

The stakes are higher than which parties and candidates get in Azerbaijan's parliament. Over the last 18 months, multi-colored" revolutions took place in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. All were sparked by elections perceived by many voters in those countries as unfair, a view shared by OSCE observer missions. If Azerbaijan's election this November does not make major improvements over October 2003, there is a real chance of confrontation again, with unpredictable consequences.

I am deeply convinced that the stability we all seek in Azerbaijan is only possible through democracy. For that reason, the November election must be free and fair. Whoever wins, it is essential that Azerbaijan's citizens and the international community see the outcome as legitimate.

A key ingredient of fair elections is impartial election commissions. At this point, there are no such bodies in Azerbaijan. Since 2003, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, along with the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, have consistently urged that Azerbaijan's election commissions, which are reliably pro-government, be reconfigured so as to "enjoy public confidence."

In fact, this issue goes back even farther—the Helsinki Commission, which I co-chair, held a hearing in May 2000 on the November 2000 parliamentary election, at which representatives of Azerbaijan's government and opposition testified. At that time as well, the composition of election commissions was one of the most heated points of contention between government and opposition.

Unfortunately, these differences have not been bridged. Azerbaijan's authorities have rejected the recommendations of the OSCE and the Venice Commission. I am extremely disappointed that Azerbaijan's parliament passed an election law on June 29 without incorporating key suggestions by the Venice Commission on election commissions and domestic monitoring.

With the law as it now stands, and with election commissions unchanged, the election will not be able to meet OSCE standards. It is already clear that the OSCE and the Council of Europe will not be able to give a passing grade to the election. Nor will the law enjoy public confidence in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani officials occasionally protest that there is not enough time between now and November to change the law. But lack of time is not the problem. They have had years to implement these recommendations—the problem is that they refuse to do so.

Nevertheless, I believe there is still time for Baku to do what is right. That is why I cosponsored this resolution. I call on my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 326, which will convey to Baku that the U.S. Congress is closely watching and will draw the appropriate conclusions.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend

the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 326, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1545

#### RECOGNIZING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT IN POLAND

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 328) recognizing the 25th anniversary of the workers' strikes in Poland in 1980 that led to the establishment of the Solidarity Trade Union, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 328

Whereas, although Victory in Europe on May 8, 1945, resulted in liberty and democracy in many nations, Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe fell behind the repressive Iron Curtain of the Soviet Union;

Whereas for more than four decades Poland and the nations of the Soviet Bloc struggled under authoritarian rule;

Whereas in June 1979, Pope John Paul II, the former Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, returned to his homeland for the first time and exhorted his countrymen to "be not afraid" of the Communist regime;

Whereas in July and August of 1980, Polish workers in the shipyards of Gdansk and Szczecin went on strike to demand greater political freedom;

Whereas workers' committees, led by electrician Lech Walesa, coordinated these strikes and ensured that the strikes were peaceful and orderly;

Whereas in August 1980, the Communist government of Poland yielded to the 21 demands of the striking workers, including the release of all political prisoners, the broadcasting of religious services on television and radio, and the right to establish independent trade unions;

Whereas the Communist government of Poland introduced martial law in December 1981 in an attempt to block the growing influence of the Solidarity movement;

Whereas the Solidarity Trade Union and its 10,000,000 members became a great social movement committed to promoting fundamental human rights, democracy, and Polish independence from the Soviet Union;

Whereas in February 1989, the Communist government of Poland agreed to conduct talks with the Solidarity Trade Union that led to elections to the National Assembly in June of that year, in which nearly all open seats were won by candidates supported by the Solidarity Trade Union, and led soon after to the election of Poland's first non-Communist Prime Minister in the post-war era, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki;

Whereas the Solidarity movement ended communism in Poland without bloodshed, inspiring other nations under Soviet control to do the same and playing an important role in the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe;

Whereas on November 15, 1989, Lech Walesa gave an historic speech before a joint meeting of the United States Congress with the opening remarks "We the People. . .", which stirred a standing ovation from the Members of Congress;

Whereas on December 9, 1990, Lech Walesa was elected President of Poland;

Whereas the support of the United States and the Polish-American community was essential to the survival and success of the Solidarity movement; and

