

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1405

Congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the 90th anniversary of its
declaration of independence.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 31, 2008

Mr. SHIMKUS (for himself, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. GALLEGLY, and Mr. WEXLER)
submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee
on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the 90th
anniversary of its declaration of independence.

Whereas on November 18, 1918, in the City of Riga, the
members of the People's Council proclaimed Latvia a
free, democratic, and sovereign nation;

Whereas on July 24, 1922, the United States formally recog-
nized Latvia as an independent and sovereign nation;

Whereas Latvia existed for 21 years as an independent and
sovereign nation and a fully recognized member of the
League of Nations;

Whereas Latvia maintained friendly and stable relations with
its neighbors, including the Soviet Union, during its inde-
pendence, without any border disputes;

Whereas Latvia concluded several peace treaties and protocols with the Soviet Union, including a peace treaty signed on August 11, 1920, under which the “Soviet Union unreservedly recognize[d] the independence and sovereignty of the Latvian State and forever renounce[d] all sovereign rights . . . over the Latvian people and territory”;

Whereas despite friendly and mutually productive relations between Latvia and the Soviet Union, on August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which contained a secret protocol assigning Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence;

Whereas under the cover of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, on June 17, 1940, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in violation of preexisting peace treaties;

Whereas the Soviet Union imposed upon the people of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania a communist political system that stifled civil dissent, free political expression, and basic human rights;

Whereas the United States never recognized this illegal and forcible occupation, and successive American presidents maintained continuous diplomatic relations with these countries throughout the Soviet occupation, never accepting them to be “Soviet Republics”;

Whereas during the 50 years of Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, Congress strongly, consistently, and on a bipartisan basis supported a policy of legal nonrecognition;

Whereas in 1953, the congressionally established Kersten Commission investigated the incorporation of Latvia, Es-

tonia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union and determined that the Soviet Union had illegally and forcibly occupied and annexed the Baltic countries;

Whereas in 1982, and for the next 9 years until the Baltic countries regained their independence, Congress annually adopted a Baltic Freedom Day resolution denouncing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and appealing for the freedom of the Baltic countries;

Whereas in 1991, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania regained their de facto independence and were quickly recognized by the United States and by almost every other country in the world, including the Soviet Union;

Whereas in 1998, the United States and the 3 Baltic nations signed the United States-Baltic Charter of Partnership, an expression of the importance of the Baltic Sea region to United States interests;

Whereas the 109th Congress resolved in S. Con. Res. 35 and H. Res. 28 that “it is the sense of Congress that the Government of the Russian Federation should issue a clear and unambiguous statement of admission and condemnation of the illegal occupation and annexation by the Soviet Union from 1940 to 1991 of the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the consequences of which will be a significant increase in good will among the affected people”;

Whereas Latvia has successfully developed as a free and democratic country, ensured the rule of law, and developed a free market economy;

Whereas the Government of Latvia has constantly pursued a course of integration into the community of free and democratic nations, becoming a full and responsible mem-

ber of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

Whereas the people of Latvia cherish the principles of political freedom, human rights, and independence; and

Whereas Latvia is a strong and loyal ally of the United States, and the people of Latvia share common values with the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) congratulates the people of Latvia on the
3 occasion of the 90th anniversary of that country's
4 November 18, 1918, declaration of independence;

5 (2) commends the Government of Latvia for its
6 success in implementing political and economic re-
7 forms, for establishing political, religious, and eco-
8 nomic freedom, and for its strong commitment to
9 human and civil rights; and

10 (3) recognizes the common goals and shared
11 values of the people of Latvia, Estonia, and Lith-
12 uania, the close and friendly relations and ties of the
13 3 Baltic countries with one another, and their tragic
14 history in the last century under the Nazi and Soviet
15 occupations.

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