

was guaranteed with the Treaty of Adrianople.

Greeks were the first Ottoman subjects to secure recognition as an independent and sovereign nation. It was a fierce fight that drew support from Philhellenes the world over. None other than the United States, England, Lord Byron was wonderful in this cause.

Undoubtedly, these Philhellenes were indebted to Greece, the world's first advanced civilization, for providing a cultural heritage that has influenced the world with firsts in philosophy, politics, mathematics, science, art and sport with the Olympics, just to name a few.

I honor my ancestors for their deep abiding conviction in all that is good and true about mankind. I celebrate their bravery and commitment to freedom and justice. I praise their perseverance and patience in the face of unspeakable hardships. I commend their sacrifices to posterity so that, should there ever be another who seeks to oppress freedom-loving people, we will be able to look upon history and summon up the same courage that those unyielding Hellenes exhibited nearly two centuries ago.

Just as our great Founding Fathers studied the model of democracy the ancient Greeks put forth, it is likely our revolution for independence in the late 18th century served as a blueprint for the early 19th-century Greeks to try their hand at freedom and sovereignty. It is a beautiful, symbolic symbiotic relationship that the United States and Greece have shared since, and it continues to enjoy.

As George Washington proclaimed at the onset of the American Revolution: "Our cause is noble. It is the cause of mankind." So it was in 1776 America and in 1821 Greece, and so it will always remain.

Zito I Ellas, and God bless America.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), who also is the cochair of the Hellenic Caucus.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of this legislation, H. Res. 228, and co-chair and cofounder of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I rise today to celebrate the 186th anniversary of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Against incredibly difficult odds, the Greeks defeated one of the most powerful empires in history to gain their independence.

Following 400 years of Ottoman rule, in March 1821, Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the traditional Greek flag at the monastery of Agia Lavras, inciting his countrymen to rise up against the Ottoman Empire.

The bishop timed this act of revolution to coincide with the Greek Orthodox holiday celebrating the archangel Gabriel's announcement that the Virgin Mary was pregnant with the divine child.

Bishop Germanos' message to his people was clear, a new spirit was about to be born in Greece. The following year, the Treaty of Constantinople established full independence of Greece.

As we celebrate Greek Independence Day, we should reflect upon the strong ties between Greece and the United States and the strong commitment to democracy shared by our two countries.

The Greeks of 1821 fought for independence from the Ottoman Empire while drawing inspiration from the ideals and institutions of the United States.

During their war of independence, the Greeks also received support from many Americans, including Presidents James Madison and James Monroe and Representatives Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, each of whom gave speeches and made resolutions and other statements in Congress in support of the Greek revolutionaries.

Just as our defeat of the British Army was remarkable, so too was the Greek triumph over the Ottoman Army, a momentous achievement in world history.

New York City is home to the largest Hellenic population outside of Greece and Cyprus. Western Queens, which I have the honor of representing, is often called Little Athens because of the large Hellenic population in its neighborhoods.

New Yorkers celebrate Greek Independence Day with a parade on Fifth Avenue, along with many cultural events, private meetings and celebrations. These events, hosted by the Federation of Hellenic Societies and other Hellenic and Philhellenic organizations and friends, remind us of the Hellenic American community's many, many contributions to our Nation's history and culture.

Relations between the United States and Greece remain strong with a shared commitment to ensuring stability in southeastern Europe.

I hope permanent solutions can be found for ending the division of Cyprus and finding a mutually agreed upon name for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Additionally, I strongly support the inclusion of Greece in the Visa Waiver Program. Last month, along with Representatives SPACE and BILIRAKIS and 18 of our House colleagues, we sent letters to Secretary Rice and Secretary Chertoff urging them to extend the Visa Waiver Program to Greece. Greece is the only member of the original 15 European Union nations not to belong to the Visa Waiver Program.

Greece has met the criteria for the program, including a less than 3 percent refusal rate of U.S. nonimmigrant visa applicants and biometric passports. I hope that they will soon be included in the program, and I ask my colleagues and the Nation to join me in celebrating Greek's independence today.

