

me and to take some time to appreciate the natural beauty of their communities and to work together to preserve our environment for future generations.

And that is just the way it is.

HARRIET TUBMAN \$20 BILL

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Secretary of the Treasury Lew announced that for the first time U.S. paper currency will feature portraits of great American women. I am very proud that a Maryland native, an abolition hero, Harriet Tubman, was selected to be the new face on the \$20 bill.

Born into slavery on Maryland's eastern shore, she escaped to freedom but returned to rescue her family members. It was dangerous and could easily have cost Tubman her life or her freedom.

After rescuing her family, she kept coming back for others who sought freedom, using the alias, Moses. How appropriate. She brought dozens of people out of slavery, never once losing a passenger on her Underground Railroad route.

During the Civil War, she was an agent for the Union. In the decades following the war, she was active in the movement for women's suffrage.

I can think of no one more suited to be honored with a portrait on the \$20 bill. I am also pleased that other women will be featured on our currency.

SAN JACINTO DAY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the marshy plains where the San Jacinto River meets Buffalo Bayou, now near Houston, General Sam Houston and his volunteer Army of Texians—men from most States and several countries, including Mexico, England, and Germany—faced the invading army under dictator Santa Anna of Mexico. Texas was fighting for independence from Mexico because Mexico had abolished its democracy and became an oppressive dictatorship.

It was the afternoon of April 21, 1836—180 years ago today. The Texian volunteers, although outnumbered 2-1, caught the enemy literally by surprise. On that hot afternoon, General Sam, with his Tejano Cavalry protecting the flank, charged the invaders with the battle cry: Remember the Alamo. Remember Goliad.

In 18 minutes, the battle was over. Half of the enemy were killed, and the other half were captured. On that day, Texas gained freedom and independence.

Sam Houston became President of the Republic of Texas. Texas was an

independent country for 9 years and then joined the United States.

Mr. Speaker, our past has allowed us to have today's freedom. We thank those Texian freedom fighters, on April 21, 1836, San Jacinto Day, for their bold sacrifices, for choosing freedom over tyranny and creating Texas.

And that is just the way it is.

HOUSTON FLOOD VICTIMS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago in Harris County, in Houston, and in my congressional district and many other places, again, the State of Texas experienced a terrible rain. It was not a hurricane and it was not a tornado, but it was a downpouring of 20 inches-plus of rain. Our bayous overran, people were standing on furniture, babies had to be rescued, and people died.

Today, I want to call the names of seven people who died untimely in this terrible, terrible storm. Next week, I will ask my colleagues to stand with me for a minute of silence, but I wanted in this week to call their names. They were mothers and fathers, truck drivers, mechanical engineers, teachers. They were Americans, they were Houstonians, they were Texans, and, unfortunately, they died.

The government must work better to ensure that there are flashing lights on underpasses and toward many other solutions. We look forward to the declaration of disaster to help the people remaining.

My sympathy to their families: German Antonio Franco, Claudia Melgar, Sunita Vikas Malhara, Pedro Rascon Morales, Charles Edward Odom, Suresh Kumar Talluri, Teri White Rodriguez.

Mr. Speaker, may they rest in piece. God bless their families in this terrible, terrible time.

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN BANGLADESH

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, in Bangladesh, the horrendous, brutal street assassinations of members of minority religions, secularists, and atheists violate every single value that we hold dear.

Just 2 weeks ago, 28-year-old Nazimuddin Samad was hacked to death in Dhaka, Bangladesh, after speaking out against the persecution of religious minorities on social media.

Evelyn Beatrice Hall, the late British author, wrote: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

In Bangladesh, discrimination and deadly violence against atheists, secularists, Hindus, Buddhists, and other religious minorities have unfortunately become a regular occurrence.

This underscores the absolute necessity of not only defeating this global wave of intolerance, but standing up and fighting for the right of others to freely express their views regardless of whether you agree with those views or not.

I introduced H. Res. 396 to call on the Government of Bangladesh to protect the rights of all of its religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus, atheists, and others. They have a responsibility to uphold the principles of its secular constitution, including freedom of religion and freedom of expression, and take action against this senseless violence.

I encourage my colleagues to take action and support this resolution's passage.

REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, in October of this year, the Republic of Georgia will hold elections. More than just an election to determine its national leadership, this election will likely determine whether the Republic of Georgia remains a semi-free country that will continue on a path to self-determination or whether it will succumb to corruption, Russian oligarch influence, and Russian domination.

Georgia has a long history of fighting to protect its identity against evil tyrants, bullying neighbors, corrupted officials, and outright invasion. A small but important nation with its distinct language and people, Georgian territory forms a vital land bridge between Eastern Europe and West Asia that is nestled on the Black Sea. With the exception of her neighbor Armenia, much of her history has been fighting for survival against her neighbors wanting to force her into Russian, Turkish, or Persian domination.

Since Georgia's reassertion of independence from her Russian masters in 1991, her struggle has not been easy. Balanced between a crumbling Soviet Union and internal unrest, Georgia emerged from several years of civil strife to defend her independence. Georgia saw her first President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, ousted by Russian-backed leaders, such as Eduard Shevardnadze. During attempts to restore elected government, President Gamsakhurdia later would lose his life in still mysterious circumstances.

After a period of domination by Russian-backed forces and political leaders, the nascent Republic of Georgia strove for great reforms in the Rose Revolution of 2003, finally breaking her chains and setting a path toward self-determination. The United States and the international community embraced

this effort, and global monitors affirmed the legitimate vote of the people that exposed the corruption of the election results.

□ 1200

Shevardnadze's government attempted to ignore the true results, but the Georgian people had a different plan and peacefully forced Shevardnadze to succumb to the will of the people as they stormed the parliament with roses. It was one of the most inspirational episodes of freedom in world history.

