

Falcon International Dam is an architectural wonder, a man-made barrier of cement and steel reining in the power of the most precious natural resources, our water.

What makes this particular dam special, though, is its location right on the Texas-Mexico border down in Zapata, Texas. Its construction was part of an international plan to improve not only flood control, but also water conservation, and provide hydroelectric power for the benefit of communities living on both sides of the border. It serves as a representation of the unique relationship that Mexico and the United States hold.

The particular dam provides electricity that helps the entire southern part of Texas, from Laredo in Webb County, to Hidalgo to Brownsville in all that area. While controversies surrounding the decision to build the dam existed, many families lost their land and five townships were submerged under the reservoir.

The Falcon International Dam is part of a vibrant history. On October 15, 1953, construction on the dam neared completion. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines of Mexico met at the center to dedicate it to the well-being of the residents of both countries. The dam itself was completed on April 8, 1954, and the Falcon Power Plant generated power for commercial use for the first time on October 11, 1954.

For 50 years, Falcon International Dam has served as an important source of water and power for irrigation and household use in this region, and its beautiful 60-mile-long reservoir known as the Falcon Lake is known as one of the best fishing lakes in Texas and supports an emerging recreational tourism industry.

Yet maintaining and operating an international dam does not come without problems. As a shared resource governed by international treaty, events over the past decade have underscored the need for a better binational water management plan.

Persistent and severe drought conditions put strain on both Texas's and Mexico's water resources. For South Texas, the struggle has even been harder because of Mexico's decision to withhold water from the U.S.

Many of you have heard me speak before on the issue of the Mexican water debt, which peaked at 1.7 million acre feet. Farmers were unable to plan adequately for their planting seasons. The fluctuating reservoir levels on the Falcon Dam disturbed the delicate ecosystem and spawning season for the fish stock. The economic impact on South Texas agricultural economy was estimated at over \$1 billion and 30,000 jobs.

In a perfect world, the two countries would work closely together to manage water storage and release so that neither side would be disproportionately hurt during these droughts. Economic losses would be shared, and, in the end,

this is a fair way to allocate shared resources.

Unfortunately, this is not the way the situation has played out over time. While recent rains have allowed Mexico to release a portion of the water to the U.S., we must work to improve water conservation and development for the future and avoid these things occurring and happening.

As I think about the needs of the communities living on the Falcon International Dam, I strongly believe we must evaluate how best to allocate our resources so it would be fair to all. In order to do so, we must first renew our binational spirit. I fear relations with our neighbors have become strained on many levels, from immigration, to water, to the war in Iraq.

It is with this in mind that I introduced H. Res. 818. What better way to look to the future than to celebrate past accomplishments?

Mr. Speaker, I ask Members of this great House for support on this important resolution to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Falcon International Dam, and recommit itself to the binational efforts and spirit in which the Falcon International Dam was constructed.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 818.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONDEMNING ABDUCTION OF DYLAN BENWELL

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 821) condemning the abduction of Dylan Benwell from the United States and calling for his return.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 821

Whereas Dylan Benwell, a 9-year-old lawful permanent resident with an application pending for United States citizenship, was taken from his home in Winthrop Harbor, Illinois, on July 22, 2004, by his maternal grandparents, Timothy and Ethel Blake, both of whom are citizens of Ireland;

Whereas Dylan and his mother once lived in Ireland with his maternal grandparents;

Whereas Dylan has legally remained in the sole custody of his mother Serena Benwell, and adoptive father, John Benwell, after a Virginia juvenile district court ruled on December 14, 2001, that Dylan should remain in the custody of his mother and stepfather;

Whereas Dylan and 3 of his siblings have been adopted by John Benwell, a United States citizen;

Whereas Dylan and his 5 brothers and sisters are a part of a caring and loving family;

Whereas Ethel Blake attempted to kidnap Dylan in 1999 from his kindergarten class in Virginia, and was charged with domestic battery upon John Benwell;

Whereas on July 16, 2001, Dylan told a Virginia social worker that he did not want to live in Ireland again with his grandparents and that he wished to live in the United States with his immediate family;

Whereas on November 29, 2001, Dylan told a social worker with Winthrop Harbor Schools, in Illinois, that he wanted to live with his mother, stepfather, and siblings and he also expressed worries that his grandparents might try to take him away again;

Whereas on December 6, 2001, after an individual session with Dylan, a social worker with the Great Lakes Naval Hospital reported to the Virginia juvenile district court that Dylan feared his grandparents after the first kidnapping attempt, after explaining that he did not wish to live with his grandparents because he had no friends to play with in Ireland, and implying that his grandparents spent a large part of their time drinking beer;

