

ELECTING CERTAIN MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1035

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—Mr. Berman, Chairman.

(2) COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.—Mr. Sires.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO MEMBER STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 854) expressing gratitude to all of the member states of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service (ITS) on ratifying the May 2006 Agreement to amend the 1955 Bonn Accords granting open access to vast Holocaust and other World War II related archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 854

Whereas for the past 62 years, until their ultimate release on November 28, 2007, the International Tracing Service (“ITS”) archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany remained the largest closed Holocaust-era archives in the world;

Whereas while Holocaust survivors and their descendants have had limited access to individual records at Bad Arolsen, reports suggest that they faced long delays, incomplete information, and even unresponsiveness;

Whereas until the archives’ recent release, the materials remained inaccessible to researchers and research institutions;

Whereas the 1955 Bonn Accords established an International Commission of 11 member countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States) responsible for overseeing the administration of the ITS Holocaust archives which contain 17,500,000 individual names and 50,000,000 documents;

Whereas the new International Committee of the Red Cross (“ICRC”) and the Director of the ITS, who is an ICRC employee, oversee the daily operations of the ITS and report to the Commission at its annual meetings;

Whereas the new ICRC leadership at the ITS should be commended for their commitment to providing expedited and comprehensive responses to Holocaust survivor requests for information, and for their efforts to complete the digitization of all archives as soon as possible;

Whereas since the inception of the ITS, the German government has financed its operations;

Whereas beginning in the late 1990s, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (“Holocaust Museum”), Holocaust survivor organizations, and others began exerting pressure on International Commission members to allow unfettered access to the ITS archives;

Whereas following years of delay, in May 2006 in Luxemburg, the International Commission of the ITS agreed upon amendments to the Bonn Accords which would grant researchers access to the archives and would allow each Commission member country to receive a digitized copy of the archives and make the copy available to researchers under their own country’s respective archival and privacy laws and practices;

Whereas the first 3 Commission member countries to ratify the amendments to the Bonn Accords were the United States, Israel, and Poland, all 3 home to hundreds of thousands of survivors of Nazi brutality;

Whereas the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has worked to ensure the timely release of the Bad Arolsen archives to survivors, researchers, and the public;

Whereas the United States Department of State engaged in diplomatic efforts with other Commission member countries to provide open access to the archives;

Whereas the United States House of Representatives unanimously passed H. Res. 240 on April 25, 2007 and the United States Senate passed S. Res. 141 on May 1, 2007, urging all member countries of the International Commission of the ITS who have yet to ratify the May 2006 Amendments to the 1955 Bonn Accords Treaty, to expedite the ratification process to allow for open access to the Holocaust archives located at Bad Arolsen, Germany;

Whereas on May 15, 2007, the International Commission voted in favor of a United States proposal to allow a transfer of a digital copy of archived materials to any of the 11 member States that have adopted the May 2006 amendments to the Bonn Accords; thereafter, transfer of materials to both the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority in Israel, was initiated;

Whereas while it is not possible to provide meaningful compensation to Holocaust survivors for the pain, suffering and loss of life they have experienced, it is a moral and justifiable imperative for Holocaust survivors and their families to be offered expedited open access to these archives;

Whereas with respect to the release of the materials, time is of the essence in order for Holocaust researchers to access the archives while Holocaust survivor eyewitnesses to the horrific atrocities of Nazi Germany are still alive;

Whereas opening the historic record is a vital contribution to the world’s collective memory and understanding of the Holocaust and to ensure that unchecked anti-Semitism and complete disrespect for the value of human life, including the crimes committed against non-Jewish victims which made such horrors possible, is never again permitted to take hold;

Whereas despite overwhelming international recognition of the unconscionable horrors of the Holocaust and its devastating impact on World Jewry, there has been a sharp increase in global anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial in recent years; and

Whereas it is critical that the international community continue to heed the lessons of the Holocaust, one of the darkest periods in the history of humankind, and take immediate and decisive measures to

combat the scourge of anti-Semitism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its appreciation to all countries that ratified the amendments to the Bonn Accords allowing for open access to the Holocaust Archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany;

(2) congratulates the dedication, commitment, and collaborative efforts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Department of State, and the International Committee of the Red Cross to open the archives;

(3) encourages the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the International Committee of the Red Cross to act with all possible urgency to create appropriate conditions to ensure survivors, their families, and researchers have direct access to the archives, and are offered effective assistance in navigating and interpreting these archives;

(4) remembers and pays tribute to the murder of 6,000,000 innocent Jews and more than 5,000,000 other innocent victims during the Holocaust committed by Nazi perpetrators and their collaborators; and

(5) must remain vigilant in combating global anti-Semitism, intolerance, and bigotry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CROWLEY. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to support this resolution which recognizes the long overdue ratification of an international agreement that will open access to records of the Holocaust and Nazi war crimes. And I would like to commend my good friend and distinguished colleague, Alcee Hastings of Florida, for introducing this measure before us today.

