

RECOGNIZING THE 185TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF PERU

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 940) recognizing the 185th anniversary of the independence of Peru on July 28, 2006, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 940

Whereas Peru gained independence from Spain on July 28, 1821, when the Republic of Peru was established as a sovereign and independent country;

Whereas the people of Peru have established, after a series of military and authoritarian regimes, a unique, pluralistic democracy which includes the freedoms cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed;

Whereas Peru regularly holds free and fair elections and promotes free exchange of ideas;

Whereas the interests of Peru and the United States are closely aligned;

Whereas the people of the United States share affinity with the people of Peru and view Peru as a strong ally;

Whereas the United States has joined Peru to promote political and economic freedoms, combat poverty, crime, disease, and drugs, and promote security, stability, and prosperity within Peru;

Whereas the bonds of association and friendship between the peoples of the two countries have been strengthened by the large number of Peruvians who have migrated to the United States where they make significant contributions to both the United States and Peru;

Whereas Peru is an integral member of the Latin American region and has been a constructive partner of the United States in fulfilling the agenda of the Western Hemisphere; and

Whereas the Peruvians and Peruvian-Americans residing in the United States have enriched and added to the United States way of life in the social, economic, and political arenas, and Peru's rich identity and heritage have become an integral part of the cultural tapestry of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 185th anniversary of the independence of Peru;

(2) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to Peru for peace and further progress, development, and prosperity; and

(3) extends best wishes to Peruvians and Peruvian-Americans residing in the United States as they celebrate the 185th anniversary of Peru's independence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE. 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 Texas?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, today, I am here to recognize the government and the people of Peru as we extend our warmest congratulations to them as they celebrate their 185th year as an independent nation.

Since independence, the people of Peru have faced many problems, including economic despair, an authoritarian regime, and a violent insurgency. During the 1980s, notorious terrorist groups such as Shining Path and MRTA destabilized Peru and the entire region and spread fear among the people.

Financed in part by illicit narcotics, these terrorist groups reduced Peru to the position of the world's second largest producer of cocoa, dimming Peru's prosperous future. However, despite years of political turmoil and violent internal conflict and through the perseverance of its people, Peru was able to escape the stranglehold on its democracy and has recently blossomed into a vibrant free state. This is evidenced by the success of the recent elections in 2001 and 2006 and a growing economy.

Today, Peru shares our Nation's most treasured ideals and standards, a success story that demonstrates the power of a democracy. Peru has played a key role as a force for stabilization and peace throughout the Western Hemisphere, as well as the rest of the world.

Along with providing over 200 troops to the United Nations mission in Haiti, Peru has been a staunch supporter in the global war on terror and the fight against drug trafficking and production.

Today, farmers from Peru are beginning to cast off the specter of a narco-economy by cooperation with the United States on alternative development crops, such as Peruvian oranges and bananas.

Peru has proven to be an invaluable ally and a role model for freedom in South America as well as the rest of the world. The United States stands with them on the continued progress and development of both democracy and as a nation.

With my best wishes to the people of Peru and most sincere congratulations on the 185th anniversary of their nation's independence, I fully support H. Res. 940. I urge all colleagues to join me in recognizing the shining model of democracy, a dedicated ally on the global war on terror, and one of the United States closest friends.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I would first like to commend the efforts of my good friend and our esteemed colleague from New York (Mr.

CROWLEY) for offering this timely measure. His work on Latin American issues in the International Relations Committee is greatly appreciated.

Madam Speaker, Peru has a long history as the center of cultural, political and economic life in the Andes. Before the country declared its independence from Spain in 1821, Peru served for centuries as the principal location of Spanish colonial power and wealth.

Peru's pre-colonial heritage is equally grand. The Incas built their impressive empire from Cuzco, their capital city. This empire stretched from what would become Ecuador's northern border to central Chile.

After its independence from Spain, Peru oscillated between authoritarian and democratic forms of government. Finally, in 2001, Alejandro Toledo was sworn in as President of Peru and consolidated the country's return to democracy.

The Peruvian economy grew on average by 5 percent a year since then, one of the most robust rates in all of Latin America, and foreign exchange reserves reached a record \$14 billion by the end of last year.

The Toledo government is respectful of human and political rights. Nevertheless, grinding poverty still hampers over half of Peruvians, and the societal divide between indigenous people and those of European and mixed descent has widened.

Peru's new President, Alan Garcia, has promised to address these inequities and social cleavages. He has also embarked on a rapprochement with Chile as part of a larger effort to solidify cooperation between the like-minded nations of South America which are friendly to the United States.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that, by the time of Peru's bicentennial celebration, we and our Peruvian neighbors will enjoy one of the strongest alliances in this hemisphere, an alliance which will continue to build upon the policies of Peru's democratically elected government and the contributions of the vibrant Peruvian American community in our own country.

I strongly support this resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do so.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and we yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, I ask for adoption of the resolution. 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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 940, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.