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S. RES. 759

Recognizing the importance of the alliance between the United States and the Baltic States and expressing support for that alliance, including for the Baltic Security Initiative, amidst foreign aggression.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 10, 2024

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of the alliance between the United States and the Baltic States and expressing support for that alliance, including for the Baltic Security Initiative, amidst foreign aggression.

Whereas the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (referred to in this preamble as “the Baltic States”) first declared independence in 1918, with the United States establishing diplomatic relations with the Baltic States on July 28, 1922, leading to a strong and unbroken partnership for more than a century;

Whereas the United States never recognized the occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union after World War

II and maintained continuous diplomatic relations with the Baltic States;

Whereas, in August 1989, approximately 2,000,000 people joined hands in the Baltic States to form a 373-mile human chain known as the “Baltic Chain of Freedom”;

Whereas Lithuania became the first occupied Soviet republic to declare the restoration of independence on March 11, 1990, a move followed by Latvia on May 4, 1990, and Estonia on August 20, 1991;

Whereas, in January 1991, Soviet military forces tried unsuccessfully to quash the growing independence restoration movements of the Baltic States, leading to approximately 14 Lithuanian deaths, as well as 6 Latvian deaths and many injuries;

Whereas, in February and March 1991, the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian people voted overwhelmingly for independence through referendums paving the path for democracy and freedom and the fall of the Soviet Union;

Whereas, since the restoration of independence, the Baltic States have served as models of democratic governance that share values with the United States, including strong institutions, respect for civil liberties and the rule of law, and modern market economies;

Whereas the Baltic States continue to demonstrate their enduring commitment to democratic values, peace, and security through their membership and active participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (referred to in this preamble as “NATO”), the European Union, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;

Whereas the Baltic States have been loyal NATO allies and demonstrated their commitment to transatlantic security by exceeding the NATO defense spending goal of not less than 2 percent of gross domestic product per year;

Whereas, since the 2022 Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Baltic States have demonstrated significant support for Ukraine by providing between 1.3 and 1.6 percent of their gross domestic product in military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine and welcoming more than 130,000 Ukrainian refugees;

Whereas the Baltic States have faced Russian intimidation, espionage, and cyberattacks since the restoration of independence, and have created total defense strategies to counter aggression by the Russian Federation;

Whereas the Russian Federation continues to pursue an aggressive disinformation campaign against the Baltic States, including intimidation of Western civilians and troops stationed in Europe and abroad through hacking, propaganda, and other cyberattacks, and has increased air provocations across the Baltic States, including disruptions of civilian air traffic;

Whereas the unilateral removal of buoys on the Narva River on the Estonian-Russian border in May 2024 by the Russian Federation was another attempt to provoke a NATO ally and illustrates disregard for sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation;

Whereas the Republic of Belarus has embraced the aggression of the Russian Federation by hosting its tactical nuclear weapons and Wagner Group mercenaries, and by inciting insecurity at its border with Lithuania and Poland by pushing migrants over the border;

Whereas Lithuania has faced severe economic and diplomatic coercion from the People’s Republic of China after the establishment of a trade relationship with Taiwan;

Whereas the presence of the United States Armed Forces in the Baltic States and Poland ensures regional security and complements NATO efforts to strengthen its deterrence and defense posture within the eastern flank of NATO, including an Enhanced Forward Presence posture in the Baltic States, which host multinational NATO battlegroups; and

Whereas dedicated funding for the Baltic Security Initiative since fiscal year 2021 has helped strengthen United States security cooperation with the Baltic States as well as enhance the national deterrent capabilities of the Baltic States and further develop NATO integration and interoperability: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) reaffirms the commitment of the United
3 States to the security of Estonia, Latvia, and Lith-
4 uania through the enduring transatlantic participa-
5 tion of the United States in the North Atlantic
6 Treaty Organization alliance;

7 (2) supports continued security assistance for
8 Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, including through
9 the Baltic Security Initiative, to further strengthen
10 transatlantic ties; and

11 (3) recognizes the contribution of the Estonian,
12 Latvian, and Lithuanian people to transatlantic se-

- 1 security and defense while facing constant aggression
- 2 by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus,
- 3 and the People's Republic of China.

