

the United States, the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban has emphasized that it has other foreign policy interests, including building closer relations with Russia. Some analysts assert that the Hungarian government appears to be the most “pro-Russian” government of the NATO and EU countries. Although Hungary is still a democracy and Russia is not, ideological similarities between Prime Minister Orban and President Putin contribute to cordial relations to a certain extent: both leaders have been organizing their respective states in contrast to the “liberal, Western model,” with Orban naming Russia (along with Singapore, China, India, and Turkey) in a July 2014 speech as the type of state model likely to be successful in the future. In addition, Putin’s doctrine of “protecting” ethnic Russian populations that live outside the borders of Russia closely evokes the nationalist view in Hungary of ethnic Hungarian minorities that live outside the borders of the country. According to some Western observers, Hungary has played an unhelpful role in the Ukraine crisis by advocating greater autonomy for a region of western Ukraine inhabited by approximately 150,000 ethnic Hungarians. Breaking with European attempts to portray Russia as diplomatically isolated, Orban hosted Putin in a state visit in February 2015. Orban has been prime minister since 2010, and previously from 1998–2002, at the head of the conservative Fidesz party.

Hungary has considerable ties to Russia in the energy sector. Russia provides over 76% of the natural gas consumed in Hungary, accounting for one quarter of the country’s primary energy supply, and Hungary was a strong supporter of Gazprom’s now-cancelled South Stream pipeline that would have crossed Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, and Slovenia (bypassing Ukraine) to reach Austria and Italy. Russia also supplies the fuel for Hungary’s Paks nuclear power plant, which provides about 40% of the country’s electricity. Under a controversial deal reached in early 2014, Russia will loan Hungary €10 billion to finance the construction by Russia’s state-owned Rosatom of two new units at the Paks plant.

Although it joined its EU partners in condemning the annexation of Crimea as illegal, and signed on to the multiple rounds of sanctions imposed against Russia by the EU, Hungary has been among the countries most reluctant to impose sanctions in response to Russia’s actions in the Ukraine conflict. In an August 2014 interview, just two weeks after the adoption of expanded sectoral EU sanctions and one week after the announcement of retaliatory Russian measures against European food products, Prime Minister Orban called for a re-think of the EU’s sanctions, stating, “The sanctions policy pursued by the West, that is, ourselves, a necessary consequence of which has been what the Russians are doing, causes more harm to us than to Russia . . . In politics, this is called shooting oneself in the foot.” Although Russia is Hungary’s largest non-EU trading partner, with Hungarian exports to Russia represent less than 3% of Hungary’s total exports. The Hungarian economy is tied much more closely to the German economy.

Russia and European Far-Right Parties

In recent years, there has been an increasingly evident ideological link between European far-right parties and the leadership of Russia. Far-right parties in V4 countries that now take openly pro-Russia positions include: Jobbik in Hungary; the Slovak National Party (SNS) and People’s Party Our Slovakia (L’SNS); the Czech Workers’ Party of Social Justice (DSSS); Self-Defense of the

Republic of Poland (SRP) and Polish Falanga.

Elsewhere in Europe, pro-Russia positions are held by: France’s National Front (FN); Italy’s Lega Nord and the New Force party in Italy; the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD); the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ); the Flemish Interest (VB) party in Belgium; the Order and Justice (TT) party in Lithuania; Golden Dawn in Greece; the Nationalist Party of Bulgaria (NPB) and Bulgaria’s Ataka Party; and the British National Party (BNP).

While many of these parties remain well on the fringes of their countries’ political scene, Jobbik, FPÖ, FN, Golden Dawn, Lega Nord and TT have had significant electoral successes in winning seats in national parliaments and the European Parliament.

Analysts assert that supporting far-right parties serves as a way for Russia to work against European unity. Among other elements of far-right ideology (typically including some combination of extreme nationalism, “law and order” and the preservation of “traditional” conservative or family values, and anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, or anti-Islam sentiments), most of these parties tend to be anti-establishment and anti-EU. Some can be characterized as anti-NATO/U.S. or isolationist, and some focus on problems with neighboring countries. Jobbik, for example, in addition to promoting strongly anti-Roma, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and anti-Western stances, promotes the idea that Slovakia and Romania are enemies of Hungary due to the ethnic Hungarian minorities living across the border in those countries.