On January 27, designated by the United Nations as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the world paused to honor the victims of this terrible crime and to vow never again to allow such atrocities to happen.

For many victims and relatives of the Holocaust, 2008 may provide the first opportunity to obtain access to information about their own treatment as well as the fate of their loved ones in Nazi death camps.

In 1955, 11 member countries signed the Bonn Accords to establish an International Commission responsible for overseeing the administration by the

International Tracing Service of Holocaust archives.

The service is based in Bad Arolsen, Germany, and is directed by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

□ 1400

Madam Speaker, the archive holds over 85,000 feet of records, listing victims' names, transport details, medical records, and in some cases the only history of those who died at the hands of the Nazis. The records contain over 50 million reference cards for over 17.5 million people.

For over 60 years, ITS has limited access to its records to survivors of Nazi crimes and their descendants. Aging Holocaust survivors have criticized ITS for delayed responses or a complete failure to provide them with any information. By 2006 ITS had recorded a backlog of over 400,000 requests.

Following years of delay, the 11 parties to the Bonn Accords Treaty signed amendments in May 2006 to ensure the records were fully opened to survivors as well as researchers. This process was to be enhanced by the distribution of digitized records to member countries.

While the United States, Israel, Poland, and the Netherlands were the first signatories to ratify the amendments, Holocaust survivors were forced to wait still longer until the remaining countries completed their ratification procedures. In April 2007, this House passed H. Res. 240 calling on the remaining seven countries to ratify the amendments by the May 2007 deadline.

The resolution before us today expresses appreciation to all member countries for having ratified the amendments, allowing survivors the opportunity to find peace in the material contained in these archives. The resolution highlights the key roles played by the United States Holocaust Museum, the Department of State, and the International Community of the Red Cross in achieving this outcome. And it calls on the Holocaust Museum and the Red Cross to create the necessary conditions by which survivors and their families can promptly obtain long-sought-after information regarding Holocaust-era atrocities. While the ratification of these amendments is tragically too late for many victims, the hope is that it provides answers for many others.

I support this resolution, Madam Speaker, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

With that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H. Res. 854 on the opening of Bad Arolsen Holocaust archives. I would like to thank the author of this resolution, Congressman HASTINGS, as well as Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN, Congressman WEXLER, and Congressman KIRK, who have fought for opening access to the Holocaust archives in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

The archives there have been the largest closed Holocaust-era collection of documents in the world, containing millions of records about the fates of over 17 million victims of Nazi Germany. The archive became open to the public in November of last year after 11 countries of its governing body ratified the agreement that allowed the collection to become open and for those documents to be transferred to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem in Israel.

Open access to these records will provide many Holocaust survivors and their families with the information about their loved ones. Additionally, it will present researchers and scholars with materials necessary to enhance the public knowledge about the Holocaust.

Now that the archive is open and the U.S. Holocaust Museum is able to answer requests, it is very important that the survivors and their family members are aware of these services and are able to immediately submit requests for information about their loved ones.

In conclusion, I urge Members from both sides of the aisle to support H. Res. 854.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, at this time I wish to yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I thank my very good friend and cosponsor of this resolution, Representative CROWLEY, for the time.

Madam Speaker, this resolution on the floor is the culmination of long-standing efforts I have made with Representative WEXLER, who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe; Representative ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative MARK KIRK; and many others to open the largest closed Holocaust-era archive in the world and release critical Holocaust records.

As I stand today in support of a resolution making this significant event in Holocaust history, I cannot help but reflect on the longstanding life and career of a true champion of human rights and Holocaust issues, the former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the first and only Holocaust survivor Member of Congress, Representative Tom Lantos.

These archives will forever contribute to the world's collective memory of the Holocaust atrocities experienced and the immense bravery exhibited by Representative Lantos and his wife and other survivors who are no longer with us today.

