

URGING REMAINING EUROPEAN NATIONS TO EXPEDITE OPENING ACCESS TO HOLOCAUST ARCHIVES

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 13, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution urging the remaining member countries of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service (ITS) to expedite opening access to the Holocaust archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

On March 8, 2007, a most important diplomatic meeting concluded in the Hague. Nine out of the 11 International Commission of the ITS member countries, which includes the United States, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United Kingdom, met to discuss opening up the world's largest Holocaust era archives.

Incredulously, 62 years after the end of the Second World War, the Holocaust archives located in Bad Arolsen remain the largest closed Second World War-era archives in the world. Inside the archives are 50 million records that disclose the fate of some 17.5 million individual victims of Nazism.

These records are some of the last remains that the Allied forces seized when they liberated the death camps in 1945. Years later, documents were given to the Red Cross for the purpose of tracing missing people and later for validating compensation claims by victims or their relatives. Over the past 60 years, the ITS has handled more than 11 million inquiries.

In order to allow for open access to these important archives, each of the 11 members of the International Commission of the ITS must individually ratify through their respective parliaments the May 2006 amendments to the 1955 Bonn Accords.

For the past decade, Holocaust researchers and most survivors have sought and failed to access the Bad Arolsen archive because the ITS Commission believed it would violate the privacy of the survivors and their families.

Slight progress has been made since last May after the Commission recently amended the Bonn Accords. The Bonn Accords were amended to allow researchers to use the archives while granting each Commission member a digitized copy of the archives and make them available to researchers under their own country's respective archival and privacy laws and practices. Unfortunately, these measures have not gone into practice because not all of the member countries of the ITS have ratified the amendments.

I support the progress made thus far by the ITS and all Commission member countries. Just last week, technical specialists reviewed plans for preparing the documents for electronic transfer and drafted recommendations to be reviewed by the commission in advance of the May 2007 ITS meeting. In fact, many of the Commission's member countries have taken significant steps since last May's meeting in order to expedite the process of ratification and allow for the digitization of the archived materials.

However, the facts remain the same. Generations after the Holocaust, 7 member coun-

tries of the International Commission have still yet to ratify these amendments. To date, only 4 out of the 11 Commission member countries; the United States, Israel, Poland and the Netherlands have ratified the treaty. Unfortunately, many Holocaust survivors may be long dead before each country's parliament ratifies the amendments.

I ask: why has it taken over 60 years to allow for open access to these Holocaust records? There is no reason European governments should not give this issue the utmost elevated attention, as this issue should be made a top priority in their respective parliaments.

For the many years after the War's aftermath, the survivors and their families who requested information have faced cumbersome delays and occasional unresponsiveness from the ITS. As a result of the harrowing experience, many survivors had in past dealings with the ITS, many survivors now lack confidence that new inquiries will be answered. Although access to individual records may be requested by Holocaust survivors and their families, the millions of extensive records remain inaccessible to researchers. Furthermore, it will likely still take years before the implementation of the distribution of the digitized archival materials.

Those responsible for the progress made at the meeting in the Hague should be widely commended. The advancements made recently are largely due in part to the United States Holocaust Museum and the United States State Department. I am grateful for their diplomatic efforts which have proved so fruitful at the last meeting.

But much work still remains undone. With the express acknowledgement of the variance in each country's internal procedures and the utmost respect for the letter of international law, I strongly encourage parliamentarians from other members of the ITS Commission to ratify the ITS amendments promptly so that the Bad Arolsen archives can be opened at the earliest possible date.

The short time left for the remaining Holocaust survivors does not afford us time to delay any longer.

As the few remaining survivors pass away, they are being deprived of information concerning their loved ones and the assets that were rightfully theirs. Let us not continue to waste the precious time left for the remaining survivors. After all of the horrific acts to which they have been subjected, they are completely justified in uncovering the truth about their family and their loved ones without hassle or delay.

In passing this legislation, Congress can put itself on record saying, "Enough is enough." I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and ask for its expeditious consideration.

A TRIBUTE TO PEGGY TSIANG  
CHERNG

**HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 13, 2007*

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Peggy Tsiang Cherng. Each year in March, in recognition of Women's History Month, we pay special tribute to the contribu-

tions and sacrifices made by our Nation's women.

Born to Chinese parents, Dr. Cherng was raised in Burma and Hong Kong. She attended Baker University in Kansas before transferring to Oregon State University, where she earned her bachelor of science degree in applied mathematics. Dr. Cherng then received her master's degree in computer science and a doctorate in electrical engineering from the University of Missouri.

Following graduation, Dr. Cherng married and settled in southern California, where she became a member of the technical team at McDonnell Douglas. Later, she worked at Comtal-3M, where her highly technical background allowed her to quickly move up the corporate ladder to become software development manager. During this time, her father and husband decided to open a restaurant they named Panda Inn—which featured gourmet Mandarin and Szechuan cuisine—in Pasadena, California.

While at Comtal-3M, the Panda Inn business grew steadily and in 1982, Dr. Cherng decided to join the family business. As executive vice-president, Dr. Cherng's leadership and skills played a vital role in creating the vision, mission, and value statements for the Panda Restaurant Group, and established a solid foundation for future corporate growth. In 1997, Dr. Cherng served as president and in 1998, she also took on the role of CEO until 2004. During the time she held both roles, the company flourished and more than doubled in size from about 250 locations to nearly 650. In 2004, Dr. Cherng took the position of co-chair and CEO, and now focuses primarily on her co-chair responsibilities.

Dr. Cherng is a firm believer in giving back to the community. The Panda Restaurant Group has supported the community and charitable causes such as United Way, City of Hope, Children's Hospital Los Angeles and Children's Miracle Network. In 1999, Dr. Cherng launched a company-wide community involvement initiative called Panda Cares, which gives back to the community and provides assistance for the care and education of children. Panda Cares has committed nearly \$3 million to non-profit organizations nationwide.

Dr. Cherng is active in a number of organizations including the National Restaurant Association, the board of directors of the Methodist Hospital of Southern California, East West Bancorp, Inc., the board of visitors for the UCLA Anderson School of Management, and the board of trustees for Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Dr. Cherng's devotion to her career and her long-time commitment to the prosperity of our community serves as a true inspiration to us all. I ask all members of Congress to join me today in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Dr. Peggy Tsiang Cherng.

A TRIBUTE TO MS. GINA  
WILLIAMS

**HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 13, 2007*

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Ms. Gina Williams, an art teacher at Lake Forest Academy in Illinois. Ms. Williams is one of