Whereas in recorded telephone conversations in the possession of the police department of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois, Dylan told Timothy Blake that he did not want to live with the Blakes in Ireland;

Whereas in 2001, a petition for the return of Dylan from the United States to Ireland, filed by Timothy and Ethel Blake in accordance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, signed at The Hague on October 25, 1980 (TIAS 11670) ("Hague Convention"), was rejected by a United States court which held that the Blakes had no custodial rights to Dylan upon relocation of the child's mother to the United States with her American husband;

Whereas Timothy and Ethel Blake succeeded in kidnapping Dylan from his home in Illinois 5 years after the initial attempt in Virginia, and have shown little concern for the trauma that the abduction of Dylan has caused their other grandchildren;

Whereas warrants for the arrest of Timothy and Ethel Blake on charges of aggravated kidnapping, a felony, have been issued by the State of Illinois and United States officials have filed a Hague Convention petition for custody of Dylan on behalf of the Benwell family;

Whereas the Congress, in 1932, enacted the first Federal kidnapping statute, in response to the kidnapping and murder of the infant son of Charles Lindbergh;

Whereas the Congress recognizes the gravity of international child abduction and enacted the International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act of 1993 (adding section 1204 to title 18, United States Code), the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980 (adding section 1738A to title 28, United States Code, and section 463 to the Social Security Act), and substantial reform and reporting requirements for the Department of State through foreign relations authorization Acts for the fiscal years 1998 through 2001;

Whereas the United States is a contracting party to the Hague Convention, and adopted effective implementing legislation in the International Child Abduction Remedies Act (42 U.S.C. 11601 et seq.);

Whereas Ireland is a contracting party to the Hague Convention and adopted legislation for the implementation of the Act under the Child Abduction and Enforcement of Custody Orders Act (S.I. No. 235/1991); and

Whereas the Hague Convention establishes reciprocal rights and duties between and among its contracting states to expedite the return of abducted children to their states of

habitual residence, and to ensure that the custodial and parental access rights of one contracting state are effectively respected in other contracting states: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the abduction of Dylan Benwell from his home in the United States, the country of his custodial mother's domicile;

(2) commends the actions taken by the Office of Children's Issues of the Department of State and the United States Embassy in Dublin, Ireland;

(3) commends the hard work and dedication of the police department of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois, especially that of Detective Sergeant Tim Borowski;

(4) calls on the Government of Ireland to recognize that the safety and welfare of Dylan are the foremost concern;

(5) urges the Government of Ireland to recognize the decision of the Virginia juvenile district court;

(6) calls upon the Government of Ireland to recognize that this matter does not pertain to the custodial rights of Dylan's maternal grandparents, a matter already decided by the courts, and instead relates to a violation of United States law and the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, signed at The Hague on October 25, 1980 (TIAS 11670) ("Hague Convention");

(7) urges the Government of Ireland not to reward or condone the unlawful action of Timothy and Ethel Blake, two Irish nationals, by keeping Dylan from his family; and

(8) urges the Government of Ireland to recognize that as a matter of international law under Article 1 of the Hague Convention, the Government of Ireland is required to secure the prompt return of Dylan, on the basis that Dylan was wrongfully removed from his home in the United States, a contracting state to the Convention.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 821.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, child abduction is a terrible problem. Any parent's worst nightmare is to have a child abducted. The initial panic and then the terrified waiting to find out whether your beloved offspring is alive or dead is dreadful. Our government must do everything necessary to protect all of our people, especially our Nation's children.

This resolution condemns one of the most trying types of abduction, the abduction of a child by his maternal grandparents, who spirited him out of the United States to Ireland. Dylan Benwell was abducted almost literally from the arms of his parents.

Both Ireland and the United States are parties to the Hague Convention which deals with child abduction. It is my hope and the hope of the chief sponsor of this resolution that the Hague Convention process works and works expeditiously so that Dylan can be returned as soon as possible to the arms of his parents here in the United States.

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I hope all Members will join me in supporting H. Res. 821. We wish for a speedy return home for Dylan and for all children who have been similarly victimized.

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before the House condemns the recent abduction of an Illinois boy, Dylan Benwell, from the United States and calls for his immediate return home.

Mr. Speaker, until 10 weeks ago, Dylan Benwell was a happy, 9-year-old boy living at home with his mother and adopted father in Illinois, along with his 5 brothers and sisters. But on July 22nd, Dylan was abducted by his maternal grandparents and taken to their native home of Ireland.

Despite the fact that the United States courts have determined that Dylan's mother and adopted father have sole custody of the boy, Dylan has yet to be returned to his parents in the United States.

