

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 163

A Concurrent Resolution expressing the sense of Congress that March 25 be recognized as the anniversary of the Proclamation of Belarusian independence, expressing concern over the Belarusian government's infringement on freedom of the press in direct violation of the Helsinki Accords and the constitution of Belarus, and expressing concern about the proposed union between Russia and Belarus.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 17, 1996

Mr. PALLONE submitted the following concurrent resolution, which was referred to the Committee on International Relations.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A Concurrent Resolution expressing the sense of Congress that March 25 be recognized as the anniversary of the Proclamation of Belarusian independence, expressing concern over the Belarusian government's infringement on freedom of the press in direct violation of the Helsinki Accords and the constitution of Belarus, and expressing concern about the proposed union between Russia and Belarus.

Whereas the seedlings of an independent and democratic Belarus, for which generations of Belarusian patriots had fought and died, are now in danger of being swept away as a result of the policies of Belarusian President Alaksandr Lukashenka and the efforts of Russian nation-

alist leaders to reunite the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union;

Whereas March 25, is the date that Belarusians throughout the world salute the sacrifices and bravery of the members of the Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic, who in 1918 liberated their country from the harsh and oppressive czarist and Soviet rule. Representatives of the United Councils of the First Belarusian Convention, meeting in Miensk (Minsk), on March 25, 1918, issued a proclamation of independence of the Belarusian National Republic, adopted a national flag with three horizontal stripes of white, red and white, and subsequently received widespread international recognition;

Whereas the Russian Duma in March 1996 has voted to declare void the 1991 agreement dissolving the Soviet Union;

Whereas the Government of President Lukashenka has monopolized the mass media, undermined the constitutional foundation for the separation of powers, suppressed the freedom of the press, defamed the national culture, narrowed the educational basis for patriotic upbringing of youth, maligned the Belarusian language, and undercut the ground for all-Belarusian unity: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
 3 resentatives that Belarus declared itself as an Independent
 4 Belarusian State on March 25, 1918; and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That the United States press the govern-
 6 ment of President Lukashenka to abide by the provisions
 7 of the Helsinki Accords and the Constitution of the Re-

1 public of Belarus and guarantee freedom of the press,
2 allow for the flowering of Belarusian culture and enforce
3 the separation of powers; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That the Congress of the United States join
5 with the people of Belarus and Belarusians throughout the
6 world in defending the statehood and democracy of
7 Belarus, sustaining the country's constitution and pre-
8 venting the loss by Belarus of its hard-won nationhood
9 and its opportunity to survive as an equal and full-fledged
10 member-state among the sovereign nations of the world.

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