

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 932

Recognizing the 120th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 13, 2023

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. DUNN of Florida, and Mr. NEAL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 120th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria.

Whereas, September 19, 2023, marks the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria;

Whereas the first United States Diplomatic Agent to Bulgaria, John B. Jackson, presented his credentials on September 19, 1903;

Whereas the first Special Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to the United States, Stefan Panaretov, presented his credentials to President Woodrow Wilson on December 22, 1914;

Whereas the enduring ties between the two nations are exemplified by the founding of the American College of Sofia, dating back to a school opened by American missionaries in Bulgaria in 1860;

Whereas, on September 25, 2023, the United States and Bulgaria held the second high-level Strategic Dialogue to advance their bilateral, regional, and global agenda and to further enhance cooperation as friends, Allies, and partners;

Whereas the United States and Bulgaria stand together as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies, determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, seeking to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area;

Whereas the United States and Bulgaria have signed numerous important documents in key areas, including defense and security cooperation, 5G security, civil nuclear cooperation, science and technology, and combating foreign disinformation and propaganda;

Whereas the United States and Bulgaria stand united against aggression and terror, condemning in the strongest possible terms Russia's brutal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, and the heinous attacks on the Israeli people by the terrorist organization Hamas;

Whereas Bulgaria remains committed to the collective defense, as exemplified by hosting a NATO battlegroup with the United States participation, and by establishing a NATO littoral countries mine countermeasures task force to secure freedom of navigation in the Black Sea;

Whereas prior to becoming a NATO member and subsequently, as an ally, Bulgaria participated in the United States-led and NATO missions and operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Kosovo, and the Mediterranean;

Whereas Bulgaria was among the very first countries to denounce terrorism and pledge active support to the United States in the fight against terrorism following the attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas Bulgaria provided overflight and basing rights at the town of Bourgas for Operation Enduring Freedom, representing the first stationing of foreign forces in Bulgaria since World War II, and Bulgaria deployed a nuclear, biological, and chemical protection detachment to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF);

Whereas the United States and Bulgaria recognize that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has only underscored the geostrategic importance of the Black Sea region, and the need to ensure that the region remains free and secure from threats posed by Russia and other malign actors;

Whereas the bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) was signed in 2006, regulating the status of forces, allowing for joint United States-Bulgarian military facilities, providing for bilateral and multilateral exercises, and facilitating the movement and temporary stationing of aircraft and vessels;

Whereas Bulgaria continues to invest in defense capabilities, interoperability, and the development of a credible defense posture in cooperation with the United States, as exemplified by the purchase of sixteen F-16 Block 70

fighter jets from the United States, and intending to purchase United States Stryker combat vehicles;

Whereas the United States and Bulgaria share the understanding that energy security is a crucial component of national security, and Bulgaria has made significant progress in reducing its dependency on Russian energy resources and in diversifying its energy sector in collaboration with the United States;

Whereas the two nations acknowledge the significance of intensifying their cooperation in innovations, research, and emerging technologies;

Whereas people-to-people exchanges between the United States and Bulgaria are vital for bolstering the bilateral relationship and Bulgaria has made progress towards meeting criteria for visa-free travel of Bulgarian citizens to the United States;

Whereas the shared commitment to counter disinformation and hybrid threats was demonstrated by the signing of a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on Countering Foreign Information Manipulation on September 25, 2023;

Whereas the year 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of the historic rescue of 50,000 Bulgarian Jews during the World War II;

Whereas it is acknowledged with regret and sadness that 11,343 Jews were deported to Nazi concentration camps from Macedonia, Thrace, and Pirot, territories administered Bulgaria at that time;

Whereas Bulgaria takes pride in its Jewish community and remains resolute in its stance against any forms of discrimination, intolerance, and antisemitism;

Whereas the vibrant Bulgarian-American community is contributing to America's prosperity, including to its remarkable economic achievements, the preservation of its technological edge, and the enrichment of American culture and society, through its diverse talents, rich traditions, art, music, dance, cuisine, and language;

Whereas Bulgaria's presence in the world's biggest library, the United States Library of Congress is marked with a collection of over 50,000 volumes of Bulgarian cultural heritage, brought together by the Library of Congress in collaboration with Bulgarian individuals and institutions since the 1880s;

Whereas the American University in Bulgaria, the pioneer of American-style liberal arts education in Eastern Europe, has been delivering exceptional education for more than three decades;

Whereas there are 41 Bulgarian Sunday schools in the United States, which are contributing to the preservation of Bulgarian language and traditions and to the cultural diversity in the United States;

Whereas Bulgaria is the place of origin of the Cyrillic alphabet, which is currently taught in the Bulgarian Sunday schools across the United States;

Whereas the Bulgarian Caucus in the House of Representatives was formed in June 2002 and the following year a group for friendship with the United States was formed in the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria demonstrating a dedication to the bilateral relationship; and

Whereas America's most successful and enduring relationships are built on shared values: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the 120th anniversary of diplo-
3 matic relations between the United States of Amer-
4 ica and the Republic of Bulgaria;

5 (2) recognizes the enduring partnership between
6 the United States of America and the Republic of
7 Bulgaria as friends, strategic partners, and Allies;

8 (3) expresses its conviction that the relationship
9 remains rooted in our shared commitment to demo-
10 cratic principles and values, including the rule of law
11 and respect for human rights;

12 (4) acknowledges Bulgaria’s strategic role in
13 the Black Sea region and expresses a shared com-
14 mitment to uphold the security and stability within
15 the region;

16 (5) notes the significant security challenges cur-
17 rently facing our two countries and supports our
18 joint efforts to further enhance the security and de-
19 fense cooperation;

20 (6) commends the Government and the people
21 of Bulgaria for their contribution to the inter-
22 national efforts to preserve the rules-based inter-
23 national order;

1 (7) salutes the willing cooperation of Bulgaria
2 and its increasingly vital role as a valuable Ally in
3 the war against international terrorism;

4 (8) acknowledges the commitment to deepen
5 our cooperation on countering foreign malign influ-
6 ence and disinformation by enhancing societal resil-
7 ience and media and information literacy;

8 (9) reaffirms the significance of intensifying co-
9 operation in innovations, research, and emerging
10 technologies;

11 (10) recognizes that the Bulgarian-American
12 culture and heritage strengthen and enrich the di-
13 versity of the United States; and

14 (11) looks forward to continued collaboration
15 between the United States and Bulgaria in advanc-
16 ing shared values and interests in the years ahead.

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