

continue to stand with the Nicaraguan people in their efforts to restore democracy in their country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me in supporting the passage of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1630

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 754, 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.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENCOURAGING REUNIONS OF DIVIDED KOREAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 410) encouraging reunions of divided Korean-American families, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 410

Whereas the Korean Peninsula, with the Republic of Korea (in this resolution referred to as "South Korea") in the South and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (in this resolution referred to as "North Korea") in the North, remains divided following the signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953;

Whereas the division of the Korean Peninsula separated more than 10,000,000 Korean family members, including some who are now citizens of the United States;

Whereas there have been 21 rounds of family reunions between South Koreans and North Koreans along the border since 2000;

Whereas Congress signaled its support for family reunions between United States citizens and their relatives in North Korea in section 1265 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 28, 2008;

Whereas most of the population of divided family members in the United States, initially estimated at 100,000 in 2001, has significantly dwindled as many of the individuals have passed away;

Whereas the summit between North Korea and South Korea on April 27, 2018, has prioritized family reunions;

Whereas the United States and North Korea have engaged in talks during 2 historic summits in June 2018 in Singapore and February 2019 in Hanoi; and

Whereas many Korean Americans are waiting for a chance to meet their relatives in North Korea for the first time in more than 60 years: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls on the United States and North Korea to begin the process of reuniting Korean-American divided family members with their immediate relatives through ways such as—

(A) identifying divided families in the United States and North Korea who are will-

ing and able to participate in a pilot program for family reunions;

(B) finding matches for members of such families through organizations such as the Red Cross; and

(C) working with the Government of South Korea to include American citizens in inter-Korean video reunions;

(2) reconfirms the institution of family as inalienable and, accordingly, urges the restoration of contact between divided families physically, literarily, or virtually; and

(3) calls on the United States and North Korea to pursue reunions as a humanitarian priority of immediate concern.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 410.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative BASS for sponsoring this resolution, which draws attention to a pressing humanitarian issue affecting the Korean-American community.

This June will mark 70 years since the beginning of the Korean war, which separated 10 million Koreans from their immediate family members. Since 1985, family reunions carried out between the North and the South briefly reunited more than 20,000 family members, but there are still thousands more who have brothers, sisters, or parents who have been separated for decades.

It must be a humanitarian priority for the United States to facilitate reunions for these separated families. Considering the many years that have passed, many of these families are older, and if we don't act soon, they may never see their loved ones again.

The measure before us underscores the long history of U.S. support for family reunification between Korean Americans and their relatives still in North Korea. It outlines different ways that North Korea and the United States can respectively take action, including a pilot program for family reunions, a family registry supported by the Red Cross and other organizations, and the use of technology to allow reunions for those who might not be physically able to travel for in-person reunions.

This is a good, commonsense resolution reiterating our country's commitment to reuniting families split by the Korean war. I support it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative BASS' res-

olution, and I want to congratulate her for doing this.

This resolution reaffirms the House's commitment to support our Korean-American families seeking to reunite with relatives who are trapped in North Korea. This resolution rightly observes that family reunification is a humanitarian priority.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the author of this important resolution and the chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H. Res. 410. The purpose of this resolution is to encourage reunions of divided Korean-American families.

Last year, I had the opportunity to meet Kyung Joo Lee, a 90-year-old Korean-American man from Virginia. Mr. Lee has not seen his three older brothers and sisters since he fled North Korea more than 70 years ago, but he prays for them daily. He has no idea if they are even still alive. Tears streamed down his face during that meeting as he held my hands and urged me to do what I can to help Korean families to be reunited.

This resolution originated at a town-hall meeting where a group of constituents called this issue to my attention. As I learned more about these aging Korean Americans who just want to be able to see their siblings and parents, I knew that we had to do all that we could do to raise this issue.

The division of the Korean Peninsula into South Korea and North Korea separated thousands of Koreans from family members. Many Korean Americans have not seen or communicated with family members in more than 60 years. Their children have grown up here in America without knowing what their cousins, aunts, or uncles even look like.

Over the years, South Korea and North Korea have arranged for selected groups to visit each other, but these reunions have been dependent on the political situation between the countries. Since 2000, there have been at least 20 rounds of family reunions, but none have included Korean Americans.

Meanwhile, the situation is now growing more urgent as many who have been separated are getting older. Most are in their late eighties or nineties. That is why I introduced this resolution that calls on the United States and North Korea to begin the process of reuniting Korean-American divided family members with their immediate relatives.

