

that emphasizes the importance of the United States Navy in ending the Transatlantic slave trade, H. Res. 1159.

I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1159.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE VALUES AND GOALS OF THE U.S.-BRAZIL ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PACT

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1254) supporting the values and goals of the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality," signed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos on March 13, 2008, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1254

Whereas the United States and Brazil have many qualities in common, such as the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of their populations and each country's efforts to protect democracy and the civil rights and liberties of all their citizens;

Whereas the United States and Brazil share strong values of democracy, a diverse cultural demographic, and histories marred by slavery;

Whereas in comparison to the general population, minority groups in the United States and Brazil have experienced discrimination in many areas;

Whereas there is a continuing need to combat racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality in the United States and Brazil;

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Brazil have committed to jointly seek solutions to issues affecting both countries, such as racial and ethnic discrimination and inequality;

Whereas the Department of State, Brazil's Ministry of Exterior Relations, and the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality began formal talks in October 2007, to negotiate areas of bilateral cooperation on combating discrimination and creating opportunities for ethnic minorities in the United States and Brazil;

Whereas, on March 13, 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos signed the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality", also known as the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination;

Whereas the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination creates the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity, which will consist of a panel of government officials from both the United States and Brazil and facilitate the exchange of information on the best practices for anti-discrimination measures and development of ideas on how to bilaterally promote racial and ethnic equality;

Whereas United States and Brazil should discuss and consider techniques and initiatives for training educators, employers, workers, administrators of justice, such as police officers, judges, and prosecutors, and other members of society, on tolerance, equality, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination;

Whereas an Advisory Board, consisting of private sector representatives, government officials, civil society members, and experts on race relations and other relevant topics, will collaborate with Steering Group members at the periodic meetings of the Steering Group, to be held alternatively in Brazil and the United States;

Whereas the Inaugural Meeting of the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity will take place September 8-10, 2008, in Brasilia, Brazil;

Whereas the Government of Brazil and the Government of the United States each will determine their country's delegate members for the United States-Brazil Steering Group;

Whereas currently, United States Government participation in initiatives of the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination is supported by existing discretionary funds within the Department of State and other participating agencies;

Whereas the elimination of ethnic and racial discrimination in the United States and Brazil is an ongoing process that requires the long-term dedication of both countries;

Whereas additional resources may be needed to support future initiatives under the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination to address discrimination and promote racial and ethnic equality in the long term;

Whereas the specific areas of cooperation that the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination plans to address include education, communications and culture, labor and employment, housing and public accommodation, equal protection under the law and access to legal systems, domestic enforcement of antidiscrimination laws and policies, sports and recreation, health issues prevalent among minorities, access to credit and technical training, and social, historical, and cultural factors that contribute to racial and ethnic prejudices;

Whereas the Steering Group on Equality of Opportunity will address the top priority of combating discrimination and promoting equality in education at primary, secondary, vocational, undergraduate, and graduate levels;

Whereas particular programs and initiatives to be considered by the Steering Group include, but are not limited to, training programs, strengthening democratic institutions, public-private partnerships with businesses and nongovernmental organizations, workshops and seminars, exchanges of technical experts, scholarships and fellowships, cooperation with international organizations and civil society, and programs in third countries;

Whereas the United States and Brazil should support cultural exchanges between minority groups in the two countries and opportunities for the exchange of perspectives and experiences in race relations in both countries; and

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Brazil value the importance of promoting tolerance and equality by emphasizing education and promoting equal opportunities, democracy, and prosperity in both countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the need to promote equality and continue to work towards eliminating racial discrimination in both the United States and Brazil;

(2) commends Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos for signing the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality";

(3) supports the continued involvement of the Government of the United States in the bilateral partnership of the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination through funding that may be designated for programs as part of this initiative;

(4) encourages the participation of the Departments of State, Labor, Justice, and Education; the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Congress; Federal, State, and local court systems; and other agencies in the collaborative process of the United States-Brazil Steering Group on Equality of Opportunity; and

(5) urges the involvement of the private sector, civil society, and experts on race relations and other relevant topics to be considered as part of the Steering Group Advisory Board.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me generally, Mr. Speaker, thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. BERMAN, and the ranking member, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, both of whom are now conducting a hearing regarding the relationship between Georgia and Russia, for their leadership on these legislative initiatives. And I want to thank the Chairs and ranking members of the subcommittees from which these legislative initiatives have come forward.

