

forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people of Taiwan. That is why we must remain vigilant on what happens in the Taiwan Strait. This is still one of the most peaceful and prosperous areas of the world. It also has one of the most steadily growing populations.

Taiwan's democracy has deepened with the second peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another after the presidential election in March 2008. The new President has made it a point of fostering an atmosphere of peace and harmony, while seeking to secure Taiwan's place as an economic growth engine. This is particularly important when the global economy is faltering.

The relationship between the United States and Taiwan has strengthened with Taiwan's evolution into a free society and a full-fledged, multi-party democracy and the development of Taiwan's robust free-market economy, with Taiwan becoming the 9th largest trading partner of the United States in 2007 and imports from the United States in that year totaling over \$26 billion. Our economic and trading relationship is one of our most important to both Taiwan and to the United States.

Also Taiwan's determined effort and collaboration with the United States to combat global terrorism, as demonstrated in part by its participation in the Container Security Initiative and its generous contribution to the Pentagon Memorial Fund are further evidence of our strong partnership.

I would also cite the leadership role Taiwan has demonstrated in addressing transnational and global challenges, including its active engagement in humanitarian relief measures, public health endeavors, environmental protection initiatives, and financial market stabilization efforts.

These reasons are why it is important that we continue to pursue peace and harmony in this region and why Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made Asia her first overseas trip in her new role. The symbolism is not lost on our Asian partners and why we must support this resolution.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in recognizing the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act and America's commitment to U.S.-Taiwan relations and supporting H. Con. Res. 55.

As many of my colleagues know, the Taiwan Relations Act has been instrumental in maintaining peace, security, and stability in the Taiwan Strait since its enactment in 1979. Over the past 30 years, Taiwan has evolved into a model democracy that respects human rights and the rule of law. It has also transformed into one of the world's most dynamic economies and is counted among America's most important trading partners. To that end, it is critical that the United States Congress continue to highlight the importance of the TRA and take further steps to enhance our overall partnership with Taiwan which has been mutually beneficial for generations in both America and Taiwan.

As a member of Congress who believes the United States should foster this relationship and create new avenues of cooperation, it is important in the context of this anniversary to recognize the bold efforts of Taiwanese President Ying-jeou Ma to bring peace and stability to the Taiwan Strait. I welcome President Ma's

efforts and the progress he has made to reduce tensions and to extend an olive branch to Beijing. While the issues that separate Taipei and Beijing are significant and the road ahead difficult, it is important for President Ma to fulfill his stated vision and continue to pursue a policy that lays down the "foundation for a century of peace and prosperity" in the region.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was recently privileged to become one of the co-chairs of the House Taiwan Caucus, and I look forward to working to strengthen our country's relationship with Taiwan through the efforts of the Caucus.

Just this week, I was also pleased to have met Ambassador Yuan and Director General Tseng down at the Georgia Capitol where the Ambassador was being honored by the Georgia General Assembly.

I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 55, which commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act. As stated in this resolution, the Taiwan Relations Act has served as the cornerstone of America's relationship with Taiwan since its enactment in 1979.

This resolution recognizes "Taiwan's evolution into a free society and a full-fledged, multi-party democracy." As the 9th largest trading partner of the United States in 2007, Taiwan has demonstrated its commitment to work with the United States and to collaborate on a range of issues—especially in regards to combating global terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan has also made clear its commitment to give back to the global community through humanitarian relief and other contributions to help stabilize global financial markets.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of this milestone anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in reaffirming our support for Taiwan's democratic institutions and commitment to our strong friendship with Taiwan.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of passage of House Concurrent Resolution 55 a resolution recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act. The Taiwan Relations Act's passage in 1979 marked an important law that allowed for continued cultural and economic relations with the people of Taiwan. The resolution we are considering, H. Con. Res. 55, reasserts Congressional intent on this very important relationship. The Taiwan Relations Act helped the United States continue to foster a greater partnership that has resulted in economic benefits and stability for both of our people and that has contributed to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

I appreciate the partnership that the people of Taiwan have with the people of Guam. The Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office on Guam, Mr. Vince Tsai, has been a valuable member of our island community and I appreciate his office's continued involvement with our local community in many social, business and civic activities. I also want to thank my good friend Congresswoman SHELLEY BERKLEY from Nevada for introducing this resolution and for her continued interest in Asian-Pacific affairs. I believe that this resolution will continue to encourage and foster the friendship and beneficial relationship between the people of the United States and the people of Taiwan, as the Taiwan Relations Act envisioned thirty years ago.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge strong support for the resolution, an "aye" vote, and 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. 55, 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.