Since then, Georgia has enjoyed a period of self-determination, Western engagement, human rights improvements, and trade. This has not been without cost. Separatists in the Georgian districts of Ossetia and Abkhazia, encouraged by Moscow, cast the Republic of Georgia into turmoil. Russia used this unrest as pretext to invade Georgia and still occupies these territories while denouncing earlier agreements to close Russian bases on Georgia's Black Sea coast.

Still, President Mikheil Saakashvili was able to take his rightful place as the duly elected President of Georgia, and his reforms brought Georgia from a backward status in the world to a much improved financial structure, with marked increases in economic growth and foreign investment.

For all of Georgia's struggles, for all of her self-determination, outside neighbors once again are vying to make Georgia subservient to their wishes. Russia has been stung by free peoples in independent states that she once dominated in the Soviet era that now choose instead to preserve their language, culture, history, and restore their freedom.

Russia, for its part, has done everything in its power to force these peoples back into a serf status. Whether in Crimea, Ukraine, the Baltic States, or Georgia, the pattern has been the same.

Russia's playbook starts with flooding opposition groups with cash from oligarchs loyal to Moscow. Separatists are courted in areas with some Russian ethnicity and then encouraged to foment division against these struggling republics, demanding their rights for Russian peoples in these territories.

Russia then aids militias to create violence that strains the local political and law enforcement structure, causing the people living there to wish for anything—even the bad old days—to somehow restore order.

Then national political parties are infiltrated and flushed with oligarch cash and promises of power as they convert legitimate parliaments into calls for pro-Moscow governance that, in essence, become nothing more than the old Soviet Socialist structure ruled by Moscow.

In Georgia, it has been no different. Despite Georgia casting off outside invaders and attempting to push off the chains of Russia in the early 1800s or in

1918 or in 1991, Russia somehow feels it is her right to treat Georgians as a subclass of human beings that only exist to serve the interests of Moscow and her territory should only merely be a transitway for Russian interests.

After the successful removal of Russian chains in the Rose Revolution in 2003, Russia has continually bullied Georgia's political system, fomented unrest in Abkhazia and Ossetia, invaded Georgia, and violated her agreement to withdraw from bases in Georgian territory. Amazingly, through all of this, Georgia has remained resolute.

So, in classic form, Russia has moved to infiltrate the political process in the hopes of creating its own pro-Moscow government in the Georgian capital to hand them everything on a silver political platter.

Chief among the funding efforts and political infiltration is oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, a close ally of Vladimir Putin. The aim is to rig votes along the same lines as was attempted in 2003 by buying votes, punishing political opponents, using Georgia's own administrative and political resources to influence the elections while using Georgian special forces to influence the outcomes.

Combined with the full privatization of the election commissions, who one source estimates is now 98 percent controlled by Ivanishvili, the Georgian people face an alarming prospect in their right to free elections in October of this year.

Faced with such bullying, the Georgian people are looking to the world for support. It is somehow fitting, Mr. Speaker, that this Saturday marks St. George's Day in world history.

St. George, the Christian martyr and mythical slayer of dragons, is the namesake from whom the country of Georgia takes its name, according to some legends.

The Georgian people are willing to slay this political dragon and stand for their freedom as they have before, but they need our help.

We can ignore their pleas—after all, most Americans don't even know where Georgia is on the map—or we can give them a megaphone to shout their message, and the message is this: They wish to remain free.

Here are some simple steps that we, in our country, can take: We call on the President of the United States to assist in monitoring of this fall's election processes in Georgia, as we once assisted them in the pivotal 2003 elections.

We call upon the Georgian electoral commissions to be restored to representative membership to counter the private buyout being conducted by Moscow and their proxy, oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili.

We call upon the United States Department of Treasury and Western banks to freeze the assets of Ivanishvili for violations as an illegal arms trader.

We call upon the State Department to flag Georgian officials and business

leaders who are discovered to be complicit in tampering with free elections to have their visas revoked and their assets frozen.

We also call upon Western journalists in our free press to give the Georgian people a chance to have their story heard by investigating and covering the remaining few months of what could be the last free months of a Republic of Georgia.

Finally, we call upon the self-determined, free, and resolute people of Georgia to stand in the spirit of St. George.

Hold your head high, grasp the lance, and pierce the attacking dragon. You have been threatened before. By your commitment, as in 2003, you can show the world again that freedom will not succumb to corruption and intimidation.

The people of Georgia should also know the God of the universe does not slumber. We, the people of the United States, join with the people of Georgia in our prayers for your freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I so much appreciate my colleague and friend talking about the Georgia election. We should be encouraging fair elections everywhere and, when they are not fair, calling those to account.

Not that we are the policemen of the world, but it becomes so much more unfortunate when you have a nation like Egypt that gets pushed into elections before they are ready, the Muslim Brotherhood takes over the country, as in Egypt when Morsi became President.

He began shredding the Constitution and taking more and more power as it happened in Venezuela with Chavez and other countries. He had taken a lesson: This is the way you do it. You get elected, and then you start seizing more and more power.

To the credit of the Egyptian people, their story in recent years is the greatest peaceful uprising in the history of the world. It wasn't entirely peaceful because of the violence of the Muslim Brotherhood.

They want a world caliphate, and they want to start with something resembling the old Ottoman Empire, that caliphate that came around North Africa and on around the Mediterranean, and they need Egypt in order to make the beginning of the caliphate work.

And so they were quite happy when radical Islam, Muslim Brotherhood, took over Egypt through Morsi. But when the Egyptian people, a third of the population, basically—30 million or so of the 90 million there in the nation of Egypt—rose up together, yes, you had Muslims marching with Christians.