

INTRODUCTION OF UKRAINE
ELECTIONS RESOLUTIONHON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS
OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission I rise to introduce a concurrent resolution which addresses the current political uncertainty in Ukraine, a country of strategic importance to the United States. My resolution urges all sides to abide by the agreement signed by Ukraine's leadership on May 27th, providing for a new round of parliamentary elections to be held on September 30th, and encouraging the holding of these elections in a free, fair and transparent manner in keeping with Ukraine's commitments as a participating State of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

I have just returned from Ukraine which hosted the 16th annual Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE. While in Kyiv, I met with President Yushchenko and other prominent Ukrainian officials. My colleagues and I received assurances from Kyiv that Ukraine would not backtrack on the path to political reform and good governance.

Ukraine's current political conflict is the result of the ongoing power struggle that President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich have been engaged in since Yanukovich became Prime Minister last August. Rooted in hastily conceived constitutional reforms, the ongoing power struggle threatens to undermine Ukraine's hard-fought and substantial democratic gains, especially those won since the 2004 Orange Revolution.

On April 2nd, President Yushchenko issued a decree dissolving the Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian parliament, asserting that the Prime Minister was attempting to monopolize power by forming a veto-proof parliamentary majority through illegal means, and called for new parliamentary elections. The parliament refused to disband and questioned the legality of the presidential decree. After several weeks of tension and standoff, violence was averted and an agreement was reached: President Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yanukovich and Parliamentary Speaker Moroz came together in support of holding pre-term parliamentary elections at the end of September.

Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that Ukraine has made genuine democratic gains since the Orange Revolution. The December 2004 presidential vote was hailed as a stirring example of the triumph of peaceful protest and democratic ideals. Just over a year ago, as head of the OSCE-led International Election Observation Mission to Ukraine, I was pleased to declare that country's parliamentary elections were also free and fair. I am pleased that Ukraine has once again invited the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to observe the September 30 elections. Moreover, Ukraine for the last two years has been designated by Freedom House as a "free" country, in contrast to the "partly free" assessment it held during its first 13 years of independence.

Nevertheless, democratic institutions and the rule of law in Ukraine are still emerging and lacking in their ability to safeguard democratic gains. It is this fragility, especially the

lack of constitutional clarity in delineating the separation of powers that made it possible for the power struggle to ripen into a full-blown political crisis in recent months. However, it is heartening to see that more serious turmoil was averted through careful and constructive dialogue and capped by an agreement involving the country's leading political figures.

First and foremost, my resolution calls for the leadership and political parties of Ukraine to abide by the May 27th agreement and conduct elections as scheduled for September 30th. The dispute between the president and prime minister must be resolved in a manner consistent with Ukraine's democratic values and national interest, and in keeping with its OSCE commitments.

Madam Speaker, prolonged political uncertainties regarding the government's delineation of powers is clearly not in Ukraine's interest, and that nation's political leaders need to stand together in support of free, fair and transparent elections as a way out of the current impasse. While democratic elections will not, in and of themselves, resolve all of the challenges facing Ukraine in strengthening the rule of law and delineating power among the branches of government, they are a critical stepping-stone in Ukraine's democratic consolidation and should serve as a further testament of Ukraine's commitment to a democratic future.

As this resolution underscores, Congress has been a staunch supporter of the development of democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law in Ukraine since the restoration of that nation's independence in 1991. The consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine will further strengthen that country's independence and sovereignty, enhancing Ukraine's aspirations for full integration with the West and serving as a positive model for other former Soviet countries. I urge my colleagues to support this timely resolution as a demonstration of Congress's interest, concern, and support for the Ukrainian people.

HONORING ROBERT "BOB"
LAYER OF HAYS, KANSAS

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, today I rise to express my admiration of a Kansan's life—a life filled with honor and service to country, community and family. Mr. Robert "Bob" Layher of Hays, Kansas, a member of the "Greatest Generation," lived life with integrity, passion and enthusiasm.

Like so many young Americans of his generation, Bob put country before self and joined the U.S. military. Bob proudly fought for freedom during World War II, though he began serving prior to the start of the war. He was among those who resigned their U.S. military positions in order to volunteer for a covert operation with the Chinese Air Force before the U.S. entered the war. For his service in China as a member of The Flying Tigers, Bob was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Bob's dedication to those he served with and his presentation of their memories was unsurpassed. While the history and service of

The Flying Tigers is well known in China, few in our country know about the courage and heroism of these men. Bob took a lead role in making certain that his community knew about The Flying Tiger's mission of protecting China's important Burma Road from Japanese attacks.