RECOGNIZING 188TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 273) recognizing the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 273

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States, many of whom read Greek political philosophy in its original text, drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas the Greek national anthem (Hymn to Liberty) includes the words, "Most heartily was gladdened George Washington's brave land";

Whereas Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that "it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you";

Whereas the people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance to the Greek people during their struggle for independence;

Whereas Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through such bravery as was shown in the historic Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war with its first major setback, setting off a chain of events that significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas the price for Greece in holding onto our common values in their region was high, as hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in Greece during World War II;

Whereas, throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of a few countries that allied with the United States in every major international conflict;

Whereas Greece is a strategic partner and ally of the United States in bringing political stability and economic development to the volatile Balkan region, having invested over \$20,000,000,000 in the countries of the region, thereby creating over 200,000 new jobs, and having contributed over \$750,000,000 in development aid for the region;

Whereas Greece was extraordinarily responsive to requests by the United States during the war in Iraq, as Greece immediately granted unlimited access to its airspace and the base in Souda Bay, and many ships of the United States that delivered troops, cargo, and supplies to Iraq were refueled in Greece;

Whereas Greece is an active participant in peacekeeping and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations, including the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE);

Whereas in August 2004, the Olympic Games came home to Athens, Greece, the land of their ancient birthplace 2,500 years ago and the city of their modern revival in 1896;

Whereas Greece received worldwide praise for its extraordinary handling during the 2004 Olympics of over 14,000 athletes and over 2,000,000 spectators and journalists, which it did efficiently, securely, and with its famous Greek hospitality;

Whereas Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel;

Whereas the Government of Greece has had extraordinary success in recent years in furthering cross-cultural understanding and has been consistently working for rapprochement with Turkey, as seen with the January 2008 visit to Turkey by Greece's Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, the first official visit by a Greek Prime Minister in 49 years;

Whereas Greece serves as a key transit country for the delivery of gas to Europe via the Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector;

Whereas Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights;

Whereas those and similar ideals have forged a close bond between Greece and the United States and their peoples;

Whereas March 25, 2009, Greek Independence Day, marks the 188th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire and celebrates the aspirations for democracy that the peoples of Greece and the United States share; and

Whereas it is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate this anniversary with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great nations were born: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Greece as they celebrate the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece;

(2) expresses support for the principles of democratic governance to which the people of Greece are committed; and

(3) notes the important role that Greece has played in the wider European region and in the community of nations since gaining its independence 188 years ago.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. 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.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of this joint resolution marking the 188th anniversary of Greek independence. I would like to thank my good friend and our wonderful ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her leadership in ensuring that the House marks this important date.

As the birthplace of democracy, Greece stands alone among nations in its influence over our modern American government. Our Founding Fathers fashioned our society based, in significant part, on the political experience and philosophy of the ancient Greeks.

We stand here in a room today surrounded by images of some of the greatest thinkers in world history, many of them Greek. We stand in a building held up by ancient Greek architectural designs and techniques. And we continue to legislate today under Greek ideals of democratic governance.

From the ancient world of Homer and Plato to the theories of Hippocrates and Pythagoras, we are indebted to the Greek nation for its scientific, philosophical and artistic contributions to the world.

Throughout the modern era, Greece has been one of the United States' strongest allies, supporting us in every major international conflict. Today, our two nations express their mutual commitment safeguarding democracy and freedom through partnership in NATO and through bilateral defense cooperation.