It is well noted the Foreign Affairs Committee works collaboratively together, and I guess it continues to be in the spirit of our fallen leader, Representative, former chairman, Tom Lantos.

So let me thank our colleagues, Congressman ELIOT ENGEL and DAN BURTON, the chairman and ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, for introducing this important resolution.

Brazil and the United States both share a history of slavery in the Americas. The legacy and residual effects of that common history remain with both our countries long after the abolishment of slavery throughout the hemisphere.

The experience of race and the phenomenon of racism has been treated and understood very differently in Brazil than it has in the United States. Brazil holds the largest and one of the most ethnically diverse and racially mixed populations in the world.

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Historically, Brazil's multi-ethnicity has taken its own unique path, devoid of the spasms of violence and resentment that have characterized similar historical moments in the United States. In fact, in the 20th century, Brazil's tolerance and accommodation came to be known as "racial democracy" and became a source of great pride for its people.

Having been to Brazil on several occasions, I can attest to the fact Brazil and its people seem to be constantly working on finding racial accommodations, racial democracy.

Significant changes have taken place in the U.S. and Brazil in the issue of race and racism in the past two decades. Today, Brazilian self-identity regarding race has become more nuanced. The undeniable fact of Brazilians as a mixture of different races has run headlong into the notion of racial exclusion. To paraphrase Professor Edward E. Telles of UCLA in his book "Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil," Brazilians today grapple with how their society can at the same time reflect inclusiveness and the differences that make them unique.

The United States and Brazil have much to learn from each other in this realm. The ways in which our racial histories have diverged, and more recently the ways in which they have converged, offer much to share and even more to discuss.

As I mentioned, as I have traveled to Brazil, I have seen the opportunity to make everyone a Brazilian. We here are now talking about the fact that different groups want to be acknowledged for their own cultural history, and also, as we have made everyone a Brazilian, different groups have noted that only one group of those Brazilians have been able to ascend to the highest corporate ranks as well as governmental ranks.

Therefore, it is especially timely, then, that we take up this resolution recognizing how our racial histories currently affect minority communities and celebrating the goals of a joint action plan between our two governments on racial and ethnic discrimination.

This resolution supports the "U.S.-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality" that was signed by Secretary Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos in March of this year.

The Joint Action Plan is an agreement between both governments to create opportunities for minorities in the U.S. and Brazil to become active in technical, academic, and cultural exchange programs. It creates the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity, which will consist of a panel of government officials from both the United States and Brazil to facilitate the exchange of information and the best practices for antidiscrimination measures and develop ideas on how to bilaterally promote racial and ethnic equality.

I want to applaud the Afro-Brazilians Parliamentarians of whom I've had the opportunity to meet with who have been a persistent voice in asking for this approach to avoiding discrimination and promoting affirmative action.

I also want to thank my good friend and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman GREGORY MEEKS, who has worked on these issues and as we have traveled together to express our concern about discrimination in Brazil.

This Joint Action Plan is only one part of the expanding strategic relationship between the United States and Brazil and is a positive step in strengthening that friendship and promoting racial and ethnic equality.

Yes, we applaud racial democracy in Brazil. We applaud the race-neutral stances that they've taken, but now we applaud even more the opportunity to cite different ethnic groups and their contributions to Brazil in giving them a greater equal opportunity in Brazil.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I'm pleased to rise in support of House Resolution 1254 and join my colleagues in supporting the views and goals of the Joint Action Plan signed between the United States and Brazil to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality. I would like to thank the gentleman from New York, Congressman ENGEL, for introducing this important measure and appreciate the efforts by his office to ensure that it was a bipartisan effort.