Whereas a bond of friendship exists between the United States and Poland, which is among the strongest allies of the United States, a contributing partner in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a reliable partner in the Global War on Terrorism, and a key contributor in Iraq and Afghanistan: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 25th anniversary of the workers' strikes in Poland that led to establishment of the Solidarity Trade Union;

(2) honors the struggle and sacrifice of the citizens of Poland who risked their lives to restore democracy to their country and to return Poland to the democratic community of nations; and

(3) offers Poland as a model for other nations struggling to emerge from authoritarian rule and establish a flourishing representative government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which 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 gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 328 recognizes the 25th-year anniversary of the Solidarity movement in Poland and conveys our recognition of Solidarity's important role in setting in motion the liberation of the Eastern and Central European nations and the fall of the Soviet Union. It also honors the struggle and the sacrifice of the people of Poland who risked their lives to restore democracy to their country.

Solidarity began in the shipyards, with Polish workers refusing to submit to the tyranny of the Communist regime in Poland, even after 40 years of oppression. A local electrician, Lech Walesa, coordinated the Solidarity strikes and ensured that the strikes were peaceful and orderly.

After months of strikes, the Communist government yielded to the striking workers' demands, including the release of all political prisoners, the broadcasting of religious services

on television and radio, and the right to establish independent trade unions.

Throughout the 1980s, Solidarity grew to become a national movement, with 10 million members. Lech Walesa went on to become Poland's first President after the fall of the Berlin wall. Solidarity was also critical in establishing the democratic institutions that flourish in Poland today and in creating a catalyst for the spread of freedom in the former Soviet bloc.

I strongly support House Resolution 328, which passed by voice vote during a subcommittee markup and by unanimous consent before the full Committee on International Relations.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution has strong bipartisan support, including the distinguished ranking member of the House Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), my good friend. I urge the passage of House Resolution 328.

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), my distinguished colleague, for her work on this resolution and all human rights issues and issues relating to the advancement of democracy globally.

Mr. Speaker, the single most important event in the second half of the 20th century was the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet hegemony over Central and Eastern Europe.

Many organizations played important roles in this political tectonic shift. Today, we are marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of one of those most important organizations, the Solidarity trade union movement of Poland, and we are paying tribute to the founder of Solidarity, one of the key players in bringing an end to Communism in Poland, the electrician from Gdansk, Lech Walesa.

Mr. Speaker, the worker strikes in Poland in 1980 and the almost spontaneous springing up of the Solidarity union movement was a critical event in the demise of Communism. As union members made their demands for reform known, and as the popularity of Solidarity's leader Lech Walesa soared in Poland and beyond, both Warsaw and Moscow became increasingly apprehensive. Solidarity was seen as a real political alternative to the Communist government. So the Soviet military conducted maneuvers on Poland's borders. The Warsaw government arrested Walesa and other Solidarity leaders. It banned the movement and imposed martial law throughout Poland.

As my colleagues know, Mr. Speaker, Lech Walesa received the Nobel Peace Prize, but he could not leave Poland to accept it. Solidarity continued its ac-

tivities underground. In 1988, a new wave of strikes broke out in Poland, and chief among the strikers' demands was that Solidarity be recognized. Finally, in April of 1989, Solidarity was recognized by the Polish Government. In relatively free elections in June of that year, Solidarity candidates won 99 out of 100 seats in the Senate of the Polish parliament and every single seat for which Solidarity candidates were permitted to run in the lower House. That election represented such a powerful repudiation of the Polish Communist Government that it no longer had the political credibility to govern that country.

Lech Walesa, my friend, went on to become Poland's first democratically elected President since the Second World War.

As we pay tribute to the 25th anniversary of the founding of Solidarity, it is critical that we remember the assistance that was given to Solidarity by our own American labor movement. Then AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and the American labor movement provided absolutely critical moral, material, and political support to the workers of Poland during their struggle in the 1980s.

I had the privilege of traveling to Warsaw to meet with Lech Walesa with Lane Kirkland, and to be in the presence of those two great labor leaders was a truly memorable experience.

At a memorial service for Lane Kirkland, Henry Kissinger recalled a dinner he had arranged for Kirkland with two top officials of the administration who were shocked to receive the "Kirkland treatment," a scathing attack on their failure to do enough for the freedom movements in Poland and around the world. At the memorial service, Solidarity Leader Lech Walesa said, "I never had enough opportunity to thank Lane Kirkland for his enormous contribution for our struggle."