Situated at the crossroads of three continents, Greece holds a strategic position in the Mediterranean region. Over the past decade, Athens has pursued path-breaking diplomacy that has resulted in meaningful rapprochement with its neighbor, Turkey. Last year, Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis made an official visit to Ankara, the first Greek Prime Minister to do so in nearly half a century.

As we commemorate today the 188th anniversary of Greek independence from Ottoman rule, we would be remiss if we failed to acknowledge the rich contributions of Greek immigrants and their descendants to the United States. We hope to continue the mutual benefit of cultural exchange by welcoming soon, Greece, into the Visa Waiver Program.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the beautiful and noble country of Greece on its anniversary, and I join with Americans and democracy-lovers throughout the world in celebrating Greek heritage and our thriving Greek-American friendship.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, to start our discussion, I would like to

yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member on our Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, what we are recognizing here: come tomorrow we have the 188th year anniversary of the independence of Greece. And we are celebrating Greek and American democracy. And that date tomorrow represents the day at which, after 400 years of oppressive rule, Greeks finally became free. Greeks were able, and it is amazing to think about it, to maintain their language, maintain their religion, to hold on to their culture, despite 20 generations of persecution during that period of time.

And I think one of the reasons we are proud here in the United States about the role we played was because U.S. President James Monroe and our then-Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, pushed to send funds and supplies to aid Greece in that struggle. But more importantly, I think to all of us, free-born men, both white and black, born in the North, traveled to Greece during that struggle. They played a role over 180 years ago in securing those freedoms. That was the power at the time of the concept of Greek liberty, that it drove Americans in this early republic to travel to Greece in order to take part in that very struggle. And that struggle, frankly, began an alliance between the U.S. and Greece that has joined our two countries in NATO, that has seen our soldiers fight tyranny in World War II.

□ 1500

We are indebted to the Greeks for their vast influence on our own society. Two thousand five hundred years ago, the Greeks ushered in Western civilization, and they brought about at that time the scientific method. They gave us the philosophy of Aristotle and Aristotelian logic, the birth of democratic government, the first age of reason. They brought forward the poetry of Euripides, the three-dimensional painting that was not rediscovered as a technique until the end of the Dark Ages, until into the Renaissance when again the enlightenment represented, really, the rediscovery of Greek philosophy, of these concepts of the autonomy of the individual, of logic and reason.

Our own founding fathers were deeply influenced by those Hellenic ideas. Thomas Jefferson, Adams and Madison, they not only wrote and read Greek; they could speak Greek—Tom Paine as well. They were well-versed in Greek philosophy.

In crafting the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Jefferson and Madison drew heavily on the Greek ideal that a government derives its power from the people. Thomas Jefferson's stirring words that all men are created equal and are endowed with unalienable rights hark back to natural law theories that originated in Greek philosophy. Indeed, the very architecture of our buildings, the very

ideals that drove our founding fathers through all of this Greek culture permeates throughout Washington, DC and our Nation. It is this legacy that we justly recognize today.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remaining time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADLER of New Jersey). Without objection, the gentleman from Florida will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to Ms. BERKLEY, the gentlewoman from Nevada.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today not only as a friend of Greece but also as a proud daughter. My mother's family comes from Salonika, Greece, and I count my Greek-Jewish heritage among my most enriching.

Greece has been a strong ally of the United States, standing by us in our struggles against the Nazis and now in the struggle against Islamic extremism. The Greek people paid a very high price for their opposition to the Nazis, and we are forever grateful for their sacrifices, of which there were many. Greece continues to be a top contributor to NATO and is a leader in the Balkan region.

The resolution before the House today extends its best wishes, our best wishes and congratulations, to the people of Greece, whom we look to as our forebearers in democracy. I am a proud cosponsor of this resolution, but I hope this will not be our last word on our friendship with Greece.

