

110TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 87

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the 90th anniversary of its declaration of independence.

Whereas on November 18, 1918, in the City of Riga, the members of the People's Council proclaimed Latvia a free, democratic, and sovereign nation;

Whereas on July 24, 1922, the United States formally recognized Latvia as an independent and sovereign nation;

Whereas Latvia existed for 21 years as an independent and sovereign nation and a fully recognized member of the League of Nations;

Whereas Latvia maintained friendly and stable relations with its neighbors, including the Soviet Union, during its independence, without any border disputes;

Whereas Latvia concluded several peace treaties and protocols with the Soviet Union, including a peace treaty signed on August 11, 1920, under which the Soviet Union “unreservedly recognize[d] the independence and

sovereignty of the Latvian State and forever renounce[d] all sovereign rights . . . over the Latvian people and territory”;

Whereas despite friendly and mutually productive relations between Latvia and the Soviet Union, on August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which contained a secret protocol assigning Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence;

Whereas under the cover of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, on June 17, 1940, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in violation of pre-existing peace treaties;

Whereas the Soviet Union imposed upon the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania a communist political system that stifled civil dissent, free political expression, and basic human rights;

Whereas the United States never recognized this illegal and forcible occupation, and successive United States presidents maintained continuous diplomatic relations with these countries throughout the Soviet occupation, never accepting them to be “Soviet Republics”;

Whereas during the 50 years of Soviet occupation of the Baltic states, Congress strongly, consistently, and on a bipartisan basis supported a United States policy of legal non-recognition;

Whereas in 1953, the congressionally-established Kersten Commission investigated the incorporation of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union and determined that the Soviet Union had illegally and forcibly occupied and annexed the Baltic countries;

Whereas in 1982, and for the next nine years until the Baltic countries regained their independence, Congress annually adopted a Baltic Freedom Day resolution denouncing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and appealing for the freedom of the Baltic countries;

Whereas in 1991, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania regained their de facto independence and were quickly recognized by the United States and by almost every other country in the world, including the Soviet Union;

Whereas in 1998, the United States and the three Baltic nations signed the U.S.-Baltic Charter of Partnership, an expression of the importance of the Baltic Sea region to United States interests;

Whereas the 109th Congress resolved (S. Con. Res. 35 and H. Res. 28) that “it is the sense of Congress that the Government of the Russian Federation should issue a clear and unambiguous statement of admission and condemnation of the illegal occupation and annexation by the Soviet Union from 1940 to 1991 of the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the consequences of which will be a significant increase in good will among the affected people”;

Whereas Latvia has successfully developed as a free and democratic country, ensured the rule of law, and developed a free market economy;

Whereas the Government of Latvia has constantly pursued a course of integration of that country into the community of free and democratic nations, becoming a full and responsible member of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

Whereas the people of Latvia cherish the principles of political freedom, human rights, and independence; and

Whereas Latvia is a strong and loyal ally of the United States, and the people of Latvia share common values with the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) congratulates the people of Latvia on the
4 occasion of the 90th anniversary of that country's
5 November 18, 1918, declaration of independence;

6 (2) commends the Government of Latvia for its
7 success in implementing political and economic re-
8 forms, for establishing political, religious and eco-
9 nomic freedom, and for its strong commitment to
10 human and civil rights;

11 (3) recognizes the common goals and shared
12 values of the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lith-
13 uania, the close and friendly relations and ties of the
14 three Baltic countries with one other, and their trag-
15 ic history in the last century under the Nazi and So-
16 viet occupations;

17 (4) calls on the President to issue a proclama-
18 tion congratulating the people of Latvia on the 90th
19 anniversary of the declaration of Latvia's independ-
20 ence on November 18, 1918;

1 (5) respectfully requests the President to con-
2 gratulate the Government of Latvia for its commit-
3 ment to democracy, a free market economy, human
4 rights, the rule of law, participation in a wide range
5 of international structures, and security cooperation
6 with the United States Government; and

7 (6) calls on the President and Secretary of
8 State to urge the Government of the Russian Fed-
9 eration to acknowledge that the Soviet occupation of
10 Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania under the Molotov-
11 Ribbentrop Pact and for the succeeding 51 years
12 was illegal.

Passed the Senate September 16, 2008.

Attest:

NANCY ERICKSON,

Secretary.