Although direct evidence of Russian financial support for far-right parties remains for the most part difficult to identify, there is a widespread belief that Russia has covertly funneled money to parties such as the FN and Jobbik. In November 2014, news outlets reported the discovery that the FN had received a potentially illegal €9 million loan from a Russian bank with close ties to President Putin. Jobbik has also long been under suspicion of receiving Russian (and Iranian) money, and the party’s finances have been questioned in the Hungarian Parliament and investigated by the Hungarian government. After publishing an annual budget of approximately \$10,000 per year for 2004–2008, Jobbik ran a well-financed campaign in the 2009 European Parliament election and reportedly spent over \$100,000 in the 2010 national election, when it won nearly 16% of the vote. Analysts argued that the sudden increase in funding could not have been due to domestic contributions. As Jobbik began running a nationwide party operation, it also abandoned its previous anti-Russian rhetoric to advocate both good relations with Russia and Hungary leaving the EU to join Russia’s Eurasian Union. Jobbik now receives a state allowance allotted to parties in parliament and has an official budget of over \$2.3 million. Suspicions of additional private financing from abroad persist, however. A potentially key figure in Jobbik’s ties to Moscow is Bela Kovács, a Jobbik Member of the European Parliament who played a central role in the party’s rise in 2009 and has been a vocal supporter of Russia in the European Parliament. In October 2015, the European Parliament granted a request by the Hungarian government to lift Kovács’ immunity from arrest in order to face allegations of spying for Russia.

Russian support for far-right parties is not merely financial. The Russian government has also been proactive in offering organizational expertise, political know-how, and media assistance to parties on Europe’s far-right. Russian support has reportedly included establishing and coordinating pro-Russian parties, non-governmental civil or-

ganizations, and think tanks, and providing support to friendly media outlets. Russian diplomacy also offers far-right parties access to political networks, including by sponsoring forums and conferences that develop and coordinate national doctrines and policies and encourage the formation of party groups or families. To some extent, analysts attribute ties between a number of European far-right parties and parallels in the policies of parties in a range of countries to this type of Russian-sponsored network-building.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o’clock and 46 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi John Linder, Temple Solel, Paradise Valley, Arizona, offered the following prayer:

God of all people and all understanding, give us strength and reason during these perilous times; bring consolation to the bereaved in Belgium. Be with our public servants here as they represent these great United States.

Collectively, brothers and sisters, you are a tapestry of America, a beautiful quilt of diversity, the best of who we can be. Our respective faiths remind us that the measure of society is how we treat the most vulnerable: the orphan, the widow, the stranger in our midst.

God bless the Members of this House, their families and staff, and all those workers who humbly serve to care for and protect these hallowed Halls.

May these deliberations reflect the best of humanity, honoring the divine spark in one another. “Long may our land be bright, with freedom’s holy light,” as we continue to shine as a beacon of hope to those within our borders and around the world.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day’s proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING RABBI JOHN LINDER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. GALLEGRO. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to recognize my good friend, Rabbi John Linder, as the guest chaplain today.

Throughout his life, Rabbi Linder has demonstrated commendable commitment to his family, to his faith, and to the cause of social justice.

After graduating with honors from Amherst College, Rabbi Linder spent his early years as a community and labor organizer, and later helped run his family's scrap metal recycling business before entering rabbinic school.

In Arizona, he has demonstrated inspired leadership of Temple Solel, my temple, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Rabbi Linder has also continued his work to advance social justice as a leader in the Union for Reform Judaism, the Jewish Family and Children's Services, and many other local service and faith-based organizations.

Rabbi Linder is also engaged in building a strong interfaith community in Arizona. He has been instrumental in connecting Temple Solel to other faiths, and he has invited a variety of other clergy members to participate in the temple's services.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Rabbi Linder to the House of Representatives and thanking him for his dedicated service.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOLLY). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

(Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Burwell*, and today, I stand in support of the Little Sisters.

