mr. Speaker, on this 182nd birthday of Greek independence, when we celebrate the restoration of democracy to the land of its conception, we also celebrate the triumph of the human spirit and the strength of man's will. The goals and values that the people of Greece share with the people of the United States reaffirm our common democratic heritage.

This occasion also serves to remind us that we must never take for granted the right to determine our own fate.

Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to celebrate Greek Independence Day and the strong ties that bind the nation of Greece and the United States.

One hundred and eighty two years ago, the people of Greece began a journey that would mark the symbolic rebirth of democracy in the land where those principles to human dignity were first espoused.

They rebelled against more than 400 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 hope and inspiration to victims of persecution throughout the world today.

Men such as Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Euripides developed the then-unique notion that men could, if left to their own devices, lead themselves rather than be subject to the will of a sovereign. It was Aristotle who said: "We make war that we may live in peace." On March 25, 1821, Archbishop Germanos of Patras embodied the spirit of those words when he raised the flag of freedom and was the first to declare Greece free.

Revolutions embody a sense of heroism, bringing forth the greatness of the human spirit. It was Thomas Jefferson who said that, "One man with courage is a majority." Quoting Jefferson on the anniversary of Greek independence is particularly appropriate. Jefferson,

and the rest of the Founding Fathers, looked back to the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers for inspiration as they sought to craft a strong democratic state. And in 1821, the Greeks looked to our Founding Fathers for inspiration when they began their journey toward freedom.

The history of Greek independence, like that of the American Revolution, is filled with many stories of courage and heroism. There are many parallels between the American and Greek Revolutions.

Encouraged by the American Revolution, the Greeks began their rebellion after four centuries of Turkish oppression, facing what appeared to be insurmountable odds. Both nations faced the prospect of having to defeat an empire to obtain liberty. And if Samuel Adams, the American revolutionary leader who lighted the first spark of rebellion by leading the Boston Tea Party, had a Greek counterpart, that man would be Alexander Ypsilantis.

Ypsilantis was born in Istanbul, and his family was later exiled to Russia. Ypsilantis served in the Russian army, and it was there, during his military service, that he became involved with a secret society called the "Philike Hetairia," which translated means "friendly society." The "friendly society" was made up of merchants and other Greek leaders, but the intent of the society was to seek freedom for Greece and her people.

The group planned a secret uprising for 1821 to be led by Ypsilantis. He and 4,500 volunteers assembled near the Russian border to launch an insurrection against the Turks. The Turkish army massacred the ill-prepared Greek volunteers, and Ypsilantis was caught and placed in prison, where he subsequently died. However, the first bells of liberty had been rung, and Greek independence would not be stopped.

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, 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 many lives were sacrificed at the altar of freedom, the Greek people rallied around the battle cry "Eleftheria I Thanatos"—liberty or death, mirroring the words of American Patriot Patrick Henry who said: "Give me liberty or give me death." These words personified the Greek patriots' unmitigated desire to be free.

Another heroic Greek whom many believe was the most important figure in the revolution was Theodoros Kolokotronis. He was the leader of the Klephts, a group of rebellious and resilient Greeks who refused to submit to Turkish subjugation. Kolokotronis used military strategy he learned while in the service of the English Army to organize a force of over 7,000 men. The Klephts swooped down on the Turks from their mountain strongholds, battering their oppressors into submission.

One battle in particular, where Kolokotronis led his vastly outnumbered forces against the Turks, stands out. The Turks had invaded Peloponnese with 30,000 men. Kolokotronis led his force, which was outnumbered by a ratio of 4 to 1, against the Turkish army. A fierce battle ensued and many lives were lost, but after a few weeks, the Turks were forced to retreat. Kolokotronis is a revered Greek leader, because he embodied the hopes and

dreams of the common man, while displaying extraordinary courage and moral fiber in the face of overwhelming odds.

Athanasios Diakos was another legendary hero, a priest, a patriot, a soldier. He led 500 of his men in a noble stand against 8,000 Ottoman soldiers. Diakos' men were wiped out and he fell into the enemy's hands, where he was severely tortured before his death. He is the image of a Greek who gave all for love of faith and homeland.

While individuals acts of bravery and leadership are often noted, the Greek Revolution was remarkable for the bravery and fortitude displayed by the typical Greek citizen. This heroic ideal of sacrifice and service is best demonstrated through the story of the Suliotes, villagers who took refuge from Turkish authorities in the mountains of Epiros. The fiercely patriotic Suliotes bravely fought the Turks in several battles. News of their victories spread throughout the region and encouraged other villagers to revolt. The Turkish Army acted swiftly and with overwhelming force to quell the Suliote uprising.