This resolution calls upon the Irish government to secure the prompt return of Dylan pursuant to Article I of the Hague Convention. Hopefully, by raising the profile of this case, Congress can increase the chances of a happy ending to this terrible saga.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE).

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

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished colleague for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support House Resolution 821, a resolution condemning the abduction of Dylan Benwell from the United States and calling for his return.

Dylan Benwell was born in Ireland to Irish parents. Dylan's biological father died when he was 2 weeks old and his maternal grandparents, Timothy and Ethel Blake, helped care for Dylan following his father's death. Within a few years, Dylan's mother, Serena, met and married an American named John Benwell. Dylan moved with the family to the United States where John was stationed in the Navy in Norfolk, Virginia.

In 2001, Dylan's grandparents, the Blakes, filed for custody of Dylan, which was inexplicably granted by the Irish courts. When Dylan was in kindergarten, the Blakes attempted, but failed, to kidnap him from Virginia. The Blakes then filed a Hague Convention request, asking the courts to order the return of Dylan back to Ireland.

The case was heard in Chesapeake, Virginia and the Virginia court determined that Dylan should remain in the custody of his mother in the United States. Therefore, in the opinion of U.S. authorities, the question of custody has already been adjudicated, and it is clear that Dylan should be with his parents.

The Benwells moved to Winthrop Harbor, Illinois, which is in my district, after John Benwell was transferred to the Great Lakes Naval Station. While in Illinois, John Benwell adopted Dylan and his 3 older brothers. He and Serena also have 2 other children. The 4 oldest boys, including Dylan, have applied for American citizenship.

Unfortunately, the Blakes have remained obsessed with Dylan. As part of the 2001 decision, they were allowed to speak with Dylan on the telephone. During these conversations, they routinely asked Dylan if they wanted to live with them in Ireland. Dylan's answer was always no. Of course, Dylan's mother, his legal guardian, would not send him off with his grandparents.

Recently, the Blakes called Serena Benwell asking to see Dylan. They claimed that Timothy Blake was dying and wanted to make amends for attempting to kidnap Dylan 4 years ago. Serena finally gave in and allowed the Blakes to come to the U.S. to visit Dylan.

On Thursday, July 22, 2004, the Blakes took Dylan to lunch. In order to make sure the Blakes did not kidnap her son again, Mrs. Benwell asked them to give her their passports, which they did. Unfortunately, the passports were fakes and they took Dylan to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and boarded a British Airways flight to Ireland. The Winthrop Harbor Police missed the Blakes and Dylan at the airport by just 15 minutes.

Dylan Benwell is only 9 years old. Many of us have children and grandchildren who are Dylan's age. Can my colleagues imagine the fear and confusion that this poor child is going through? Can my colleagues imagine their child or grandchild going through this?

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid for Dylan's safety. Consider the following: in a sworn affidavit, Mrs. Benwell told police detectives that her father, Timothy Blake, told her in 2001 that they wished that they had killed Dylan and themselves while they had him rather than allow him to become an American. In addition, according to Mrs. Benwell, Mr. Blake had attempted suicide in 1987, and Mrs. Benwell has also stated that her father physically abused her as a child.

To make matters worse, in 1999, after the Blakes attempted to kidnap Dylan from kindergarten, Ethel Blake was arrested in Virginia for physically striking John Benwell while he was holding his then 2-month-old daughter. Mrs. Benwell also told police that both of her parents have been patients in psychiatric institutions. After the abduction, when the Winthrop Harbor Police searched the hotel where the Blakes had been staying, they found several prescription drugs in the Blakes' room that are used to treat psychiatric and emotional disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety.

For all of these reasons, I am deeply concerned about Dylan Benwell's safety and well-being. It is imperative that we return Dylan back to the care of his loving parents. I have been working with the State Department, which is very concerned, and has noted that this is a particularly worrisome case. The State Department believes that the Blakes took the case in their own hands and are now forum shopping, which completely goes against Hague Convention agreements.

It is essential that we in the House of Representatives urge the government of Ireland to recognize the decision of the Virginia juvenile district court. Above all, the Blakes should return Dylan promptly to his parents.

In passing this resolution today, the House of Representatives is making an important statement. Perhaps we are also giving some greater hope to a family in need of some hope. They have been through so much.

Mr. Speaker, it is for all of these reasons that I introduced House Resolution 821. I am committed to ensuring we return Dylan Benwell to the United States and to his family. So I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important resolution.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT), the gentleman from Texas (Majority Leader DeLay), and the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) for supporting my efforts to help Dylan and the Benwells. I want to also thank all of the Members who cosponsored this resolution, as well as the staff that helped bring this urgent resolution to the House Floor so expeditiously.

