

RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF THE COUNTRY OF GEORGIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, as ROB departs the Chamber, let me thank him for his service and for his family's service. As, obviously, the first Republican Member to be able to respond to your comments, let me say what most of us always know, that although many of us disagree on public policy, no one has ever questioned your commitment, your sacrifice, your focus, and your tenacity, and I think I value that more than almost anything we do.

Your words are very important for us and for the American people to understand that spirited debate is not bad. It is a part of this process. As a former high school teacher in government history, we would relish this in our classrooms, to have this type of exchange between our students. So thank you for that, and I am just fortunate to be here when you made your comments.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus and turn my comments to Sochi, Russia. As the world focuses on that area of the world, let me talk about what is going on on the southern side of the Caucasus mountain range.

In the country of Georgia, a small country, people have to understand that the Russian Federation occupies two provinces of the country of Georgia, actually, with military troops: one for a long time, South Ossetia, one relatively recently in Abkhazia.

That kind of changes the understanding of this great show that the Russian Federation is putting on with the treatment of their neighbors in occupying provinces. That would be like a country occupying one or two of our States and occupying one or two of the provinces in Georgia.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is important to just remind the public of this, especially when the world's focus is there. And I want to specifically talk about what has happened with the Olympics and the Abkhazia region, using Olympic security as an excuse.

Russia has actively created a so-called buffer zone between Abkhazia and Georgia, pushing the cease-fire line established in 2008 7 miles further into Georgia territory. So here we have an international peace agreement that kind of sets a line allowing the occupation in Georgian territory of Russian forces, and then the Russian Federation decides, based upon the Olympics, to push that line further into the country of Georgia 7 more miles.

It is a very troubling extension of Russia's earlier efforts to enclose South Ossetia, this other province, in a barbed wire enclave. And this new incursion of Georgian territory is a violation of Georgia's sovereignty as it stands in stark contrast to Russia's many commitments under international law.

According to the cease-fire signed on August 12, 2008, Russian military forces

were to return to their pre-war positions, yet they have now established militarized security perimeters on the Georgian side of the administrative border with both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. This is a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Russia is a signatory, and a violation of customary international law.

Russian President Putin claims that he must close borders within the internationally recognized territory of Georgia to prevent security threats in Sochi. This move is nothing more than a power grab. I will continue to support Georgia's sovereignty and urge my colleagues to do the same.

HONORING AMELIA BOYNTON ROBINSON DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2014

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue my commitment to honoring influential African Americans from Alabama during this Black History Month. This week, we honor the heroines of the movement for civil rights and voting rights. These courageous women had tremendous roles in our Nation's fight for justice and equality, and I am honored to share their stories.

Today I honor the tremendous life and legacy of Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson. Amelia was a key figure in the voting rights movement in Selma, Alabama, and she is often remembered for her historic role in Bloody Sunday, on that solemn day on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. At 102 years old, she is an American treasure whose story is a testament to her commitment to serving as a conduit of change.

Amelia Boynton Robinson was born August 18, 1911, in Savannah, Georgia. Her mother was an activist during the women's suffrage movement. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, she and her mother would distribute voter registration information to women from the family's horse and buggy in the 1920s.

Her mother's tireless efforts to secure the right to vote for women would have a lasting impact on Amelia. It also paved the way for the young activist to claim her own place in history. Fueled by the same passion, Amelia began her own service to mankind when she and her husband, Samuel Boynton, fought for voting rights and property ownership for Blacks in the poorest rural counties of Alabama.

She was later named the only female lieutenant to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement. In this role, Amelia would travel alongside Dr. King and often appear in his stead for various events and gatherings during the movement.

Amelia is best known for being on the front lines during Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama. During the protest,

she was gassed, beaten, and left for dead at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Despite the violent attacks, this heroine was committed to staying the course. Her direct involvement in the movement led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Amelia was such a valued part of this process that some of the contents of the bill were drafted at her kitchen table in Selma.

On May 5, 1964, Amelia Boynton Robinson broke yet another barrier when she became the first woman in the State of Alabama to run for Congress. She garnered 10.7 percent of the vote during a time when very few Blacks were registered voters. Her historic run further solidified her impact on the movement for human rights, civil rights, and voting rights in Alabama.

When this extraordinary woman wasn't contributing her time to the causes of her generation, she worked as an educator, a home agent with the Department of Agriculture, an insurance agent, an income tax preparer, as well as a real estate agent.

She attended Georgia State Industrial School, which is now known as Savannah State University, and Tuskegee Normal, which is also known as Tuskegee University.

I am certain that I would not stand before you today as Alabama's first Black Congresswoman without the tremendous contributions of this amazing woman. It is indeed humbling to experience and pay honor and tribute to the first African American woman to pursue this office in my great State.

Her compelling story is one that reminds us of the undeniable power of courage. She refused to be silent and even risked her life to blaze trails for future generations. And at 102 years old, Amelia is still alive and still with us today, and she is still dispensing her wisdom.

As we celebrate Black History Month and the notable contributions of African Americans to this country, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson, an Alabama gem and an American treasure.

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TRIBUTE TO PENN STATE LUNAR LION SPACE TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Penn State University's Lunar Lion Team will make history as the first-ever university-led space mission to the Moon.

This group of talented young minds is competing in the Google Lunar XPRIZE competition to land a robotic spacecraft on the Moon in December of 2015. The mission, which the team began preparing in January of 2013, includes a launch onboard a commercial