Additionally, it is my sincere pleasure to pay tribute to the New York Hellenic American community for its many, many contributions to our city and Nation.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs, I am proud to congratulate the nation of Greece on the 186th anniversary of independence. Though it began the cradle of Democracy and formed the foundation of Western thought, Greece was ruled over by various empires until 1821 when the people of Greece threw off Ottoman oppression and set about founding a government that would be ruled by Greeks and for Greeks.

The ancient Greek city-states provided young American with a strong foundation of government and philosophy to build our democracies. In both our nations, the Golden Age of Greece continues to be a guiding light.

During the last 50 years, the United States has been proud to stand with the Greek people as they confronted communist oppression, solidified their democracy, and became part of the vibrant European economy.

Independence, once achieved, is not guaranteed for all time. We know that at all times there must be those who are willing to sacrifice to retain liberty. Both of our nations have faced struggles for survival since the initial moment of independence. We must continue to support each other in the causes of freedom and democracy.

Again, I congratulate the Greek people on this historic day. It is a day to remember the sacrifices of the past, to take pride in your nation, and to look forward to a bright future.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman WEXLER, chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe, and also Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for their work on this legislation.

We have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank Mr. POE. And we also do not have any more speakers, so we will yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 228.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF ROME

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 230) recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome signed on March 25, 1957, which was a key step in creating the European Union, and reaffirming the close

and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Europe.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 230

Whereas, after a half century marked by two world wars and at a time when Europe was divided and some nations were deprived of freedom, and as the continent faced the urgent need for economic and political recovery, major European statesmen such as Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Paul-Henri Spaak, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Sir Winston Churchill, and others joined together to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among their peoples;

Whereas on March 25, 1957, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Rome to establish a customs union, to create a framework to promote the free movement of people, services, and capital among the member states, to support agricultural growth, and to create a common transport policy, which gave new impetus to the pledge of unity in the European Coal and Steel Agreement of 1951;

Whereas to fulfill its purpose, the European Union has created a unique set of institutions: the directly-elected European Parliament, the Council consisting of representatives of the Member States, the Commission acting in the general interest of the Community, and the Court of Justice to enforce the rule of law;

Whereas on February 7, 1992, the leaders of the then 12 members of the European Community signed the Treaty of Maastricht establishing a common European currency, the Euro, to be overseen by a common financial institution, the European Central Bank, for the purpose of a freer movement of capital and common European economic policies;

Whereas the European Union was expanded with the addition of the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland in 1973, Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, a unified Germany in 1990, Austria, Finland, and Sweden in 1995, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004, and Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, making the European Union a body of 27 countries with a population of over 450 million people;

Whereas the European Union has developed policies in the economic, security, diplomatic, and political areas: it has established a single market with broad common policies to organize that market and ensure prosperity and cohesion; it has built an economic and monetary union, including the Euro currency; and it has built an area of freedom, security, and justice, extending stability to its neighbors;

Whereas following the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the European Union has played a critical role in the former Central European communist states in promoting free markets, democratic institutions and values, respect for human rights, and the resolve to fight against tyranny and for common national security objectives;

Whereas for the past 50 years the United States and the European Union have shared a unique partnership, mindful of their common heritage, shared values and mutual interests, have worked together to strengthen transatlantic security, to preserve and promote peace and freedom, to develop free and prosperous economies, and to advance human rights; and

Whereas the United States has supported the European integration process and has consistently supported the objective of European unity and the enlargement of the European Union as desirable developments which promote prosperity, peace, and democracy,

and which contribute to the strengthening of the vital relationship between the United States and the nations of Europe: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the Treaty of Rome on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its signing;

(2) commends the European Union and the member nations of the European Union for the positive role which the institution has played in the growth, development, and prosperity of contemporary Europe;

(3) recognizes the important role played by the European Union in fostering the independence, democracy, and economic development of the former Central European communist states following the end of the Cold War;

(4) acknowledges the vital role of the European Union in the development of the close and mutually beneficial relationship that exists between the United States and Europe;

(5) affirms that in order to strengthen the transatlantic partnership there must be a renewed commitment to regular and intensive consultations between the United States and the European Union; and

(6) joins with the European Parliament in agreeing to strengthen the transatlantic partnership by enhancing the dialogue and collaboration between the United States Congress and the European Parliament.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 230, and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I first want to thank Chairman LANTOS for introducing this resolution with me. If there is anyone in Congress who fully understands the significance of this moment, it is Congressman LANTOS, who has been an unwavering supporter of the transatlantic alliance and the creation of the European Union.