Mr. Speaker, this is an order of Catholic nuns who serve the elderly poor in 31 countries. We talk a lot about public service up here. Well, these are the people who live it. They are the definition of public service. In fact, I had the honor of hosting two of the Sisters at the State of the Union address this January, and I was amazed to hear all the good work that they do.

So the last thing the Federal Government should do is make their jobs harder, but that, unfortunately, is exactly what this administration is doing. Under the healthcare law, the Department of Health and Human Services is insisting on a regulation that requires the Sisters to offer benefits that violate their religious beliefs.

The administration claims to have offered them an "accommodation," but it is just a fig leaf. So this is the choice that they are facing: either violate your faith, or pay up to \$70 million a year in fines.

Mr. Speaker, there is no good reason for any of this. A full one-third of the American people are exempt from this regulation, so why insist that the Sisters, of all people, follow it? There are other ways to protect people's health that do not violate people's faith.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear to anyone with eyes to see that this regulation is a violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. A broad bipartisan majority in Congress voted for that law, and what Congress said was this: the burden is not on your faith to obey government mandates; the burden is on the government to respect your faith.

Mr. Speaker, that is the very meaning of religious liberty. That is one of our founding principles, and that is why we should do everything we can to let people live out their faith. That is why many colleagues of mine and I have joined in an amicus brief asking the Court to grant the Sisters the relief that they deserve; and that is why I am here today: to stand in defense of the Sisters, to stand in defense of the law, and to stand in defense of religious liberty.

TODAY NIAGARA FALLS WILL RECLAIM ITS WATERFRONT

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today the people of Niagara Falls will reclaim what was taken from them 50 years ago: access to, arguably, the world's greatest waterfront, Niagara Falls.

Since 1964, the Robert Moses State Parkway has cut off the city from its waterfront. The highway is one of several ill-conceived projects rammed through cities 50 years ago that have kept western New York from realizing its full economic potential.

Three years ago, I issued a report that detailed the role of the New York Power Authority, which planned the parkway, evicted homeowners, and owns the land on which it sits, justifying the New York Power Authority's responsibility to fix what they had broken.

Shortly thereafter, work began on the removal of the southern portion, and now, as we proposed, the New York Power Authority will fund the next phase, a \$42 million project that takes down the parkway and builds up this city.

Two weeks ago, I stood with Mayor Paul Dyster to demand the complete removal of the parkway. With today's announcement, Niagara Falls will reclaim its waterfront and all of the promise that comes with it.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DEPUTY CARL KOONTZ

(Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Deputy Carl Koontz, who was shot and killed Sunday while serving a warrant.

A 3-year veteran of the Howard County Sheriff's Department, he was more than a deputy; he was a husband to Kassie, a father to baby Noah, a son, and a friend to his many fellow law enforcement officers.

Yesterday, hundreds of Hoosiers lined the procession route from Indianapolis back to his hometown of Kokomo to pay their respects and honor his sacrifice.

He was only 27 years old, and in his short life he served Howard County with courage and distinction. He was passionate about his job as a deputy, particularly his role as a school resource officer for the Northwestern School Corporation, where he was a role model as well as a protector of Hoosier children.

I would also like to recognize Sergeant Jordan Buckley, who was also shot and injured, and wish him a speedy recovery.

Law enforcement officers and first responders put their lives on the line each and every day.

In memory of Deputy Koontz, I would ask everyone to please stand and thank all of our officers, the courageous law enforcement officers and first responders, for their service and sacrifice because on Sunday, Deputy Koontz paid the ultimate sacrifice.

CELEBRATING SALLIE BALDWIN HOWARD'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 100th birthday of Sallie Baldwin Howard, a friend and legendary citizen of Wilson, North Carolina.

Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, Sallie B. Howard will be honored at a grand birthday celebration at the charter school named in her honor, the Sallie B. Howard School for the Arts and Education.

Sallie Howard has lived an extraordinary life. Her contribution to the arts and education is immeasurable.

Mrs. Howard graduated as valedictorian from Charles H. Darden High School. She later graduated from Kittrell Junior College, the Anderson School of Dance, New York City's