The opening of the Bad Arolsen archives will enable Holocaust survivors, their descendants, and future generations of researchers and the public access to some 50 million records on the fates of 17.5 million individual victims of Nazi brutality.

In our world today, filled with growing international intolerance, includ-

ing anti-Semitism, hate, racial bigotry, xenophobia, and religious discrimination, it could not be more critical for us to ensure unfettered access to these Holocaust archives. The ultimate release of these documents serves to further delegitimize world leaders and other extremist factions who spew anti-Semitic propaganda and downplay or deny the significance of the Holocaust.

I am thankful for the collaborative efforts and leadership shown by the Holocaust Memorial Museum, new leadership of the International Committee of the Red Cross at the International Tracing Service, the State Department, survivor groups, and this body of Congress to pressure the member states of the ITS to throw open the doors of these archives.

Our success sends a robust message to the world that the horrors of the Holocaust shall forever remain at the forefront of our collective and individual memories. The ultimate release of these archives proves that the world recognizes the moral importance of combating the scourge of modern-day anti-Semitism.

May we never forget the atrocities of the Holocaust. May this historic event serve as a constant reminder to the world of what happens when humanity is silenced and evil permitted to wage war on the innocent.

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. I want to thank the gentleman, the sponsor from Florida of this legislation, Mr. HASTINGS, for his comments.

Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Las Vegas, Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. I want to return the compliment to the gentleman from New York. This is an issue that has been in the forefront of his mind and actions since he came to Congress. And I thank the sponsor of the legislation, Mr. HASTINGS, for bringing it to us today.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution and in the hope that this archive will help the world remember the crimes committed in the Holocaust and ease the pain of those families who lost loved ones in the Holocaust but to this day have no idea what happened to their families and their family members.

We, unfortunately, find ourselves in an age where the absurdity of the Holocaust denial is on the rise, when the leader of Iran seeks to recreate Hitler's acts, and when anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are finding fertile ground all over the Internet.

At the meeting of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue last October in Las Vegas, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, laid out for us the troubling resurgence of global anti-Semitism, not only in Europe and in the Middle

East but even here at home. Conspiracy theories flourish, claiming Jews control the media and the banking industry and Jewish lobbies have too much power, the same old canards that have existed for all too long. Mr. Foxman reminded us that these words and theories, often serious anti-Semitism disguised as “anti-Zionism,” are too often used by terrorists and hate groups to justify their actions.

I’m sorry to say in a newspaper article in the Rebel Yell at my alma mater, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, just this week there was a horrible anti-Semitic and anti-Israel screed written by a misinformed student that has created shock waves across the Las Vegas community.

As chairman of the Transatlantic Dialogue, I believe that I speak for all TLD members when I say how grateful we are to our friends across the Atlantic who have worked so hard to open these archives.

It is my hope, as this resolution states, opening the historic record will be a “vital contribution to the world’s collective memory and understanding of the Holocaust.” We must do everything we can to ensure that nothing like the Holocaust ever happens again, not in Europe, not in the Middle East, not in Africa, not anywhere.

And I thank the gentleman again.

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I appreciate the opportunity.

Madam Speaker, opening these historical records on the Holocaust at this time, I think, is absolutely vital for the debate that is going on in the world today, when, ironically, you have a head of a state like President Ahmadinejad in Iran who simultaneously manages to say that the Holocaust never occurred and that we should have another Holocaust and that the Jewish people should be erased, that Jerusalem and Israel should be erased from the map. When you have the kinds of assertions that we read about, it is vital that those records be discussed by scholars, be surveyed by the families of those who lost loved ones, and that the debate be reengaged.

And the reason I say this is this weekend at Chapman University they had a program with 280 Holocaust survivors who had been interviewed by students and we heard the students’ words about what they had learned about the Holocaust.

My father was present at that program, and he was also present and took photographs at Dachau when that camp was liberated and has since that time had to repeatedly engage those who deny the evidence of those eye-witnesses to history who recorded what had happened there. The words that he has written about this and the speeches

that he has given in debate record the four ovens with the bodies stacked like cordwood next to the ovens and in the ovens and the thousands of human beings packed into railcars where they were left to starve to death. The fact that people today still engage us in this argument is why these archives must be turned over to researchers. As he said, when his generation is dead, the last eye-witnesses to this inhumanity will be gone and the Ahmadinejads and those who deny what happened in history will have a chance to try to repeat history.