In addition, I want to thank the ranking member of the Europe Subcommittee, Mr. GALLEGLY, for his efforts in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, on March 25, 1957, in an attempt to recover from destruction caused by two devastating world wars, six European nations, France, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Luxembourg, joined together in common interest to form the foundations of a new economic and political community. The resulting Treaty of Rome laid the framework to promote an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe.

At that time, the Treaty of Rome provided for the establishment of a common market, a customs union and common policies, expanding on the unity already established in the European Coal and Steel Community. The founding members, keen on ensuring the past was not to be repeated, were particularly interested in the idea of creating a community of peace and stability through economic ties.

The success of the European Economic Community inspired other countries to apply for membership, making it the first concrete step toward the creation of the European Union. The Treaty of Rome established the basic institutions and decision-making mechanisms still in place today. The European Union, now comprised of 27 countries and over 450 million people, is a unique and a historic example of nation-states transcending their former divisions, deciding to come together for the sake of freedom, peace and prosperity, and resolving their differences in the interest of the common good and rule of law.

The success of the EU over the past 50 years has also benefited greatly the United States. Today, the United States and Europe enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship that has a long and established history.

As the world's most important alliance, the U.S. and the EU are intimately intertwined, cooperating on regional conflicts, collaborating to address global challenges, and sharing strong trade and investment relations.

It is clear that the strongest possible relationship between the United States and Europe is a prerequisite for addressing the challenges of the 21st century. The U.S. and EU are working closely to promote reform and peace in the Middle East, rebuild and enhance security in Afghanistan, support the goals of democratization and prosperity in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Balkans and Central Asia, prevent genocide in Darfur and end the violence and terrorism in Lebanon.

The anniversary of the Rome Treaty is a reminder of the importance of the transatlantic alliance in an increasingly difficult global environment. However, the 50-year EU experiment is an example of the enduring possibilities of democratic transformation and a brighter future for millions.

It is my hope that the EU will continue to keep its doors open and remain a beacon of hope to the citizens of Europe who aspire to obtain the peace and prosperity that have blossomed over the past 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, and strongly urge the passage of H. Res. 230.

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

When Americans visit Europe today, it is hard to see how very damaged the

countries of that continent were when they emerged from the destruction of the Second World War. American assistance played a very important role in rebuilding Western Europe in the 1940s and the 1950s, and American arms played a crucial role in protecting the democracies of Europe from the advance of Soviet communism during the Cold War.

Ultimately, however, Europeans needed to do more on their own to build upon a foundation that the United States had first provided. The 1957 Treaty of Rome, signed by France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg was one of the first steps that Western Europe took to put the causes and the legacy of the Second World War behind them.

The treaty established a free-trade region known as the European Economic Community, the cornerstone of what we today know as the European Union.

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A post-World War II economically ravaged Europe reasoned that if nations are linked economically, in this case by recalling the role that economic decline and hindered trade among nations had played in the years leading up to World War II, the creators of that free trade zone saw that the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital, and people might well prove to be a great deterrent to conflict between the states of Europe, large and small.

Over the subsequent decades through the entry of new members and expansions both geographically across Europe and functionally across issues, the European Community grew beyond the original core membership of the 1950s and assumed responsibilities going well beyond trade. Today, the European Union indeed counts among its member states countries that once were under Soviet domination. It has worked to transfer more powers from its individual member states to the overall organization centered on the road to creating a more unified European foreign and security policy and making the European Union an organization that the United States increasingly looks to for leadership on transatlantic issues, joining the NATO alliances that continue to bind us together in that common cause.

