

while cynically exploiting the Palestinian refugees in their war against Israel. Arab leaders willingly agree to confine the Palestinians to squalid camps where terrorism and extremism and hate are bred instead of resettling them and welcoming their Palestinian brothers to their own oil rich lands. They claim a "right of return" for Palestinian refugees in the hope that they will flood Israel in order to undermine and ultimately destroy the Jewish State of Israel.

Madam Speaker, this resolution begins to set the record straight, while setting out a balanced approach to address the refugee issue, all refugees.

Any peace plan must look at both sides of the refugee issue in an equal way. We must acknowledge the Jewish refugees from Arab lands, be aware of the hidden agenda behind a Palestinian "right of return" and expose the obstructive role played by both the Arab nations and the United Nations in the refugee issue. We must find just solutions for all refugees in this conflict, redressing the grievances of all sides while retaining Israel's integrity as a Jewish state.

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 185, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of unacceptable human rights violations and blatant anti-Semitism.

For over 2,500 years, Jewish communities have resided throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region in large numbers. Unfortunately these vibrant Jewish communities have often been considered second-class citizens under onerous rulers. In the 20th century, widespread persecution and mass violations of human rights against Jewish minorities in Arab countries became unfortunately commonplace.

Upon the declaration of the State of Israel's independence in 1948, the difficult status of Jewish minorities was greatly exacerbated as Arab nations declared war or supported the destruction of the nascent state. In response, many members of the Jewish community were forced to flee their countries of birth or faced becoming a political hostage. Jewish properties were unlawfully seized and confiscated without any compensation or just redress. While there were once nearly a million Jews living in these regions, today there are only a few thousand Jews remaining in these Arab countries.

Unconscionably, the story of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries has been neglected by the United Nations and the international community for far too long. While Palestinian refugees from Israel have been one of the focal points of the international community, Jewish refugees from Arab states have been forgotten, if not intentionally ignored. This resolution recognizes the over 850,000 Jewish refugees from Arab states and expresses the sense of Congress that the international community should acknowledge the Jewish refugee issue as a part of any settlement of the Middle East conflict.

It is clear that the violations of human rights against Jewish refugees from Arab countries

have never been adequately addressed by the international community. As a cosponsor of H. Res. 185, I believe it is essential that Congress work with the administration to rectify this black mark on history. To this end, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, which sheds light on the plight of Jewish refugees throughout the Middle East.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 185. I commend this body for recognizing the rights of Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries. I agree that a resolution that addresses the legitimate rights of all refugees is inherent to establishing enduring peace in the Middle East.

The resolution draws its strength by including all refugees in the Middle East, including Jews, Christians, minority communities, Iraqis, and Palestinians. A lasting peace in the Middle East must abate feelings of hostility throughout all refugee populations. As the resolution suggests, this includes recognition of Jewish, Palestinian, and Christian refugee populations but must also encompass all Middle East refugee populations "numbering in the hundreds of thousands and comprised of peoples from many ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds."

As such, I urge this body to continue to be mindful of and work toward peaceful, enduring solutions for all refugee populations in the Middle East. Currently the two largest refugee populations in the world are Iraqi and Palestinian refugees. The United Nations has estimated that there are approximately 2,000,000 Iraqi refugees currently displaced from their homes (and another 2,200,000 internally displaced). These Iraqi refugees endure deprivation of food, shelter, and medical care. The United States must be mindful of the role of our foreign policy in the creation of this refugee population and our continuing role in addressing this humanitarian crisis.

United Nations-recognized Palestinian refugees currently constitute an approximate 3,700,000-person population. According to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency, UNRWA, of these refugees, approximately 1,300,000 Palestinian refugees continue to live in 58 recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, ongoing Israeli policies like settlement expansion, which contravene the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as the basis of Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements, create new refugee populations today.