Mr. Speaker, the 25th anniversary of the founding of Solidarity is an appropriate time for us to reflect upon the historic changes that convulsed the Soviet Union and Central Europe 15 years ago. Solidarity was an important catalyst in that transformation. We honor the struggle and sacrifice of the workers of Poland and the leaders of Solidarity who risked their lives to restore democracy to their homeland.

Poland has been a member of NATO for 8 years and recently became a full member of the European Union. These actions would not have taken place without the leadership of Lech Walesa and his colleagues in the Solidarity movement. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 328, recognizing the 25th anniversary of the workers' strikes in Poland that led to the founding of Solidarity.

Mr. Speaker, Stalin once said that trying to impose communism on Poland was like trying to put a saddle on a cow. As history showed, that was one time the Soviet Union's dictator was right. From the end of World War II, when

the Soviet Union spread its suffocating net across a Central Europe devastated by war, Poles struggled to be free. Time and again, from the 1956 riots in Poznan, when workers took to the streets "For Bread and For Freedom," through the intellectual upheavals of the 1960s, Poles struggled to stretch the boundaries of freedom. Each time, they came closer, but each time they were pulled back into the Soviet fold.

The year 1976 marked an historic turning point. In that year, Polish intellectuals stood outside the court room door while workers stood inside, waiting for verdicts to be meted out against them for their strikes at the Ursus tractor factory. At those trials, only family members were allowed to be present. And, as one onerous prison sentence after another was handed down, the intellectuals standing outside the courtroom would hear only the sobs of family members. The harshness of the regime only served to galvanize opposition to it.

By 1980, when the workers struck in Gdansk, they were no longer alone; they were joined by intellectuals who had been pursuing a parallel path. The newly elected, Polish-born Pope, John Paul II, had countenanced his countrymen and women to "be not afraid." And an extraordinary individual, Lech Walesa, scaled the walls at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk to lead his country to a place in history. The Gdansk shipyard workers had 31 demands, one of which was a call for the Polish Government to fulfill its obligations it had under the in the 1976 Helsinki Final Act.

By December 13, 1981, the Soviet Union had seen enough of this Polish experiment and martial law was imposed. But, it seems, the power of the people could not be truly repressed. The joining of workers and intellectuals in Poland produced the only mass dissident movement in all of Eastern Europe. In spite of mass arrests and other forms of repression during the 1980s, Solidarity remained a force with which to be reckoned and, by 1988, the tide was inexorably turning. In that year, Janusz Onyszkiewicz [YAN-oosh oh-nish-KAL-a-vich], a Solidarity activist who—in a few years time—would be Minister of Defense, came to Washington and testified before the Helsinki Commission about the human rights situation in his country. It was the first time a dissident from an East European Communist country had testified before Congress and then actually returned to his country. Although authorities briefly considered bringing criminal charges against him for his daring appearance before the Helsinki Commission, those plans were quickly abandoned.

By 1989, Solidarity's disciplined strikes had forced Communist officials to the negotiating table. These so-called "Round-Table Talks" produced an agreement to allow a fraction of the seats in parliament to be openly contested in June elections—the proverbial camel's nose under the tent. In July, when Tadeusz Mazowiecki [tah-DAY-oosh maz-oh-VIET-ski] was elected Poland's first non-Communist Prime Minister in the post-War era, a delegation from the Helsinki Commission, led by Senator DeConcini, sat in the gallery of the parliament and watched this extraordinary moment unfold.

Mr. Speaker, there are many factors that led to the collapse of communism, and many heroes—some tragically fallen—who deserve credit for restoring freedom to Eastern Europe.