He was also involved in national education of The Flying Tigers. Appearing in stories and presenting at schools, he shared the history of this brave group of volunteers. During trips back to the area where they were stationed, members of The Flying Tigers found the need for education about their group was much less necessary in China. The idea that Americans would volunteer to defend another country all for the sake of freedom made a great impression on the Chinese.

While Bob was born and raised outside of Kansas, our State was lucky to have him settle here and begin farming after his military service. Bob was born in Dallas, Oregon, on September 3, 1916. He graduated from the University of Colorado where he also met his wife, Marian. In 1941, 4 days before he left for China, he and Marian were secretly married. This was also the same day as his birthday, so this way Bob would never forget their anniversary.

A very involved member of his community, Bob participated in several civic groups. After he moved to Hays in 1952, Bob became a member of the First Presbyterian Church and the Order of the Eastern Star. He was also a member of the ISIS Shrine and the Masonic Lodge in Salina.

Most important to Bob was his family. Over the course of their 65 years of marriage, he and his wife were committed parents and grandparents. Bob's son, R.F. "Bobby" Layher Jr., followed in his father's footsteps and served as a pilot with United States Marine Corps. Even though Bobby went on to be a civilian pilot with Federal Express for 29 years, Bob and his son were still able to fulfill their dream of farming together.

In the many important roles Bob filled in his life, he served out of a sense of duty and not out of selfish ambition. He helped make his community better and his nation safer. I join his many friends and admirers in paying tribute to a great man. My thoughts and prayers go out to Marian and her family during this time of loss.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHOREVIEW, MINNESOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 50th anniversary of the city of Shoreview, Minnesota.

The area that is currently Shoreview served as home for members of Dakota and Ojibwe tribes more than 150 years ago. The abundant lakes and wetlands that attracted these first Americans still bring people to this beautiful community.

In 1850, Mr. Socrates A. Thompson ventured from Saint Paul in search of a good place to farm, settling in what is now part of Shoreview. Following Mr. Thompson, families

from other parts of the United States such as Vermont, Virginia, Illinois and New York moved in to begin farming the land there as well. This area also attracted people from other parts of the world including England, Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland.

On April 23, 1957, with a population of 5,231, area residents voted to incorporate as the Village of Shoreview. During the 1970s and 1980s Shoreview experienced rapid growth. In the 1990s, the city matured as less land was available for development. City planning has shifted from new development to infill, redevelopment and preserving its natural habitat.

Fifty years after incorporation, Shoreview has grown into a large suburb. It is a thriving community that is home to quiet neighborhoods, small businesses, excellent schools, and expansive wetlands, trails, parks and lakes.

Madam Speaker, in honor of the history of Shoreview, Minnesota and the events celebrating it, I am pleased to submit this statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD recognizing Shoreview's 50th anniversary.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PRIVATE FIRST CLASS STEVEN A. DAVIS

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Private First Class Steven A. Davis and to recognize his service to our nation.

PFC Davis was a true patriot who served his country with honor. Throughout his life he selflessly dedicated himself to his fellow soldiers, family and friends, and to our country.

His family moved to Woodbridge, Virginia, in 2001. Before joining the Army, PFC Davis worked in a fast food restaurant to try and pay for college. Yearning to serve his country, he enlisted in the Army in September 2005, and began his first deployment shortly thereafter. PFC Davis was assigned to C Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colorado. Tragically, he was killed on July 4, 2007, after sustaining injuries from grenades detonated near his mounted patrol. He was honored with the Purple Heart and Bronze Star prior to his death.

PFC Davis is survived by his parents Guy and Tess, his wife Ayla and their one-year-old daughter Elizabeth, and his brother Specialist Chris Davis, who is also a soldier currently deployed to Iraq. His mother, Tess, is working in Iraq as a paramedic, and his grandfather is working there as a mechanic. His father, Buck, is also an Army veteran.