On March 13, 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos signed the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federated Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality." This plan recognizes the commitments of our governments to promote equality and opportunity. It underscores the importance of cooperating in the pro-

motion of human rights in order to maintain an environment of peace, democracy, and prosperity. And it also strengthens the ongoing and vital partnership we share with the country of Brazil.

Furthermore, the Joint Action Plan provides for the creation of a Steering Group to advance the understanding and exchange of information between the United States and Brazil and places a special emphasis on the role that education plays in both of our countries.

House Resolution 1254 recognizes the importance of the U.S.-Brazil Joint Action Plan and highlights the commitment of our two nations to strengthen cooperation in the pursuit of these noble goals. It also serves to underscore and further advance our commitments to democracy in that region of the world.

This increased partnership will work to further enhance our longstanding relationship with Brazil, a key partner in the Western Hemisphere, and deepen the types of friendship between our two peoples.

I applaud the proactive efforts taken by both countries in confronting the ongoing challenges of inequity, and I'm confident that the U.S.-Brazilian Joint Action Plan will only work to further strengthen the historic bonds between our two nations.

I support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman's comments in support of this legislation. I, too, agree that this partnership between Brazil and the United States through our respective state departments and foreign ministers will be a great asset to creating equal opportunity in Brazil.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask that our colleagues support this legislation.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1254, a resolution I authored which commends the United States and Brazil for signing the Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality. And, I thank the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs HOWARD BERMAN for his leadership on this issue.

The Joint Action Plan is an important step forward in global efforts to combat the evils of racism and to stand together, as the two largest democracies in the Western Hemisphere, to promote equality for all people.

The United States and Brazil share a history of slavery in the Americas. The legacy and residual effects of that common history remain with both the United States and Brazil long after emancipation. Although the experience of race and the phenomenon of racism have been treated and understood differently in Brazil and the United States, today our paths converge. The ways in which our racial histories have diverged, and more recently the ways in which they have converged, offer a great learning opportunity for both countries.

Brazil and the United States are the two largest countries in the Western Hemisphere and have the largest Afro-descendant populations—populations which often face the most

difficult economic and social barriers. Therefore, it is highly significant that our countries are now working together. The United States and Brazil have much in common, and our large vibrant minority communities are simply another trait we share. As Chairman of the Brazil Caucus, I believe that working together to stamp out discrimination only helps to bring our countries and peoples closer together, while each nation learns from the other's success stories in fighting ethnic discrimination.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support of this important resolution. Our Congress can and should play a vital role in ensuring the success of the Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality. Our partnership on the Joint Action Plan is a positive step in strengthening our friendship and promoting racial and ethnic equality.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1254, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF BULGARIA

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1383) recognizing the 100th anniversary of the independence of Bulgaria, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1383

Whereas on September 22, 1908, Bulgaria proclaimed its independence to become a full-fledged sovereign state under the name of the Kingdom of Bulgaria;

Whereas this act marked the end of a long and dedicated struggle the Bulgarian people waged against their ages-long foreign occupier, the Ottoman Empire, which conquered the medieval Bulgarian state in the 14th Century;

Whereas although liberated in 1878, Bulgaria remained divided and dependent on its formal ruler;

Whereas with the proclamation of independence 100 years ago, Bulgaria took its rightful place among the family of nations and secured for its citizens in its constitution of 1991 the right to life, freedom and property;

Whereas the Republic of Bulgaria is a democratic nation, a strong defender of freedom and human rights, and a staunch ally of the United States;

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Bulgaria on September 19, 1903;

Whereas the United States acknowledges the courage of the Bulgarian people in deciding to pursue a free, democratic, and independent Bulgaria and their steadfast perseverance in building a society based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, and a free market economy;