I support H. Res. 185 for recognizing the displacement, human rights, suffering and loss of all refugees. I encourage this body to do so in a way that brings us closer to establishing a just and long-lasting Arab-Israeli peace. To make this dream a reality we must truly rise to become the "honest broker" of peace in the Middle East.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 185, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 154) expressing the sense of Congress that the fatal radiation poisoning of Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in Mr. Litvinenko's death and about the security and proliferation of radioactive materials, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 154

Whereas Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko, a citizen and resident of Great Britain, suddenly fell ill on November 1, 2006, and died three weeks later in a London hospital;

Whereas British health officials concluded, following an autopsy, that Mr. Litvinenko died of radiation poisoning caused by ingestion of the radioactive element polonium-210, and British law enforcement officials have announced that they are treating Mr. Litvinenko's death as a murder;

Whereas polonium-210, according to the Health Physics Society, radiates alpha particles that cannot penetrate paper or human skin but, if ingested through eating, drinking, or breathing, are extremely toxic, with the ability to destroy cells, damage vital organs such as the liver, kidneys, and bone marrow, cause cancer, and result in human death;

Whereas according to the Health Physics Society, just one millionth of a gram of polonium-210 can be fatal, an amount invisible to the naked eye;

Whereas 97 percent of the world's legal production of polonium-210 occurs at the Avangard nuclear facility in Russia, and Russia is the world's leading exporter of polonium-210 for commercial purposes;

Whereas polonium-210 is presently neither produced in nor commercially exported to Great Britain;

Whereas polonium-210, being especially dangerous to public health and safety if improperly handled, may attract the attention of terrorists because it can be easily and safely concealed and transported and is not usually detectable by radiation detectors;

Whereas this instance of poisoning by use of polonium-210 could serve as a model for future use of the radioactive element to assassinate individuals, poison and kill large numbers of people, or spread general panic and hysteria amongst the public;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko was a former agent and official in the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation during the period when present Russian President Vladimir Putin ran that agency;

Whereas in 1998 Mr. Litvinenko was fired from the Federal Security Service and subsequently arrested and briefly incarcerated without conviction for a criminal act after publicly accusing high-level officials of the Federal Security Service of crimes that included plotting assassination attempts;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko fled Russia and successfully sought asylum in Great Britain,

becoming a naturalized British citizen in October 2006;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko, after arriving in Britain, repeatedly accused the Federal Security Service and many of its officers, including now-President Putin, of involvement in organized crime, assassinations, and other illegal activity;

Whereas on November 1, 2006, before falling ill, Mr. Litvinenko reportedly met with three citizens of Russia, including former Federal Security Service agent Andrei Lugovoi;

Whereas the manner in which the polonium-210 was obtained, transported, and used must be fully investigated and revealed in order to reveal any defects or inadequacies in the present safeguard regime for that substance administered by the Russian Government and in order to prevent the unlawful, criminal, or terrorist acquisition or use of polonium-210 in the future;

Whereas the danger posed by polonium-210, as displayed by the discovery, subsequent to Mr. Litvinenko's death, of numerous cases of its exposure to objects and persons who had contact with Mr. Litvinenko and his meal companions, demonstrates the threat that the proliferation and use of polonium-210 poses to the lives of innocents worldwide, as well as to international security;

Whereas on July 15, 2006, the United States and Russia jointly announced the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which "will enhance cooperation . . . to combat the global threat of nuclear terrorism . . . [including] determined and systematic efforts to improve accounting, control, and physical protection of nuclear material and radioactive substances, as well as security of nuclear facilities; [and] detect and suppress illicit trafficking or other illicit activities involving such materials, especially measures to prevent their acquisition and use by terrorists";

Whereas Mr. Lugovoi has won immunity from prosecution as a member of the Russian Duma in December 2007 elections allegedly influenced by government electoral manipulation, which provides credence to claims that he has enjoyed official support in obtaining that office and its associated immunity; and

Whereas the British investigation into Mr. Litvinenko's murder continues in an atmosphere of deteriorating relations between the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation due, in part, to a lack of agreement on the further pursuit of that investigation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the fatal radiation poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in Mr. Litvinenko's death, and about the security and proliferation of radioactive materials;

(2) the use of such radioactive materials in such cases demonstrates a threat to the safety and security of the people of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other countries; and

(3) the President of the United States and the Secretary of State should urge Russian President Vladimir Putin and other officials of the Russian Government to cooperate fully with the British Government in its investigation into Mr. Litvinenko's death and to ensure the security of the production, storage, distribution, and export of polonium-210 as a material that may become dangerous to large numbers of people if utilized by terrorists.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each of control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Madam 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 California?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support this resolution that notes the tragic poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko, expresses concern about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in his death, and highlights the need to ensure the security of radioactive materials.