I urge this House and our administration to strengthen our relationship with Greece by including it in the Visa Waiver Program. By approving admission into the program, we will send not only a message of friendship but a message of thanks to the Greek community, which is so deserving of our friendship and of our gratitude. Greece has met the criteria to become a visa waiver country, and only awaits approval of their application. On this anniversary, let us take concrete action to strengthen our bond with Greece and send a message of thanks to our friends and allies.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to my wonderful colleague from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS. It is no surprise he is the co-chair of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, and a fine job he does.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride and strong support for House Resolution 273, recognizing the 188th anniversary of Greek independence and celebrating Greek and American democracy. I thank my good friend and ranking member, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for introducing this resolution.

Like the American revolutionaries who fought for independence and established this great republic, Greek freedom fighters began an arduous struggle to win independence for Greece and its people 188 years ago. When the Greeks

began this glorious revolution after four centuries of Ottoman oppression, they faced incredible odds. It was David versus Goliath.

On March 25, 1821, Archbishop Germanos raised the flag of freedom and declared Greece free. This day of rebellion was not chosen by chance. It was a holy day, dedicated to the mother of God. To the Greeks of 1821, Theotokos was their champion, their savior, their protector. The revolution of 1821 brought independence to Greece, and emboldens those who still seek freedom across the world. It proved to the world that a united people, through sheer will and perseverance, can prevail against tyranny.

By honoring the Greeks' struggle for independence, we reaffirm the values and ideas that make our great Nation. We also remember why freedom is so important. In the history of the Greek war for independence, many Greeks died, but they were undeterred from their ultimate goal. "Eleftheria I Thanatos"—liberty or death—became their battle cry.

We know the price of liberty can be very high. Democracy can only be maintained at a great cost. Our Greek brothers earned their liberty with blood, as did our American forefathers. The freedom we enjoy today is due to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past. I take great pride in both my Greek and American heritage.

As Thomas Jefferson once said, "To the ancient Greeks . . . we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves . . . American colonists, out of gothic darkness."

We celebrate Greek independence to reaffirm the common democratic heritage we share. As Americans, we must continue to pursue this spirit of freedom and liberty that characterizes both of these great nations.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to Mr. SPACE, the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 273, recognizing the 188th anniversary of Greek independence and celebrating Greek and American democracy.

This bill is personally significant to me because, like Mr. BILIRAKIS, I, too, am of Greek descent, being the grandson of immigrants who came here from the very small but beautiful island of Ikaria, Greece.

It is significant that we understand in recognizing and in advocating for this resolution that our founding fathers chose the ancient Greek models in the formation of our own Constitution and in formulating and defining the values of freedom, justice and equality. What is equally interesting is that, when Greece attained its independence, it turned to the Jeffersonian democracy that we have in formulating its constitution.

This resolution reaffirms the excellent relationship between the United States and Greece. In its passage, I look forward to continued joint co-

operation between these two nations in their mutual quest for peace, justice and democratic principles. Peace, justice and democratic principles are not just words. They mean something.

In this case, it means a renewed interest and quest for peace, justice and the principles of democracy in Cyprus. It means ending the occupation that has lasted for over 35 years. It means this country working with Greece to effectuate that. It means preserving the sanctity and the integrity of the ecumenical patriarch, the spiritual father of nearly 300 million who are Christian Orthodox worldwide.

Ascribing to those principles is what we believe in, and it is what Greece believes in. I look forward to working with Greece in future years as we strive for that justice.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Judge POE.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 188 years ago, the Greeks brought forth another democracy, but their philosophy started hundreds of years ago. They did not just bring the world a relentless warrior who was willing to give everything to defend the sacred honor of the Greek Nation, but they brought the world a concept that was novel, because of no other country can it be said that they brought to the world a philosophy that it was the individual that is more important than government, itself, more important than the State, because always before in all cultures the State was the supreme power over the individual. Yet the Greeks had the novel concept that the human being, the individual, is worth more than the State. Because of that seed, democracy was planted, and democracy now flourishes throughout the world with the basic premise that it is the individual who is all important.

So we honor them tomorrow because of their great heritage, because of their great influence on our democracy, but we also honor them because they gave to the world a concept of freedom and worth of the individual that had never before been known to any civilization.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud member of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus to offer my strong support for H. Res. 273, celebrating the 188th anniversary of Greek Independence Day. I am proud to follow other members of this caucus, and agree with their wonderful comments about this special occasion.

My grandfather, Arthur Costandinos Cathones, for whom I am named, came to America from Greece in 1911. He instilled in me a love of Greece and Greek culture. The Hellenic values he taught me have served me well as guiding principles throughout my career in public service, and he would be so proud to see me today on the floor of the U.S. House.

I have been blessed with this wonderful heritage throughout my life. I have

enjoyed visiting Greece a number of times to learn firsthand about the birthplace of democracy, and these trips have given me a deep understanding of the country's regions, its mythologies, its history, its food, its music, and especially its people.

The U.S. and Greece have always shared a special bond. When the new democracy was formed in Greece, they charged themselves with imitating and resembling American democracy, just like our forefathers shaped our democracy around the ideals of Aristotle and Socrates. Those are the very principles of government I teach in my political science classes at UNLV.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to celebrating this holiday tomorrow with the leaders of the Hellenic community and with the President of the United States. I look forward to working to further strengthen the relationship between the United States and the wonderful Hellenic Republic of Greece.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am proud to both sponsor and rise today in support of this resolution. This measure, as we have heard from each speaker, expresses our support for the nation of Greece as it celebrates the 188th anniversary of its independence, and it also notes the many very positive aspects of our relationship with that country.

There is truly a kinship between the people of Greece and the United States, one that was born from the shared ideals of democracy. Americans, indeed, owe a great deal to the political philosophy of democracy that was born in ancient Athens so long ago in 500 B.C. It was the Greek city-state of Athens that first created the word "democracy" by combining "demos," meaning people, with "kratos," meaning power, and so it became the first state in history to introduce and implement the concept of democracy in its form of government.

As they framed our Constitution in the late 18th century, our founding fathers drew upon the principles and the forms of government that had been created in ancient Greece thousands of years earlier. Soon after that, 45 years after America's Declaration of Independence, Greek freedom fighters looked to the young United States for inspiration as they began their work for independence from Ottoman Turkey in 1821. In fact, at that time, one of those Greek freedom fighters praised George Washington and the United States for being the land of liberty in his poem "Hymn to Liberty." That poem then became a rallying cry in the Greek war for independence, and was later adopted as the national anthem for Greece.

□ 1515

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Today, Mr. Speaker, Greece is a strong ally of the United States. It was the only country that fought alongside the United

States in every major conflict of the 20th century. The contributions and sacrifices made by Greeks in fighting the Nazis in World War II, in the Battle of Crete and elsewhere, are not forgotten by us today well over 60 years later.

In this new century, Greece has also sought to reinforce stability and peace in her area of the eastern Mediterranean. As evidenced by her position at the crossroads of energy supplies between Asia and Europe and by its efforts to support stability in the region of the Balkans, Greece will play an increasingly important role in its immediate region in the European Union and the trans-Atlantic community of nations.

It is my privilege to have introduced this resolution, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the strong relationship between the United States and Greece and honoring the 188th anniversary of the revolution that led Greece to its freedom. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this resolution.

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

Mr. WEXLER. I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Hellenic Caucus, I want to express strong support for this resolution recognizing the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy. I would also once again like to thank my very good friend from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) who has been a leading supporter of U.S.-Greek relations in Congress. Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to the co-chairs of the Hellenic Caucus, Congresswoman MALONEY and Congressman BILIRAKIS, for their efforts in moving this resolution forward.

Having had the honor of meeting with the Foreign Minister of Greece 1 month ago, it is an honor to highlight one of America's most important allies, Greece, and the common commitments to democracy, human rights and laws that bind our two nations. This resolution is an opportunity to praise Greece for its efforts to bring peace and stability to the Balkans, as well as the support Athens has given the United States following 9/11 and our collective efforts on the war on terrorism.

It is not lost on any of us in Congress that Greece was quick to respond to requests by the United States during the war in Iraq and immediately granted unlimited access to its airspace and the base in Souda Bay. Many American ships that delivered troops, cargo, and supplies to Iraq were refueled in Greece.

Close cooperation with our NATO ally Greece continues on a daily basis, and it is essential that Congress and the administration recognize this extraordinary support and express our deepest gratitude to the Greek people and Greek government.

This occasion is not only important in terms of U.S.-Greece bilateral rela-

tions, but it is an historic occasion for millions of Americans. As a Member of Congress with a large Greek American community, I am especially pleased that we are passing this resolution today, which also highlights this community's extraordinary commitments to the shared prosperity of our Nation.

It is undeniable that the Greek American community, which includes some five million Americans with Greek ancestry, is the lynchpin in the unbreakable bond between the United States and Greece. As unofficial ambassadors between the U.S. and Greece, Greek Americans have for decades successfully shaped this long-standing friendship and built new bridges to forge closer relations between our nations.

While this resolution recognizes an important anniversary in the independence of Greece, it is also my hope that today's floor debate will be used as a catalyst to promote our ally, Greece's, participation in the Visa Waiver Program. Greece has fulfilled all of the criteria to be included in the Visa Waiver Program, and I urge the administration to act as quickly as possible, along with Athens, to finalize this process and open the door to further enhance the relationship between the people and governments of the United States and Greece.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I congratulate the Greek people on the 188th anniversary of their independence and strongly support this resolution.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hellenic community as they celebrate the 188th anniversary of Greek Independence from the Ottoman Empire.

After close to 400 years of Ottoman rule, on March 25, 1821, the people of Greece rose up against the Turks and won their independence. March 25th is a date that will live forever in the hearts and minds of Greeks all around the world.

The Greeks have a history dating back almost 4000 years. Greece is the cradle of democracy and its great philosophers were an invaluable inspiration for our founding fathers as they created the democracy we have in America.

We are joined by culture and a deep commitment to shared values. Greek ideals of democracy and freedom continue to inspire us.

On Greek Independence Day, we celebrate the living history of Greek heritage. During the occupation by the Ottoman Turks, they risked harsh penalties, some extreme as death, to teach their children the culture, history, and language of their ancestors. It is this dedication to Greek culture and ideals that led them to revolt against the Ottomans in 1821.

Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure of representing a large number of Greek-Americans in the Seventh District of New York. Their influence and active participation in their communities has fostered economic, political, and social growth throughout New York City and I am honored to represent them in Congress.

Generations of Greek Americans have enriched every aspect of our national life, in the arts, sciences, business, politics, and sports.

Through hard work, love of family and community, they have contributed greatly to the prosperity and peace that we all enjoy as Americans today.

Although the anniversary of Greece's independence is cause to celebrate, we must also use this occasion to remember the ongoing struggle for freedom and demand for human rights on the island of Cyprus. The United States and the international community must remain steadfast in our resolve to unify the Greek and Turkish Cypriots who have been divided for far too long.

Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate my strong commitment to the Greek communities in my district, the country, and throughout the world. Their strength and dedication to democracy and peace in the world has made them an inspiration and model for modern civilization.

I urge my colleagues to join me as we celebrate Greek independence.

Mr. McMAHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Greece on her 188th anniversary of Independence.

The U.S. tradition of democracy was built upon ancient Greek political and philosophical thought. And, the flame that ignited the first discussions of democracy in Ancient Greece, shined luminously throughout the Mediterranean on March 25, 1821.

Fortunately, this anniversary not only marks the creation of a promising, new democratic state, but of a steadfast and loyal friend to the United States.

I am proud to say that Greece has stood by the United States as a strong NATO ally.

A quick and reliable partner in World War II, the Balkans and most recently, Iraq.

And as a leader through its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I would also particularly like to congratulate the nearly 15,000 Greek-Americans of Staten Island and Southern Brooklyn whose strong family ties, established customs and tradition of hard work have added to the character and longevity of my district.

These Greek Americans and their relatives in Greece are a tight community. Their relatives in Greece deserve to have the same level of access for tourism and business travel to the United States that most other European countries have. This is why I support Greece's prompt membership into the visa waiver program and look forward to future global opportunities to partner with our friend and ally, Greece.

On this important occasion I would like say once more: Congratulations.

Mr. WEXLER. 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. 273.

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, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the

Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

REDUCING THE DEFICIT

(Mr. LUETKEMEYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, the President's budget as recently unveiled spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much. We need to stop talking about reducing our deficit and actually go to work and do it.

We cannot continue to put off the tough economic decisions that must be made. In the words of Missouri's Harry Truman, the buck stops here.

It is just plain wrong to pass off more and more debt to our children and grandchildren. Folks back home in Missouri have made it clear to me if they have to balance their checkbooks, then so does Washington.

Unfortunately, the President's budget doesn't do that. Instead, it continues to mortgage the future of our children and grandchildren. I support reducing our Nation's deficit, which is precisely why one of the first bills I filed and sponsored was a constitutional amendment to balance the budget.

Now, let's be clear. Raising taxes is not the way to do that. Putting Washington's fiscal house in order is.

I am urging all of us to remember the buck stops here, not with future generations.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

AMERICAN SCHOOL KIDS AND THE LONE SURVIVOR OF WORLD WAR I

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 1918, the war to end all wars was over. It was called World War I. It started in 1914, ended in 1918. And during that time, it was a stalemate until 1917 when the United States entered the war. The United States went overseas to Europe. Those doughboys fought in a land they did not know and for a people they did not know. They broke the trench warfare stalemate, and on the 11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour of 1918, that Great War was over.

Fifteen million people in the world died because of World War I. And the casualties for the United States? Well, 4,734,991 Doughboys and Marines went over there to fight in that Great War; 116,561 were killed representing and de-

fending our country. They fought in the woods, in the forests of Belleau Wood, the Argonne, and the fields of Flanders. Many of them are still buried in those forests in graves known only to God. When they came home, thousands more had contracted the Spanish flu, and they died here in the United States.

When the war was over, America moved on, and now 101 years later, we honor troops from that last century. We have on the Mall here not far from this Capitol the Vietnam Memorial where we honor the 55,000-plus that were killed; we honor the Korean veterans with the Korean Memorial that has those American soldiers going through a minefield in the snow; and we honor the Greatest Generation with the World War II Memorial.

But in the tall weeds of the Mall, there's a little-known memorial for the D.C. veterans that fought in World War I. It is decrepit, it is falling apart, and like I said, it is in the high weeds. It was built largely because the kids here in Washington, D.C., saved their nickels so that memorial could be built.

But Mr. Speaker, we do not have a memorial on the Mall for all of the Americans who fought in the great World War I. America just never got around to it. So I have introduced the Frank Buckles Lone Survivor Act to expand the D.C. memorial so that it honors all that fought in World War I.

Why Frank Buckles? Because you see, Mr. Speaker, Frank Buckles is the lone American survivor from World War I. He's 108 years old. In World War I, he lied to get into the Army; he was probably 16; he should have been 18. But he went off to war in Europe and drove an ambulance and rescued other doughboys that had been wounded in France. After the war was over, he came back to America. And during World War II, he was captured in the Philippines by the Japanese and held as a prisoner of war for 3 years. And now he lives in West Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, here is a photograph of Frank Buckles, 108 years old. It is taken in front of what is left of the D.C. memorial. And what I am asking Congress to do is authorize the expansion of the D.C. memorial to include all who fought in World War I.

You know, the men that fought there should be honored by America. Even though I have offered this bill into legislation, government bureaucrats are opposed to this memorial, saying we don't need any more memorials on the Mall. That dishonors America's war dead, Americans the bureaucrats never even knew.

But kids across the Nation are answering the call of Frank Buckles. And let me explain. What is occurring is, service-learning projects in schools throughout the country are teaching their kids hands-on about World War I and those that lived and fought and died in World War I. It started in Creekwood Middle School in my home district, and now it has spread to