Today, I am proud to stand with my colleagues in getting one step closer to reunifying Mr. Lee and so many others with their families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this resolution that calls on the

United States and North Korea to pursue reunions as a humanitarian priority of immediate concern. I also urge them to support H.R. 1771, the Divided Families Reunification Act, introduced by my colleague Representative GRACE MENG, that takes up the same issue.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to support Representative BASS' resolution to stand with Korean Americans seeking to reunite with family members stranded inside North Korea.

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, most of us can't imagine the pain of going decades without knowing if your relatives are alive or dead. That is the daily struggle for thousands of families torn apart by the Korean war.

Mr. Speaker, this measure underscores our support for reuniting these families, bringing solace and closure to this deep wound left by the war. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this resolution, 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 Jersey (Mr. SIRES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 410, 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. SIRES. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

EASTERN EUROPEAN SECURITY ACT

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2444) to authorize the Secretary of State to make direct loans under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2444

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Eastern European Security Act".

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that it is in the national security interest of the United States to—

(1) deter aggression against North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies by Russia or any other adversary;

(2) assist NATO allies in acquiring and deploying modern, NATO interoperable military equipment and reducing their dependence on Russian or former Soviet-era defense articles;

(3) ensure that NATO allies meet alliance defense commitments, including through adequate investments in national defense;

(4) supplement existing grant assistance to key allies through foreign military financing loans, at rates competitive with those already available on commercial markets, to purchase NATO-interoperable military equipment; and

(5) work to maintain and strengthen the democratic institutions and practices of all NATO allies, in accordance with the goals of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

SEC. 3. FOREIGN MILITARY LOAN AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning in fiscal year 2021, subject to the notification requirements under subsection (b) and to the availability of appropriations, the President, acting through the Secretary of State, is authorized—

(1) to make direct loans under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763) to NATO member countries that joined the alliance after March 1, 1999, notwithstanding the minimum interest rate required by subsection (c)(1) of such section; and

(2) to charge fees for such loans under paragraph (1), which shall be collected from borrowers in accordance with section 502(7) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and which may be used to cover the costs of such loans as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(b) NOTIFICATION.—A loan may not be made under the authority provided by subsection (a) unless the Secretary of State submits to the appropriate congressional committees a certification, not fewer than fifteen days before entering into an agreement to make such loan, that—

(1) the recipient country is making demonstrable progress toward meeting its defense spending commitments in accordance with the 2014 NATO Wales Summit Declaration; and

(2) the government of such recipient country is respecting that country's constitution and upholds democratic values such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the rule of law, and the rights of religious minorities.

(c) REPAYMENT.—A loan made under the authority provided by subsection (a) shall be repaid in not more than 12 years, but may include a grace period of up to one year on the repayment of the principal.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this Act, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2444.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2444, the Eastern European Security Act.

I want to thank Ranking Member MCCAUL for working on this excellent measure that mirrors Chairman ELIOT ENGEL's bill, the NATO Defense Financing Act, in pursuit of a stronger transatlantic partnership.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and its European allies have, together, built the most successful alliance in the history of the world. The NATO alliance is strengthened by our shared values, mutual trust, ability to work together, and, if necessary, to fight together.

It is crucial that NATO is ready and able to defend against external threats and engage in combat. For that to happen, all of our allies must be able to work together seamlessly. But right now, some of our Eastern European allies still rely on Russian or old Soviet era equipment. Modernizing these military forces is a national security imperative.

The Eastern European Security Act puts in place direct loans to our security partners so they can update their military equipment to better address their shifting and complex security needs. As adversaries like Russia continue to test our alliance's defenses and cohesion, these loans would be a meaningful step towards ensuring that we are ready and able to face evolving threats on the horizon.

These loans will complement, not replace, our ongoing U.S. security assistance effort to Europe and will be conditioned upon our allies upholding their own constitutions and the democratic values of the alliance.

The United States must not only support the militaries of our NATO allies, but also safeguard the continued strength of the democratic values upon which the alliance is built. I hope all Members will join me in approving this measure that better supports our European allies and advances the United States' national security interests.

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

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

I rise today in support of the Eastern European Security Act, introduced by the lead Republican of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. MICHAEL MCCAUL. This bipartisan bill supports our NATO allies and American jobs and is the best way to secure the NATO alliance.

The NATO alliance is essential to our national security, but it is only as strong as its most vulnerable members. Some newer member countries with smaller economies want to purchase American military hardware, but such purchases are often out of reach. As a result, these partner nations are forced to purchase less expensive and, often, less reliable military equipment from other allies or even our strategic competitors, Russia and China. Such purchases threaten America's security as well as the security of the alliance.