My deepest prayers and sympathy are for Dylan, his mother, Serena Benwell, and their family, as they go through these trying times.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, one of the most heart-wrenching issues we will ever contemplate is the problem of child abductions. As a parent of four children and four grandchildren, I cannot think of a more terrifying nightmare than one in which one of my children or grandchildren were abducted or killed. The sheer panic, fear, and helplessness one must feel has to be paralyzing. I believe in a government that stands up for the rights of all people, including the most helpless ones—children.

While far too many crimes are committed against children by strangers, amazingly enough, some of the perpetrators of the worst

types of crimes against children are parents or relatives. In the case before us, young Dylan Benwell was kidnapped from his parents by his maternal grandparents, Timothy and Ethel Blake, and taken to Ireland.

Dylan's mother and the Blakes had suffered an estranged relationship as a result of a previous attempt by the Blakes to kidnap Dylan. Dylan's mother finally relented and allowed her son to visit his grandparents because she was told that her father, Mr. Blake, was dying of cancer. Dylan's mother took her parents' passports as a precaution so that Dylan could not be kidnapped to Ireland. Shockingly, the Blakes had planned the kidnapping to such a degree that they already had duplicate passports issued, and once Dylan was in their possession, they immediately left with him for Ireland.

Dylan is not alone in his victimization. According to the State Department, more than 16,000 cases of international child abductions were reported in the past two decades.

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction serves as an important diplomatic tool in achieving the return of abducted children. Both the United States and the Republic of Ireland are contracting parties to the Hague convention, which establishes reciprocal duties to expedite the return of abducted children to their habitual residence. In Dylan's case, arrest warrants for aggravated kidnapping have been issued by the State of Illinois for the Blakes, and a Hague Convention petition has been filed on behalf of Dylan's parents for his return. Dylan's family now sits helplessly awaiting the Hague Convention process to bring him home to them.

Unfortunately, many countries have failed to take their obligations seriously in making certain that these children are sent home. Yet, in the instant case, I am confident that Ireland will follow the Hague Convention process scrupulously, as it has been an excellent treaty partner in the past. Considering the unusual facts of this case, however, it is my hope that Ireland expeditiously resolves this matter and finds that Dylan must be sent home.

In the meantime, it is imperative that our government continues to press all nations to take seriously their international treaty obligations under The Hague Convention, and to bring home our children.

I'd like to commend both the State Department for its efforts in bringing Dylan home and the efforts of my dear friend, Congressman PHIL CRANE. I know that he is doing everything possible to reunite Dylan with his parents.

I hope all Members will join me in supporting H. Res. 821. We wish for a speedy return home for Dylan and for all other children who have been similarly victimized.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 821.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL TO IMMEDIATELY CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO RESPOND TO THE GROWING THREAT THAT THE RULING STATE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN BURMA POSES TO THE SOUTHEAST ASIA REGION AND TO THE PEOPLE OF BURMA

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 768) calling on the United Nations Security Council to immediately consider and take appropriate action to respond to the growing threat that the ruling State Peace and Development Council in Burma poses to the Southeast Asia region and to the people of Burma.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 768

Whereas the ruling State Peace and Development Council in Burma, formerly known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council, continues to refuse to uphold the 1990 election results in which the National League for Democracy, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won 392 of the 485 contested parliamentary seats;

Whereas the ruling State Peace and Development Council in Burma has imprisoned or placed under house arrest Aung San Suu Kyi on a nearly continuous basis since 1995, most recently since May 2003 when she and National League for Democracy supporters were violently assaulted by government-affiliated forces;

Whereas according to the Department of State's 2003 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, security forces of the ruling State Peace and Development Council in Burma continue to commit extrajudicial killings, rape, engage in torture, forcibly relocate persons, use forced labor, and conscript child soldiers;

Whereas in December of 2003 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution expressing grave concern about the ongoing systematic violations of human rights abuses occurring against the people of Burma; and

Whereas the situation in Burma poses a threat to regional stability because of the continuous cross border flow of illegal narcotics, trafficked persons, and the unchecked spread of HIV/AIDS; because of the State Peace and Development Council's reported efforts to acquire military hardware from the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and North Korea; and because of the destabilizing effects of the flight of over 200,000 refugees to Thailand and Bangladesh in an attempt to escape systematic terrorizing by the Burmese military: Now, therefore, be it—

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the United Nations Security Council should immediately consider and take appropriate action to respond to the growing threat that the ruling State Peace and Development Council in Burma poses to the Southeast Asia region and to the people of Burma.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO).