

himself—to send a high level delegation to Oslo as a very clear signal to the world that the U.S. stands full square for human rights and democracy, and that we stand with Liu Xiaobo and the Chinese human rights and democracy movement.

China also cracked down harshly on any attempts to celebrate Mr. Liu's achievements in his country, and has so far prevented Mr. Liu's wife, Liu Xia, from traveling to Oslo, as well as most of China's democracy activists and scholars who were invited by Mr. Liu's family.

The speeches in Oslo will no doubt highlight Mr. Liu's incredible courage and peaceful convictions. We will hear about his leadership as a writer, literary critic, professor and human rights activist; his role during the 1989 pro-democracy protest in Tiananmen Square, where he negotiated on behalf of student demonstrators, that he served as President of the Independent Chinese PEN Center since 2003, and the prominent leadership role he played in the drafting of one of the most important Chinese reform documents, Charter 08.

This Friday, Mr. Liu will take his rightful place among those human rights giants who were also imprisoned when they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize—Germany's Carl von Ossietzky in 1935 and Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi in 1991.

But what Mr. Liu needs most is not the ornate medal, or even the cash prize which goes with the award, but our ongoing commitment to stand with him and the goals and aspirations he represents. That is our job as law makers, NGOs, the public, and the international community—today, tomorrow, in Oslo, and most importantly, beyond December 10th.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANGEVIN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1717, as amended.

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. KLEIN of Florida. 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 motion will be postponed.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO VICTIMS OF FIRE IN ISRAEL

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1751) mourning the loss of life and expressing condolences to the families affected by the tragic forest fire in Israel that began on December 2, 2010.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1751

Whereas, on December 2, 2010, a forest fire began in the Carmel region of Israel;

Whereas the fire quickly spread and became the worst fire in Israel's history;

Whereas over 40 people have been killed by the blaze;

Whereas more than 17,000 people have been displaced by the fire;

Whereas more than 4,000,000 trees have already burned in the fire;

Whereas Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared December 2, 2010, a national day of mourning in Israel;

Whereas Israel has exhausted its supplies and equipment necessary to sustain the firefighting effort;

Whereas United States Ambassador to Israel James Cunningham rapidly issued a disaster declaration, prompting significant coordination within the United States Government to identify and provide Israel with firefighting assistance;

Whereas President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton have pledged significant United States assistance to address this disaster;

Whereas the United States has already provided Israel with technical assistance, over 110 metric tons of fire suppressant, 3,800 gallons of fire retardant concentrate, and other needed assistance to fight this fire;

Whereas State and local governments in the United States have mobilized to send firefighting supplies to Israel; and

Whereas Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the Ukraine are among the other nations that have provided assistance or offered assistance to Israel to fight this fire: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) mourns the loss of life and extends condolences to the families affected by the fire in northern Israel that began on December 2, 2010;

(2) supports the Obama Administration's offer of, and rapid efforts to provide, United States firefighting assistance to Israel in response to this disaster;

(3) recognizes the efforts of foreign governments that have provided assistance or offered assistance to Israel;

(4) commends State and local governments in the United States that have offered and provided assistance to Israel; and

(5) reaffirms United States support for the people and State of Israel in their time of need.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to 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. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

As my colleagues are aware, last week the State of Israel faced the worst natural disaster in its history. A forest fire ravaged the Carmel Forest, killing over 40 people, displacing over

17,000 Israelis, and burning 4 million trees. People from all over the world have planted trees in forests throughout Israel to make it greener and make the desert bloom.

This is a tragedy, because of the loss of these forests, that really is something that has to be recognized. But, more importantly, this is a moment that we, as Americans, want to send a message of condolence to the Israeli people for the loss of life, loss of property, and to make an important statement of support and solidarity with our ally and friend, the State of Israel.

Thankfully, over the last day or so, the fire has now been successfully contained, and hopefully it will soon be fully extinguished. With the help of the international community, Israel will now be able to rebuild, and that's why it's important that at this moment in time we recognize the importance of this international effort from countries around the world who offered or provided assistance to fight the fire.

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Those countries include Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Norway, the Netherlands, the Palestinian Authority, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

We're also proud of our State and local governments in the United States who selflessly mobilized to send firefighting supplies and firefighting experts to Israel. I would like to especially acknowledge the round-the-clock efforts by USAID, Department of Defense, National Security Council, U.S. Fire Services Professionals, as well as our embassy personnel in Tel Aviv, who were in constant contact with their Israeli counterparts offering assistance and support at every juncture.

We must note that time and again Israel sends its supplies and its experts to disasters around the world. It was one of the first countries that provided support to the people of Haiti after the earthquake. And certainly we know in the aftermath of floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and other natural and manmade disasters, Israel offers its expertise. Now Israel knows that it can rely on others as well.

Restoration will be a long-term effort after this fire and will require cooperation on many fronts. I would like to commend the important efforts of the Jewish National Fund which is taking a leading role in the replanting effort as it has operated for decades.

I would like to thank my partner in this bipartisan legislation, Congressman PETER KING, the chairman of the Fire Services Caucus, and many others who have cosponsored this piece of legislation. And I would also like to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for quickly bringing this resolution to the floor.

Our expeditious consideration allows us to send a message to the people of

Israel: we stand with you in your time of need. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on December 2, as my good friend and colleague pointed out, the worst fire in Israel's history erupted in the forests in the northern region of the country. The fire spread quickly, killing over 40 Israelis, displacing over more than 17,000 and destroying more than 250 homes. The fire also burned over 4 million trees and over 12,000 acres of forest, resulting in damages totaling almost \$55 million.

After Israel had exhausted its resources to fight the fire, it appealed to the United States and other nations to help, and help we did. U.S. C-130 aircraft from the Department of Defense flying from the U.S. European command at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany delivered 20 tons of fire retardant and 38,000 gallons of fire retardant concentrate.

Furthermore, The U.S. Agency for International Development has provided extensive firefighting supplies, including 27 metric tons of fire retardant and 42 metric tons of firefighting foam.

USAID also dispatched its 10-member disaster assistance response team to Israel, where it's provided technical assistance and discussed lessons learned. And countless individual Americans provided charitable donations to help Israel fight and recover from the fire.

Mr. Speaker, the American people and their government have once again stood with our great friend and ally, Israel, in their time of need, as they have done with us on countless occasions. This is one more example of the rock-solid friendship and alliance between the U.S. and the State of Israel.

Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of the people and the Government of Israel, and thanks to the contributions of the U.S., our State and local governments, and over two dozen other countries, Israel was able to fully contain the fires on December 5. Unfortunately, it will be likely many years for Israel to rehabilitate its damaged forests, which have long been a symbol of Israel and the rebirth of the Jewish State in the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people.

Again, I want to thank my good friend and colleague, Mr. KLEIN, for this very important resolution for authoring it, and for Mr. KING and others for cosponsoring it. It's an excellent resolution. I urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman for his support of this resolution. I think we all understand when it comes to disasters, that we're all in this together—whether it's people of the State of Israel, people in the United States and other countries around the world. And I think certainly after watching Israel over the

years come to the aid of other countries in their time of need, it's obviously important on a humanitarian level, logistical level, and a respect level that we can all help the State of Israel in its time of need as well as in this time of this natural disaster. I ask the Members of the House to support this resolution.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1751, a resolution expressing condolences to the families affected by the tragic forest fire in Israel that began on December 2nd, 2010.

This was the worst fire in Israel's history—42 people were killed, more than 17,000 have been displaced and over 4 million trees have been destroyed. As we mourn this tragic loss of life, I would like to extend my condolences to the families affected by these fires.

The United States has provided Israel with technical assistance, including 110 metric tons of fire suppressant, 3,800 gallons of fire retardant concentrate and other supplies. An additional 23 nationals provided or offered assistance to Israel as well. It is important to commend the United States and these other nations for providing timely aid to Israel when it was most necessary.

We are grateful that global coordination and rapid response resulted in the speedy extermination of the fire. I would like to once again applaud the response of the United States and others as well as reaffirm the United States' support for the people and State of Israel.

I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my deepest condolences to all those who lost loved ones to the Carmel wildfires in Israel. Over 40 people died in these devastating fires and approximately 17,000 Israelis were driven from their homes. In addition to the human tragedy, over 12,000 acres of forestland were scorched and nearly 5 million trees were burned in the last six days. I am grateful that the forest fires are now under control and the immediate danger has passed.

I appreciate the Obama Administration's swift response to our ally's call for firefighting assistance. After U.S. Ambassador James Cunningham declared a disaster, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense mobilized over 40 metric tons of fire retardant and 3,800 gallons of concentrated fire retardant for immediate transport to the affected areas. To date, the U.S. has contributed more than \$1.3 million to the relief efforts in Israel, and I am committed to ensuring that our friend and ally has the necessary resources to recover over the days and weeks ahead. I also want to commend the generous contributions of personnel and firefighting resources from so many of Israel's neighbors, including Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey. It is heartening to know that even in a region fraught with conflict and tension, the human desire to assist one another in times of great need transcends political differences.

The celebration of perseverance and hope during this Hanukkah season is a comforting reminder of our ability to overcome great hardship and to look toward the future. I am pleased to cosponsor this resolution of solidarity with the Israeli people, who are foremost in my thoughts and prayers at this very difficult time.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. 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. KLEIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1751.

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.

HONORING 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF BALTIC STATES INDEPENDENCE

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 267) congratulating the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the 20th anniversary of the reestablishment of their full independence, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 267

Whereas the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were occupied in June 1940 by Soviet forces through the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and illegally incorporated into the Soviet Union in August 1940;

Whereas between June and August 1941, the Baltic nations were invaded by Nazi Germany, subject to brutal repression, and occupied as part of the Third Reich before being re-occupied by Soviet forces in late 1944 until they regained their independence in August 1991;

Whereas their forcible and illegal incorporation into the Soviet Union and Third Reich was never recognized by the United States;

Whereas from 1940 to 1991, thousands of Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians were executed, imprisoned, or exiled by Soviet authorities through a regime of brutal repression and Sovietization in their respective nations;

Whereas despite the efforts of the Soviet Union to eradicate the memory of independence, the Baltic people never lost their hope for freedom and their long-held dream of full independence;

Whereas during the period of "glasnost" and "perestroika" in the Soviet Union, the Baltic people played a leading role in the struggle for democratic reform and national independence; and

Whereas in the years following the declaration and subsequent restoration of full independence, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have demonstrated their commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and have actively participated in a wide range of international structures, pursuing further integration with European political, economic, and security organizations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) congratulates Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the 20th anniversary of their declarations on the restoration of independence from the Soviet Union and commends the significant progress that they have since made, including their membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU); and

(2) calls on the President to continue to build on the close and mutually beneficial relations the United States has enjoyed with