□ 1315

And I'd like to thank my good friend and the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, for introducing this important measure.

In late November 2006, Americans joined with many around the world in watching with horror as a youthful, energetic Russian dissident and British citizen dramatically changed appearances within days. Who can forget the piercing blue eyes of the bald and gaunt man staring intently at the camera from a London hospital bed?

After the completion of an autopsy, British health officials concluded that Alexander Litvinenko had died on November 23, 2006 of radiation poisoning caused by ingesting the radioactive element Polonium-210. British law enforcement officials classified his death as murder.

Alexander Litvinenko was an agent in the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation at the time when Vladimir Putin ran the agency. Mr. Litvinenko was fired from the service in 1998, then was arrested and briefly held without conviction after accusing senior Security Service officials of assassination plots.

Mr. Litvinenko successfully sought asylum in Britain, from where he continued to accuse the Security Service of involvement in illegal activities.

The night before falling ill, Mr. Litvinenko reportedly dined with three Russian citizens, including former Federal Security Service Agent Andrei Lugovoi.

On May 22, 2007, British authorities announced their intent to prosecute Mr. Lugovoi for the murder of Mr. Litvinenko. After Russia refused to extradite Mr. Lugovoi to Britain, a political dispute ensued between the two countries that resulted in the mutual expulsion of diplomats.

The murder of Alexander Litvinenko clearly raises disturbing questions about how elements of the Russian Government appear to deal with their enemies and perceived threats.

It also raises worrying questions about the security and proliferation of radioactive material. 97 percent of the world's legal production of Polonium-210 occurs at the Avangard nuclear facility in Russia, the country that is also the world's leading exporter of this substance for commercial purposes.

If the Russian government is not responsible for Litvinenko's death, as President Putin has stated, then it should be urgently investigating the security of the production, storage, distribution and export of Polonium-210 to prevent grave threats to international security.

The resolution calls on President Bush and Secretary Rice to urge President Putin and President-elect Medvedev to cooperate with British authorities in finding answers to ensure the safety and security of all our citizens.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 154, which I introduced.

The purposes of this measure, they're very straightforward. First, it is to put this Congress on record as being skeptical, to say the least, about the Russian Government's views and positions regarding the murder of the Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko in November of 2006.

We must keep in mind that Litvinenko, as a former agent of the Russian Security Service, was in a position to speak with credibility when he charged high level officials of the Russian Government with involvement in assassinations and organized crime and the use of state-sponsored terrorism for political purposes in the 1999 bombings of several Russian apartment buildings.

We note that Mr. Litvinenko's poisoning with the radioactive material known as Polonium-210 raises some interesting general facts. Polonium-210 is not produced, nor commercially exported to Britain where Mr. Litvinenko was murdered. Indeed, as Mr. BERMAN pointed out, 97 percent of the world's production of Polonium-210 takes place in Russia. And indeed, after the poisoning of Litvinenko in London, British investigators were able to track traces of the material to passenger aircraft serving the London to Moscow route.

Furthermore, the British investigation into the murder has found that Litvinenko had met with three visitors from Russia prior to the detection of the radioactive poison in his body. The British authorities are now, in fact,

seeking to prosecute a Russian citizen who currently resides in Russia for his involvement in the murder.

The second purpose of this measure, Madam Speaker, is to point out that Polonium-210 would prove to be a dangerous weapon that Islamic radicals could use seeking to inflict large numbers of civilian casualties, not just to murder an individual. Therefore, as the dominant producer of this material, it is incumbent upon the Russian Government to ensure the security from proliferation of the Polonium-210, and this resolution indeed makes that case.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I note that former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott appeared before our Foreign Affairs Committee last October and said the following when asked about this case, and I quote. "Many of the people running Russia today come from Security Services, the secret police. There has been a long and unbroken tradition of the use of murder as a means of controlling Russian society. And I can tell you that our British colleagues believe that they have at least a prosecutable case that goes very, very close to the seat of power in Moscow."

Madam Speaker, the perpetrators of the 1999 apartment building bombings in Russia probably hope that the passage of time would cover their tracks and that people would forget and move on. That appears to be the case in Moscow with this case as well, unfortunately.