While the European Community continues to provide a framework within which to conduct international trade, such as multilateral trade negotiations with the United States, it has also advanced the cause of liberty, free markets, democratic institutions, and respect for human rights throughout the European continent. The Treaty of Rome was an important step in building on the foundation that the United States helped create after World War II for Europe.

Today, we look to a strong Europe as seen in the expanded NATO and expanded and strengthened European

Union as a foundation on which we can work together to address new and ever growing challenges. Therefore, with enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker, it is that this House should commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of this Treaty of Rome.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues in supporting H. Res. 230, a resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which was signed on March 25, 1957. The Treaty of Rome established a customs union—formally known as the European Economic Community—among six countries: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Today, that customs union is known as the European Union, and now includes 27 countries spanning the length and breadth of Europe. Most importantly, it has grown into an institution that inspires countries to be their better selves.

If one travels to Europe today, it may be hard to remember that, 50 years ago, the continent was still recovering from the second of the two world wars it had unleashed in less than half a century. It may be hard today to recall or imagine the magnitude of devastation that still scarred farmland and cities alike. It may be difficult to conceive of the bitterness, anger and thirst for revenge that bled across the continent like the blood of those fallen in war. The fact that Germany, a country that had unleashed a war of aggression against its neighbors just a few years before, was included in this new “community” was really nothing short of a minor miracle.

Moreover, fifty years ago, Europe was still riven in two—no longer by a shooting war, but by a cold war. While a small group of nations was beginning the slow process of rebuilding their own countries and forging transnational relations based on cooperation, mutual trust, and mutual benefit, another part of the continent had fallen under the boot of communist dictatorship, where the Soviet Union exploited its neighbors, stripping them of wealth, prosperity, and opportunity for generations. Just one year before the Treaty of Rome was signed, the Soviet Union underscored its opposition to any independent foreign or economic policy on the part of East European countries—a message unequivocally sent by its invasion of Hungary.

As the years passed, and the success of the European Economic Communities became ever more apparent, it is no surprise that more countries joined this union. Membership in Council of Europe, the European Union's sister organization and home of the European Court of Human Rights, helped pave the way for membership in the EU. Meanwhile, the NATO alliance created a zone of military security where the post-war citizens of Western Europe could build a zone of financial security.

Since the fall of communism, there is no doubt that the aspiration of joining the European Union, much like the goal of joining the NATO alliance, has helped focus the attention of many countries on overcoming their past differences for a larger, common good that also brings substantial benefits to their own citizens. Today, I commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, and the new vision it held for the European continent, one that has helped spread peace and prosperity to nearly 500 million people.

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

Mr. WEXLER. 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 Florida (Mr. WEXLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 230.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE FOR THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 222) expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, as a blueprint for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 222

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, sets out a plan for the creation of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and a devolved government in Northern Ireland on a stable and inclusive basis;

Whereas the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive have been suspended since 2002;

Whereas the St. Andrews Agreement of October 2006 established a timetable for the restoration of a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the St. Andrews Agreement required that “support for policing and the rule of law should be extended to every part of the community”;

Whereas on January 28, 2007, Sinn Féin held a party conference during which it declared its support for the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the criminal justice system, consistent with the terms of the St. Andrews Agreement;

Whereas British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern stated on January 30, 2007, that “We remain fixed in our determination to see shared government returned to the people of Northern Ireland.”;

Whereas British Prime Minister Tony Blair called for elections in Northern Ireland to take place on March 7, 2007, in adherence to the timeline established in the St. Andrews Agreement; and

Whereas the St. Andrews Agreement set a deadline of March 26, 2007, for devolved government to be restored to Northern Ireland: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives—

(A) reiterates its support for the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, as a blueprint for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

(B) declares its support for the St. Andrews Agreement of October 2006;

(C) commends British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern for their leadership and persistence in seeking a peaceful resolution in Northern Ireland; and

(D) commends all parties for abiding by the terms agreed to in the St. Andrews Agreement; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that all political parties in Northern Ireland should—