The Solidarity Trade Union played a singular role in achieving that great goal, and I give my wholehearted support to this resolution which honors the men and women of that movement.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 328, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING AFRICAN DESCENDANTS OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE IN ALL OF THE AMERICAS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 175) acknowledging African descendants of the transatlantic slave trade in all of the Americas with an emphasis on descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean, recognizing the injustices suffered by these African descendants, and recommending that the United States and the international community work to improve the situation of Afro-descendant communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

#### H. CON. RES. 175

Whereas during Black History Month it is important that we not forget that African-Americans are not the only survivors of the transatlantic slave trade;

Whereas like the United States, many European nations benefited greatly from the colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean and their participation in the slave trade;

Whereas the story of African descendants in all of the Americas remains untold, leading them to be forgotten, made invisible, and allowed to suffer unjustly;

Whereas it is important to acknowledge that as a result of the slave trade and immigration, approximately 80,000,000 to 150,000,000 persons of African descent live in Latin America and the Caribbean, making them the largest population of persons of African descent outside of Africa;

Whereas Afro-descendants are present in most all Latin American countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela;

Whereas the size of Afro-descendant populations vary in range from less than 1 percent in some countries to as much as 30 per-

cent in Colombia and 46 percent in Brazil and make up the majority in some Spanish speaking Caribbean nations, such as Cuba and the Dominican Republic;

Whereas Afro-descendant populations have made significant economic, social, and cultural contributions to their countries and the Western Hemisphere from their unfortunate involvement in the transatlantic slave trade to their recent contributions to trade, tourism, and other industries;

Whereas although persons of African descent have made significant achievements in education, employment, economic, political, and social spheres in some countries, the vast majority are marginalized—living in impoverished communities where they are excluded from centers of education, government, and basic human rights based upon the color of their skin and ancestry;

Whereas Afro-descendants have shorter life expectancies, higher rates of infant mortality, higher incidences of HIV/AIDS, higher rates of illiteracy, and lower incomes than do other populations;

Whereas Afro-descendants encounter problems of access to healthcare, basic education, potable water, housing, land titles, credit, equal justice and representation under the law, political representation, and other economic, political, health, and basic human rights; and

Whereas skin color and ancestry have led African-Americans in the United States and African descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean to share similar injustices, leading to economic, social, health, and political inequalities: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes and honors African descendants in the Americas for their contributions to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the countries in the Americas, particularly in Latin American and Caribbean societies;

(2) recognizes that as a result of their skin color and ancestry, African descendants in the Americas have wrongfully experienced economic, social, and political injustices;

(3) urges the President to take appropriate measures to encourage the celebration and remembrance of the achievements of African descendants in the Americas and a resolution of injustices suffered by African descendants in the Americas;

(4) encourages the United States and the international community to work to ensure that extreme poverty is eradicated, universal education is achieved, quality healthcare is made available, and equal access to justice and representation under the law is granted in Afro-descendant communities in Latin America and the Caribbean; and

(5) encourages the United States and the international community to achieve these goals in Latin America and the Caribbean by—

(A) promoting research that focuses on identifying and eradicating racial disparities in economic, political, and social spheres;

(B) promoting programs that focus on Afro-descendant communities;

(C) providing technical support and training to Afro-descendant advocacy groups that work to uphold basic human rights in the region;

(D) promoting the creation of an international working group that focuses on problems of communities of Afro-descendants in the Americas; and

(E) promoting trade and other bilateral and multilateral agreements that take into account the needs of Afro-descendant communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from

Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, progress for some of the Afro-Latino communities in the Western Hemisphere has been disturbingly low. Estimates show that almost one-third of the population in Latin America is made up of descendants of West African slaves brought to the Americas by European slave traders during the colonial period.

Afro-Latinos comprise either a majority or a large minority in a number of Latin American nations, including the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. Yet reports indicate that most Afro-Latinos are among the poorest, most marginalized groups in that region.

Thus, as we press for democratic progress, for prosperity, and for security in our hemisphere, and we focus to maximize our efforts to reduce poverty, part of a comprehensive strategy must also include efforts to address the needs and provide for the rights of the Afro-Latino community in the region.

The resolution before us urges us to take a thoughtful, proactive approach to achieve such goals.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for bringing this issue to our attention and for introducing this important measure. I also wish to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE); the gentleman from California (Ranking Member LANTOS); the gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON), the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere; and the gentleman from New Jersey (Ranking Member MENENDEZ) for their efforts to expeditiously bring this resolution before the House today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud my colleagues for bringing this resolution to the House for consideration. I deeply appreciate the efforts of my dear friend and esteemed colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), for offering this resolution, and my colleagues,