One other point: the evidence uncovered here, the evidence exposed here, will help us better defend the Jewish people and to explain to some of our colleagues and to the world why it is the United States understands why the threats from people like Ahmadinejad are so dangerous.

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Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank the gentleman from California for his contribution to the debate today. I think his remarks are right on target.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding, but also for his great leadership on this and so many issues that affect the Jewish community and that affect justice.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 854 to congratulate the member states of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service for opening the Holocaust archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

For 62 years after the end of the Second World War, the Holocaust archives located in Bad Arolsen remain the largest closed World War II era archives in the world. While Holocaust survivors and their families could request access to individual records, many reported facing significant delays, and these important archives remained inaccessible to researchers.

Fortunately, that has all changed. Each of the 11 member countries of the International Commission of the International Tracing Services has ratified the May 2006 amendments to the Bonn Accords, opening these treasured archives to researchers, including those at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Opening the historic record is a vital contribution to the world’s collective memory and understanding of the Holocaust. Greater understanding of the materials contained in the Bad Arolsen archives will help ensure that unchecked anti-Semitism is not allowed to take hold in the world again.

Each year, the Congress recognizes Holocaust Remembrance Day, and I am pleased that today we are continuing our efforts to “never forget.”

My district, the Ninth Congressional District of Illinois, is home to the larg-

est concentration of survivors in the State of Illinois and perhaps the country, and the opening of the Bad Arolsen Archive holds deep meaning for those individuals in the entire community. Perhaps the records located there will help these families fill in the blanks of their lives that were shattered by Nazi Germany.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H. Res. 854.

I urge all of my colleagues to lend it their support.

PERMISSION TO ADD MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF
H. RES. 854

Mr. MANZULLO. I would ask unanimous consent to add the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) as a cosponsor to this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That would be the prerogative of the primary sponsor through the hopper.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 854, which commends all countries that worked to ratify the amendments to the Bonn Accords to permit open access to the Holocaust Archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

I want to thank my colleague from Florida, Congressman HASTINGS, for bringing this important resolution to the Floor.

For the last 62 years, records relating to more than 17 million Holocaust victims have been sealed inside the archives at Bad Arolsen, Germany—the largest WWII-era archives in the world. To carry forward the process of rectifying past wrongdoing and to prevent subsequent humanitarian crimes, it is critical that we throw open the doors of dark repositories like Bad Arolsen and allow the light of accountability to shine in.

To open the archives at Bad Arolsen, all 11 members of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service (ITS) were required to ratify the May 2006 amendments to the 1955 Bonn Accords. On November 28, 2007, the final state ratified the amendments, so that Holocaust survivors, their descendants, researchers, and the general public are finally allowed full access to the records housed at the facility.

At a time when anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial persist around the world, a vote for this resolution will serve as an indictment of secretive government practices that facilitated vast crimes, and it will reaffirm that the atrocities experienced by Holocaust victims will be remembered and mourned in perpetuity.

I commend Mr. HASTINGS for his leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing gratitude to our international partners for ratifying the treaty to release Holocaust records and in congratulating the United States Holocaust Museum, the U.S. Department of State, and the International Red Commission of the Red Cross for their efforts to open the archives.

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 854, highlighting the decision made by the member states of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service, ITS, to finally grant access to the vast Holocaust archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

The recent decision to fully open the archives closed a frustrating chapter for Holocaust survivors whose requests for information, which numbered in the hundreds of thousands, were left unanswered.

As many of my colleagues are aware, for 63 years the most extensive collection of files documenting the horrors of the Holocaust were extensively closed to survivors, heirs, researchers and family members seeking to find out the true fate of their loved ones or to document the horrific atrocities committed by the Nazis.

The Bad Arolsen archives, with its 50 million documents chronicling the fate of over 17 million victims of the Holocaust, is a vital resource for the remaining Holocaust survivors and their families who are struggling to bring closure to this painful chapter of history.

Many Holocaust survivors have died without knowing the details of a family member's deportation, incarceration, or death. The opening of the Bad Arolsen archives will now enable survivors as well as second and third generation survivors to gain access to vital information about their family history.

There are many individuals and organizations that deserve credit for their efforts in fully opening Bad Arolsen. In Congress there was a strong bipartisan effort to raise awareness about the world's largest Holocaust archive that was for all intents and purposes closed. To that, I would like to thank my colleague from south Florida, Congressman ALCEE HASTINGS, for his tireless work on this issue, as well as the many sponsors of this resolution, many of whom were also involved in efforts to reach out to the parliaments of the member states of the International Commission of the ITS to ensure the timely ratification of the amendments to the Bonn Accords.