Words cannot express the gratitude we feel to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation; it is a debt that can never be repaid. I recognize that words are of little comfort for the family and friends of PFC Davis, who are truly suffering in the wake of the loss of this intelligent and dedicated man. I hope they will take some solace in knowing that we will never forget PFC Davis and the tremendous sacrifice he made while defending our country.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to honor the memory of Private First Class Ste-

ven A. Davis. I call upon my colleagues to remember him as a man who gave his life protecting the American people.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF MISS JOELLA GALE MURRAY

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, today, I am happy to congratulate Joseph and Kathryn Murray of Alexandria, Virginia, on the birth of their beautiful baby girl. Joella "Ella" Gale Murray was born on Thursday, June 21, 2007, at 1:03 pm weighing 7 pounds 4 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. Ella has been born into a loving home, where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. Her birth is a blessing.

PASSING OF GENNADI KRYUCHKOV

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, on July 14, 2007, the Russian Federation lost one of its great leaders, although I am certain he would steadfastly reject such a characterization of himself.

He certainly wasn't a famous political figure, or a wealthy philanthropist, or a brilliant scientist, and his name was rarely found on the pages of the major media. Gennadi Kryuchkov's leadership was in the spiritual realm. He was a courageous and principled leader of the unregistered Evangelical Baptist Church in the Soviet Union in the days when merely sharing one's religious faith with a neighbor could lead to a "discussion" at the local police station or the feared KGB office, and actively preaching the Gospel without permission from the government was usually good for a ticket to one of the many forced labor camps that comprised the infamous Gulag.

Born in 1926, Gennadi Kryuchkov came to faith in 1951, and became active in an unregistered congregation of Baptist believers. In 1960, when he felt the officially registered Baptist organization had too deeply compromised itself with Soviet authorities by submitting to repressive new regulations, he became one of the leaders of the *Initiativniki*, the unregistered and essentially underground network of congregations that defied Caesar's intrusion into the spiritual realm. Gennadi Kryuchkov became president of the underground church council and the late Georgi Vins was chosen as secretary. In May 1965, Pastor Kryuchkov and Pastor Vins led an open march on Communist Party headquarters in Moscow to protest government restrictions on believers in the Soviet Union.

According to church council statistics, by 1972 the unregistered or "reform" Baptist church numbered around 450 congregations and 18,000 members. Another reputable source reported in the mid-1980s that there were 2,000 reform Baptist congregations with approximately 70,000 adult members.

I would add parenthetically that in April 1979 Georgi Vins and four other Soviet dissidents were expelled from the Soviet Union in exchange for two convicted Soviet spies. In August 1985, the Helsinki Commission, of which I am honored to serve currently as Chairman, heard Pastor Vins' dramatic testimony on the plight of the unregistered Baptist church at Congressional hearings in Buffalo, New York, devoted to the subject of Soviet forced labor practices.

Meanwhile, as a result of his determination to preserve the freedom to worship without state interference, Pastor Kryuchkov was arrested and sentenced to three years in labor camp from 1966 to 1969. In 1970, under threat of continued persecution, he went into hiding and spent 20 years working underground, preaching to fellow believers in clandestine gatherings, publishing "illegal" religious literature, and staying one step ahead of the KGB.

Only when the chains of religious repression in the Soviet Union were cast off as a result of the new thinking that characterized the government of Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, was Pastor Kryuchkov able to emerge from the shadows and return to his family and loved ones in the Tula Oblast, still fervently preaching the Scriptures and standing fast for separation of church and state.

Madam Speaker, like the Soviet Union itself, the days of cruel religious persecution and militant atheism in Russia are pretty much a thing of the past. But let us not forget the courage and persistence of church leaders like Gennadi Kryuchkov, who, like the "Remnant" of Old Testament times, kept the flame of faith of burning during the dark days of persecution.

HONORING MR. PETE DLABAL OF ELLSWORTH, KANSAS

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, today I rise to express my respect and high regard for a Kansan who is truly a member of "The Greatest Generation"—Mr. Pete Dlabal of Ellsworth. The time has come to recognize this man who has served his community and country while remaining devoted to his family.

Mr. Dlabal was born to a family that included nine brothers and sisters in one of the fine small towns I have the privilege of representing, Wilson, Kansas. Following his graduation from Wilson High School and the Wichita Business School, he joined the millions of other selfless young men of his generation and enlisted in the United States Army. After serving in the Army for four and a half years during World War II, he returned to Ellsworth County, Kansas.

Upon returning home, his service to his community continued, serving as the county treasurer for two years. He then began his tenure at the Ellsworth County Farmers Cooperative Union in 1949. In this position he would remain for 31 years, including 24 years as General Manager. In honor of his dedication and leadership, Mr. Dlabal was one of only four individuals inducted into the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame this past March.