The Suliote women were alone as their husbands battled the Turks at the front. When they learned that Turkish troops were fast approaching their village, they began to dance the "Syrtos," a patriotic Greek dance. One by one, rather than face torture or enslavement at the hands of the Turks, they committed suicide by throwing themselves and their children off Mount Zalongo. They chose to die rather than surrender their freedom.

The sacrifice of the Suliotes was repeated in the Arkadi Monastery of Crete. Hundreds of non-combatant, mainly the families of the Cretan freedom fighters, had taken refuge in the Monastery to escape Turkish reprisals. The Turkish army was informed that the Monastery was used by the Cretan freedom fighters as an arsenal for their war material, and they set out to seize it. As the Turkish troops were closing in, the priest gathered all the refugees in the cellar around him. With their consent, he set fire to the gunpowder kegs stored there, killing all but a few. The ruins of the Arkadi Monastery, like the ruins of our Alamo, still stand as a monument to liberty.

News of the Greek revolution met with widespread feelings of compassion in the United States. The Founding Fathers eagerly expressed sentiments of support for the fledgling uprising. Several American Presidents, including James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, conveyed their support for the revolution through their annual messages to Congress. William Harrison, our ninth President, expressed his belief in freedom for Greece, saying: "We must send our free will offering. 'The Star-Spangled Banner' must wave in the Aegean . . . a messenger of fraternity and friendship to Greece."

Various Members of Congress also showed a keen interest in the Greeks' struggle for autonomy. Henry Clay, who in 1825 became Secretary of State, was a champion of Greece's fight for independence. Among the most vocal was Daniel Webster from Massachusetts, who frequently roused the sympathetic interest of his colleagues and other Americans in the Greek revolution.

It should not surprise us that our Founding Fathers would express such keen support for Greek independence, for they themselves had been inspired by the ancient Greeks in their own struggle for freedom. As Thomas Jeffer-

son once said, "To the ancient Greeks . . . we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves . . . American colonists, out of gothic darkness." Our two nations share a brotherhood bonded by the common blood of democracy, birthed by Lady Liberty, and committed to the ideal that each individual deserves the right of self-determination.

We all know that the price of liberty can be very high—history is replete with the names of the millions who have sacrificed for it. Many great scholars throughout history warned that we maintain democracy only at great cost. The freedom we enjoy today is due to a large degree to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past—in Greece, in America, and all over the world.

I recount these stories because they pay homage to Greece's absolute commitment to freedom and liberty and the common bonds which we share. Unfortunately, our devotion to the principle of freedom is not shared by many people whose interests are better served by applying oppression to their own people and spreading terror elsewhere. The cowardly attack of September 11, 2001, against our great Nation backfired because these horrific acts united our country as Americans rushed to the aid of their fellow countrymen. The terrorist attacks brought out the best in America and showed the world that ordinary people like you and me will do extraordinary things when called upon.

Freedom is America's heart. It is central to our being, and from the beginning we have recognized that freedom is not just an American right. It is a God-given right to every citizen of the world. Even as we commemorate Greek Independence Day, American servicemembers are fighting to liberate the Iraqi people who have suffered for decades under Saddam Hussein's brutal regime.

We must not overlook those who are still fighting for their independence in other parts of the world, such as in the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey still illegally occupies Cyprus, as it has since its invasion in 1974. Finding a fair resolution for Cyprus will help stabilize a region marked more often by conflict than accord.

As with so many intentional issues, U.S. leadership is essential to urge Turkish and Turkish Cypriot leaders toward peace.

It is unfortunate that the Turkish Cypriot leadership has recently rejected the plan proposed by the U.N. Secretary General, aimed at reuniting the island under a government of shared power and having the united island admitted to the European Union. This is a vision worthy of our attention and full support because it will end the illegitimate division of Cyprus, improve the relations between Turkey and Greece and promote stability in the sensitive region of Eastern Mediterranean.

We must never forget that freedom must be constantly guarded. It is a noble but fragile thing that can be stolen or snuffed out if not protected. We cannot take for granted that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. We enjoy our freedom only because we have been willing to fight and die for it, just like our forefathers and the valiant Greeks in 1821.

Mr. Speaker, on this 182nd birthday of Greek Independence, when we celebrate the restoration of democracy to the land of its conception, we also celebrate the triumph of the human spirit and the strength of man's will.

The goals and values that the people of Greece share with the people of the United States reaffirms our common democratic heritage. This occasion also serves to remind us that we must never take for granted the right to determine our own fate.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today Greece celebrates its 182nd year of independence. I am here tonight to praise a society that represents, in a historical sense, the origins of what we call Western culture, and, in a contemporary sense, one of the staunchest defenders of Western society and values. There are many of us in Congress, on both sides of the spectrum, who are staunchly committed to preserving and strengthening the ties between Greek and American people.

In the years since it's Greek independence, Americans and Greeks have grown ever closer, bound by ties of strategic and military alliance, common values of democracy, individual freedom, human rights, and close personal friendship.

The timeless values of Greek culture have endured for centuries, indeed for millennia. Four hundred years of control by the Ottoman Empire could not overcome the Greek people's determination to be free. But, I regret to say, Mr. Speaker, to this day, the Greek people must battle against oppression. For almost 28 years now, Greece has stood firm in its determination to bring freedom and independence to the illegally occupied nation of Cyprus.

Given instability around the world and a war in Iraq, now is a good time to heal the wound in Cyprus that has poisoned the relations between Greece and Turkey for so many years.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I was so disappointed earlier this month when I learned of the breakdown in the United Nations-sponsored Cyprus peace talks in the Hague. All of the facts lead to the inescapable conclusion that the cause of the breakdown is the intransigence of the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash, and his supporters in Ankara.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday 16 of my House colleagues joined me in sending a letter to President Bush urging that all official statements from the U.S. Government regarding the Cyprus issue place the blame for this negative outcome squarely where it belongs, with Mr. Denktash and Ankara. We also requested that the Bush administration redouble its efforts to persuade Turkey and Turkish-Cypriot leader to work constructively within the U.N. process and framework to achieve a negotiated settlement to end the division of Cyprus.

Due to the attitude of Mr. Denktash and Turkey, further progress on the U.N. plan now appears derailed. The office of the Secretary General's Special Advisor on Cyprus will be brought to a close in the coming weeks. The Secretary General has said that his plan is still on the table. It is apparent that continued division serves Mr. Denktash's narrow political interests—even if his position is completely contrary to the interests of the large majority of the Turkish Cypriots, who have made their views known in support of the U.N. process in massive demonstrations.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, Cyprus President Tassos Papadopoulos has pledged to continue efforts for a Cyprus settlement that would properly serve the interests of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is my expectation, and the expectation of 16 of my colleagues who joined

me in sending the letter to President Bush, that the Bush administration will use all available political and diplomatic means to persuade Turkey to work constructively to resolve the Cyprus question. At a time when Turkey is interested in joining the EU, its lack of cooperation in the efforts to solve the Cyprus problem can only result in a setback for Turkey's EU candidacy. Ultimately, the victims of these shortsighted policies from Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot leadership are the people of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community, who will continue to be deprived of an opportunity to share in the economic, social and other benefits of EU membership. Moreover, the Turkish rejection is a setback to peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, a U.S. strategic objective and long-standing policy for the region.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work with my colleagues here in Congress to ensure that the United States government remains on the right side of this issue—because there is no gray area when it comes to this conflict.

In closing I want to congratulate the Greek people for 182 years of independence and thank them for their contributions to American life.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 182nd anniversary of Greece's modern independence, and I can think of no more fitting time to celebrate the birth place of democracy than now, when our brave men and women are overseas fighting for the very principles that the Ancient Greeks first embraced. I am proud and honored to pay tribute tonight to the more than 3 million Greek-Americans in the United States, almost 10,000 of whom reside in my congressional district.

From the books that are still taught in schools, such as Homers's Iliad and Odyssey, to the homecoming of the Olympics in Athens, Greek culture continues to influence American life today. Greek-Americans contribute to every aspect of American culture as teachers, scientists, engineers, writers, actors, and every other occupation in the United States. Greek-Americans continue to teach us about the ideals that their great grandparents first taught the world: loyalty, pride, rugged individualism and governing for the people by the people.

Greece was the world's first democracy, and now more than ever it is important to celebrate democracy at a time when Coalition forces fight to preserve it. The citizens of Iraq will soon reap the benefits of living in a democratic land, and their children will be able to grow up in a society free from tyranny. This is what we celebrate tonight on the anniversary of Greek Independence Day: the idea of living free in a society where citizens freely elect their representatives to govern them, without coercion or intimidation.

Athens was the first city to say that one person does not have the right to rule by whim without the consent of the people. Saddam Hussein is a dictator. His totalitarian regime undermines human dignity. It works against, not for, the people of Iraq. Greece was the first civilization to realize this truth, and it is for this reason that tonight we celebrate its Independence Day.

We must also never forget the exceptional relations that Greece and America enjoy. As Greece continues to be a country of stability in an otherwise turbulent Balkans region, let us always remember that Greece, one of Amer-

ica's greatest allies, has fought with the United States in every major war from World War I to the Persian Gulf, and that it remains committed to promoting the democratic ideals that we celebrate tonight.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of the 182nd anniversary of Greek independence. As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I once again join my colleagues in paying tribute to the Greek nation and its people.

Today in the Congress of the United States we commemorate not only the independence achieved by the Greeks in 1821, but the freedom, civil liberties and self-determination sought by people everywhere.

Today is also a day to mark the long-standing special relationship between our two countries. We Americans owe a special debt of gratitude to the country upon which our democratic process is founded. Greece was the cradle of democracy, birthplace of ideals and values that shaped human history. Whenever we promote participatory democracy, public service, and equal rights, we pay testament to our shared heritage.

In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, modern day Greece was one of the first nations to offer its support to America in the struggle against terrorism so that we could create a safer world where future generations grow up in a free and open society. And during these days of war, cherished democratic principles are more vital than ever.

In my district in Massachusetts, thousands of Greek American families will participate in political, religious and cultural festivities, expressing pride in their Greek heritage and patriotism in their American citizenship. I extend congratulations to them, to all the people of Greek heritage in the United States, and to the people of Greece on this important holiday.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Greek people and their successful struggle for independence from Ottoman occupation that began nearly 182 years ago. Greek Independence Day has special symbolic resonance for Americans. Our forefathers founded our democratic system of government on the principles of popular representation introduced to this world by the ancient Athenians.

Our word democracy is, in fact, of Greek derivation and literally translates as people ("demo") rule ("kratos"). The ancient Greek experiment with democracy, however, was a visionary aberration that was centuries ahead of its time. Democracy did not last long in Ancient Greece as the first of empires—Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman—silenced democratic yearnings for nearly two millennia.

Although democracy temporarily disappeared, the Greeks continued to thrive and prosper. As the Roman Empire expanded in the early centuries after the birth of Christ, the Greek peoples dominated the eastern half of the Roman Empire, known as Byzantium, and it was the Greek city of Constantinople where the Roman emperor Constantine converted himself and the entire Roman Empire to Christianity.

After the fall of Rome in 476 AD, the Greek-led Byzantine Empire emerged as a potent force in the world and protectorate of Christian Orthodoxy. The Greeks remained strong and independent until the Central Asian Ottomans crushed the Byzantine armies and conquered the spiritual capital of the Byzantine world at Constantinople in 1453.

The victory of the Ottomans cast the Greek speaking peoples into more than four hundred years of occupation. But even while under the yoke of Ottoman rule, the Greeks were an impressive force. As successful and educated merchants, many thrived in the Ottoman middle class and bolstered the Ottoman economy.

Still, the Greeks were not meant to be subject peoples and they began to oppose the imperial policies of the Ottoman government. Greeks, many of whom were educated in the universities of the West, began to adopt revolutionary ideas from France, Great Britain, and the United States. The concepts of the nation-state, self-determination, and liberal democracy found their ways into the Greek villages and cities from Athens to Constantinople.

On March 25, 1821, Greek patriots from the southern tip of the Peloponnese to the northern outskirts of Macedonia finally rebuked the yoke of the Ottomans and declared the independence of the Greek people from subjugation. At first, the Hellenic fighters met with violent failure, but their just cause ignited the imaginations of their people and of scores of Western philhellenes, such as the English poet Lord Byron, who left their homelands to fight and die with the Greeks for their liberation.

The United States was never far from the minds of the revolutionary Greeks, nor was the struggle of the Greeks unnoticed by Americans. As Greek revolutionary commander Petros Mavromichalis, one of the founders of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821, "It is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you."

By 1833, the Greeks had secured independence and with it a place in history as the first of the subjugated peoples in Europe to overthrow their Ottoman masters.

As the Greek nation developed and grew, it emerged as a stalwart ally of the United States. The Greek people fought alongside the American and Allied forces in both of the world wars of the twentieth century. The Greeks again took up arms against their Ottoman foes in the First World War and then handed the Axis powers their first defeat in World War II when the Greek army pushed back the forces of Mussolini. Soon after, however, they would suffer through a long and painful Nazi occupation.

After World War II, Greece became an instrumental member of the NATO alliance. Greece's strategic location made it a vital buffer between the Western Democratic world and Soviet Communism.

Over the last thirty years, Greece has made major strides forward for its people. In 1974, Konstantine Karamanlis finally restored democracy to Greece, bringing representative government back to its birthplace. Greece became a member of the European Community and the powerful European Union.

Today, Greece continues to move in the right direction thanks to the enlightened leadership of Prime Minister Costas Simitis. Greece currently has the honor of holding the European Union's rotating Presidency. It is working to promote peace and stability in Europe and the Middle East during challenging times. Greece and its Foreign Minister George Papandreu continue aggressive efforts to end generations of strained relations between Tur-

key and Greece, including actively promoting a settlement on Cyprus and helping to promote Turkey's bid for EU membership. Greece understands that a democratic Turkey belonging to the EU would serve the interests of Greece, Turkey, and all of Europe.

Economically, Greece is prospering and recently became a member of the European Monetary Union. Next year, the Olympics will finally return to their birthplace in Greece where athletes and spectators from around the world will experience the warmth of Greek hospitality.

Strategically, Greece remains important, especially to the United States. It is a force of stability in the volatile Balkans where it continues to promote open markets and democracy. The Greek government is also united with the United States in its war on terrorism. Over the last year Greek law enforcement and intelligence services have worked closely with U.S. authorities to shut down the November 17th terrorist group and its terrorist allies in Greece. Greece has made major arrests and has begun prosecuting terrorist leaders for their crimes.

I cannot overstate the importance of strong ties between Greece and the United States. As an American citizen who believes firmly in the principles of democracy and as a representative of thousands of Greek-Americans that live in Central New Jersey, I rise today in humble recognition of Greek Independence Day.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud recognition of the 182nd anniversary of Greek Independence. This special day for Greece commemorates the end of nearly four hundred years under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and a return to its democratic roots.

The political philosophies of both the United States and Greece have been challenged by oppressive powers, and both nations have proudly defended their right to self-government. After showing a desire to be free from the Ottoman Empire in 1821, Greece endured eleven long years of war to succeed in gaining independence. American and Hellenic cultures greatly respect their tradition of independence and recognize the importance of democratic principles.

The United States and Greece have always enjoyed a reciprocal relationship in international and cultural endeavors. Hellenic principles resonate in our culture and politics, since the United States was founded on the principles of democracy developed thousands of years ago in the city-states of ancient Greece. Hellenic influence can even be seen in the architecture of our Capitol building. Our country has also had an influence on Greece since our Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution influenced their first Constitution.

On a cultural level, I am looking forward to 2004 and the homecoming of the Olympic Games to Athens. Since Greece resurrected the Olympics in 1896, they have symbolized peace and excellence for people around the world. Greece will undoubtedly serve as a gracious host of the Games, and the 25th Summer Olympics will prove again to the world how Hellenic ideals such as equality and friendship have stood the test of time and continue to flourish at a global level. Hellenic culture, whether through its development of democratic government or from its espousal of friendly competition, encourages people to

come together amicably even during the most difficult of times.

Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult to imagine a United States of America, or even the world, without the great contributions from Greece. I will continue my work in Congress to support Hellenic causes and keep the ties between our two countries strong. I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating Greece on the anniversary of its independence.

I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating this anniversary.

CELEBRATING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague and dear friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), with whom we founded and co-chair the Hellenic Caucus here in Congress; and I rise with him today to celebrate the 182nd anniversary of Greece's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire.

As many of my colleagues may know, New York City is the home of the largest Hellenic population outside of Greece and Cyprus; and historic Queens, which I have the honor of representing, is often called Little Athens because of the large influence from Greece and Cyprus in that neighborhood.

I rise today to pay tribute along with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) to the Hellenic American community, not only in the 14th Congressional District but in the entire country, for their many contributions to America; and also I rise to honor the Federation of Hellenic Societies, which will lead the Greek Independence Day Parade in Manhattan, again in my district, that pays tribute to the Olympic spirit.

The grand marshal this year is Senator SCHUMER, who will be accompanied by the Federation president, Apostolos Tomopoulos, and officers Petros Galatoulas, Takis Vassos, Sotirios Vahaviolos, Demetrios Kachulis, Kleantis Meimaroglou, Stylianos Manis, Elias Tsekerides, Anastasios Stasinou, George Georgopoulos, Nikos Alekgakis, Gregory Demetroulakis, Nikos Diamantides, Vasilios Petratos, Demetrius Kalamaras, George Kaloudis, Nikos Kouzilos, along with other major leaders from Astoria and Manhattan, Konstantis Lambrakis, Elena Maroulleti, Andreas Savva, John Zapantis, Bill Stathakos who is the honorary president, and John Spyridakis and George Razis.

Democracy traces its earliest roots back to ancient Greece and the Greeks of 1821 fought for independence from Turkey; and when they fought, they truly drew inspiration in turn from the ideals and institutions of the fledgling United States as they waged their own struggle for independence.