So the question before our President and this Congress is the following: Will that be allowed to happen in the Litvinenko case as well?

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution to keep in mind that the people of Russia live with this kind of threat every day. Their government is aggressively working to take back control over the economy, over their livelihoods, their access to uncensored news and their personal freedoms.

So, Madam Speaker, I hope that the House passes this resolution.

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this ill-conceived resolution. The U.S. House of Representatives has no business speculating on guilt or innocence in a crime that may have been committed thousands of miles outside United States territory. It is arrogant, to say the least, that we presume to pass judgment on crimes committed overseas about which we have seen no evidence.

The resolution purports to express concern over the apparent murder in London of a shadowy former Russian intelligence agent, Alexander Litvinenko, but let us not kid ourselves. The real purpose is to attack the Russian government by suggesting that Russia is involved in the murder. There is little evidence of this beyond the feverish accusations of interested parties. In fact, we may ultimately discover that Litvinenko's death by radiation poisoning was the result of his involvement in an international nuclear smuggling operation, as some investigative reporters have claimed. The point is that we do not know. The House of Representatives has no business inserting

itself in disputes about which we lack information and jurisdiction.

At a time when we should be seeking good relations and expanded trade with Russia, what is the benefit in passing such provocative resolutions? There is none.

Madam Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to a very thought-provoking article by Edward Jay Epstein published recently in the New York Sun, which convincingly calls into question many of the assumptions and accusations made in this legislation. I would encourage my colleagues to read this article and carefully consider the wisdom of what we are doing.

Ms. ROS LEHTINEN. I have no further requests for time, and I give back the balance of our time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 154, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2040) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the semicentennial of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2040

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964 Commemorative Coin Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress hereby finds as follows:

(1) On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks' brave act of defiance, refusing to give up her seat to a white person on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, galvanized the modern civil rights movement and led to the desegregation of the South.

(2) On February 1, 1960, 4 college students, Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, David Richmond, and Ezell Blair, Jr., asked to be served at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and lunch counter sit-ins began to occur throughout the South to challenge segregation in places of public accommodation.

(3) On May 4, 1961, the Freedom Rides into the South began to test new court orders barring segregation in interstate transportation, and riders were jailed and beaten by mobs in several places, including Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama.

(4) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the leading civil rights advocate of the time, spearheading the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s with the goal of nonviolent social change and full civil rights for African Americans.

(5) On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led over 250,000 civil rights supporters in the March on Washington and delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech to raise awareness and support for civil rights legislation.

(6) Mrs. Coretta Scott King, a leading participant in the American civil rights movement, was side-by-side with her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during many civil rights marches, organized Freedom Concerts to draw attention to the Movement, and worked in her own right to create an America in which all people have equal rights.

(7) The mass movement sparked by Rosa Parks and led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., among others, called upon the Congress and Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson to pass civil rights legislation which culminated in the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

(8) The Civil Rights Act of 1964 greatly expanded civil rights protections, outlawing racial discrimination and segregation in public places and places of public accommodation, in federally funded programs, and employment and encouraging desegregation in public schools, and has served as a model for subsequent anti-discrimination laws.

(9) We are an eminently better Nation because of Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and all those men and women who have confronted, and continue to confront, injustice and inequality wherever they see it.

(10) Equality in education was one of the cornerstones of the civil rights movement.

(11) On September 10, 1961, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote that African American "students are coming to understand that education and learning have become tools for shaping the future and not devices of privilege for an exclusive few".

(12) Over its long and distinguished history, the United Negro College Fund has provided scholarships and operating funds to its member colleges that have enabled more than 300,000 young African Americans to earn college degrees and become successful members of society.

(13) Those graduates include Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as leaders in the fields of education, science, medicine, law, entertainment, literature, the military, and politics who have made major contributions to the civil rights movement and the creation of a more equitable society.

(14) Congress has an obligation to lead America's continued struggle to fight discrimination and ensure equal rights for all.

(15) The year 2014 will mark the semicentennial of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.

(a) DENOMINATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall mint and issue not more than 350,000 \$1 coins each of which shall—

- (1) weigh 26.73 grams;
- (2) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and
- (3) contain 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

(b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.

(a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—The design of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its contribution to civil rights in America.