Whereas the people of the Republic of Bulgaria strive to preserve and continue their tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance;

Whereas the Bulgarian Parliament, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, King Boris III, politicians, intellectuals, and citizens all played a part in the resistance to Nazi pressure to carry out the deportation of Jews living in Bulgaria by preventing the deportation of 50,000 Jews to Nazi concentration camps;

Whereas Bulgaria was the only European country during World War II to increase its Jewish population;

Whereas Bulgaria experienced its first free election after the end of the Cold War in June 1990;

Whereas North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) heads of state and member governments, meeting in Prague on November 21, 2002, invited Bulgaria into NATO after verified reforms of Bulgaria's political, economic and military systems were completed in preparation for membership;

Whereas Bulgaria was accepted as a member of NATO in April 2004, and has shown determination in enacting the continued reforms necessary to be a productive, contributing member of the Alliance;

Whereas Bulgaria was welcomed into the European Union in January 2007;

Whereas the World Bank recently classified Bulgaria as one of the top 10 nations to have undertaken important economic reforms to attract business investment;

Whereas Bulgaria is the only European Union nation to be listed in the top 10 of the World Bank's classification;

Whereas Bulgaria has promoted stability in the Balkans by rendering support to Operation Allied Force and Operation Joint Guardian led by NATO, and by providing peacekeeping troops to the Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo;

Whereas Bulgaria initiated a historic strengthening of military relations by inviting the United States Armed Forces to begin conducting joint exercises with its forces in Bulgaria, the first voluntary defense cooperation agreement with foreign troops throughout Bulgarian history, including the 1,300 years before its declaration of independence; and

Whereas Bulgaria has stood firmly by the United States in the cause of advancing freedom worldwide during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the Republic of Bulgaria for its efforts to strengthen relations with the United States over the past 100 years;

(2) recognizes the continued contributions of Bulgaria toward bringing peace, stability, and prosperity to the region of South Eastern Europe, including its contributions to regional security and democratic stability;

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

(4) encourages opportunities for greater cooperation between the United States and Bulgaria in the political, military, economic, and cultural spheres.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I'm delighted to support this resolution marking the 100th anniversary of the independence of Bulgaria. I would like to note my good friend Representative JOE WILSON of South Carolina for his leadership in ensuring that the House mark this important date.

Founded over 1300 years ago in 681, Bulgaria is one of the most ancient countries in the world. Often referred to as the cradle of Slavic culture, Bulgaria was the birthplace of Orpheus and Spartacus. It has given the world the Cyrillic alphabet, beautiful handicrafts, and folk music.

In September 1908, Bulgaria threw off the yoke of Ottoman occupation, proclaimed its independence, and became a sovereign state under the name of the Kingdom of Bulgaria. In the 100 years since it achieved independent statehood, Bulgaria has become a Democratic nation, a staunch ally of the United States, and an active participant in the transatlantic community.

Bulgaria joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, in April 2004. It has actively participated in NATO missions aimed at ensuring the security and stability of the Balkans. Bulgaria provided support for Operation Allied Force and Operation Joint Guardian and furnished peacekeeping troops to the Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Kosovo Force.

Bulgaria also has been a country of strategic importance to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan allowing the U.S. to establish bases in the country and make use of its technical facilities. Bulgaria was welcomed into the European Union in January 2007, which made the Cyrillic alphabet the third official alphabet of the Union after Latin and Greek.

Bulgaria has also sought to strengthen its ties to the United States. Bulgarians began immigrating to this country in large numbers between 1903 and 1910, seeking economic opportunities and political freedoms during a time of great turmoil on the continent. According to the United States Census of 2000, there were 63,000 people of Bulgarian descent living in the United States. They're undoubtedly making a rich contribution to the tapestry of American life.

This resolution rightly encourages opportunities for even greater collaboration between our two nations in the political, economic, military, and cultural realms.