Now that this vital archive has been made public, information unjustly denied to survivors and their families for the past 63 years can be brought to light. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. MANZULLO. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, at this time, we have no further speakers on the subject, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 854, 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.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Expressing gratitude to all of the member states of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service on ratifying the May 2006 Agreement to amend the 1955 Bonn Accords granting access to vast Holocaust and other World War II related archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMEMORATING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to

the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 290) commemorating the 175th anniversary of the special relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Thailand, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 290

Whereas the United States will celebrate the 175th anniversary of its relationship with the Kingdom of Thailand since the signing of the original Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1833 during President Andrew Jackson's administration and the reign of King Rama III;

Whereas the Kingdom of Thailand was the United States' first treaty ally in the Asia-Pacific region and remains a steadfast friend with the Thai and American people sharing the values of freedom, democracy, and liberty;

Whereas Thailand was designated as a major non-NATO ally in December 2003, which improved the security of both nations, particularly through joint counterterrorism efforts;

Whereas for more than a quarter century Thailand has been the host country of Cobra Gold, the United States Pacific Command's annual multinational military training exercise designed to ensure regional peace and promote regional security cooperation;

Whereas the United States and Thailand launched joint relief operations in the wake of the tragic 2004 tsunami from Utapao, Thailand, thus strengthening the overall capacity of the forces involved in providing relief and setting the model for effective humanitarian operations throughout the entire region affected by the deadly tsunami;

Whereas Thailand is a key partner of the United States in Southeast Asia and has supported closer relations between the United States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations ("ASEAN");

Whereas Congress passed H. Con. Res. 409 in 2006 commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Ascension to the Throne of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand;

Whereas on December 5, 2007, the people of Thailand celebrated the 80th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest serving monarch, who is loved and respected by Thai for his lifelong dedication to the social and economic development of the Thai people;

Whereas on December 23, 2007, the Royal Thai Government held nationwide parliamentary elections that should help pave the way for a successful return of stable democracy to Thailand;

Whereas approximately 500,000 Americans of Thai descent are living in the United States and share in the mutual pursuit of the American Dream;

Whereas Thailand is America's 20th largest trading partner with bilateral trade totaling \$30,600,000,000 per year; and

Whereas the bonds of friendship and mutual respect between the United States and Thailand are strong: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) commemorates the 175th anniversary of United States and Thailand relations;

(2) offers its sincere congratulations to the Kingdom of Thailand and the Thai people for their democratic, free, and fair election;

(3) commemorates the 80th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand and offers its sincere congratulations and best wishes for the continued prosperity of the Kingdom of Thailand; and

(4) looks forward to continued, enduring ties of friendship between the Thai and American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CROWLEY. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, as the lead Democratic sponsor of this legislation, I want to thank my friend and distinguished colleague from Illinois, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, Mr. Don Manzullo, for introducing this resolution before us today.

In 1833, 2 years before the publication of Alexis de Tocqueville's "Democracy in America" and 3 years before the Battle of the Alamo, the United States and Kingdom of Thailand signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, making the Kingdom of Thailand the United States' first treaty ally in the Asia-Pacific region.

Now, 175 years later, Thailand remains our oldest Asia-Pacific ally.

During this time, the relationship between our two countries has strengthened as it has changed with the times, and the friendship between our two peoples has grown deep and enduring.

Our military partnership, which began when King Mongkut offered combat elephants to President Lincoln during the Civil War, is now one of the closest in Asia.

Thai soldiers fought alongside U.S. military personnel in World War I, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Today, Thailand is one of only a handful of our major non-NATO allies and is a crucial partner in our efforts to combat international terrorism. Thailand is also the host country of Cobra Gold, U.S. Pacific Command's annual multinational military training exercise.

Our economic relationship is similarly robust, with bilateral trade topping \$30 billion annually.

On the political front, traditionally Thailand has been an anchor of stability and democracy in the volatile region of Southeast Asia. While it has been tested repeatedly by its own political upheavals, the Thai people have consistently responded by renewing their dedication to democracy.

The country has had 18 coup attempts since World War II, and Thailand's December elections only recently ended the latest coup government, which had come to power in 2006.