

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 1142

Recognizing 100 years of diplomatic relations between the United States
and the Baltic States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 27, 2022

Mr. BACON (for himself and Mr. GALLEGO) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing 100 years of diplomatic relations between the
United States and the Baltic States.

Whereas the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania
originally declared their independence in 1918;

Whereas, in 1920, Soviet Russia signed treaties with Estonia,
Latvia, and Lithuania recognizing their sovereignty and
renouncing all territorial claims over each Baltic State in
perpetuity;

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations
with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as independent
countries on July 28, 1922, and the United States and
the Baltic States have grown strong as partners for the
past century;

Whereas, on August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which contained a secret protocol dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence, with the Baltic States ultimately being assigned to the Soviet Union, leading soon after to the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union;

Whereas following World War II, the Soviet Union forcibly occupied the Baltic States, imposing its model of Soviet totalitarianism for more than 5 decades;

Whereas the United States never recognized the illegal occupation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania by the Soviet Union, instead maintaining 100 years of continuous diplomatic relations with the Baltic States;

Whereas, in August 1989, approximately 2,000,000 people joined hands in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to form a 373-mile human chain across the 3 States known as the Baltic Chain of Freedom;

Whereas, in February 1990, the people of Lithuania participated in the first free election to select a new parliament, which promptly voted to restore independence, making Lithuania the first occupied Soviet republic to declare independence on March 11, 1990, a move subsequently followed by Latvia on May 4, 1990, and Estonia on August 20, 1991;

Whereas, in January 1991, Soviet military forces tried to quash the growing independence restoration movement, leading to approximately 14 Lithuanian deaths, 6 Latvian deaths, and many injuries;

Whereas, in February and March 1991, the people of Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia voted overwhelmingly in sup-

port of their respective independence restoration referendums, which the United States recognized later that year;

Whereas the Baltic States helped pave the path for democracy and freedom across Eastern Europe, leading to the fall of the Soviet Union;

Whereas after the restoration of independence, the economies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania emerged as modern market economies leading in technology and financial services sectors;

Whereas Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania continue to demonstrate their commitment to advancing democratic values, peace, and security through their membership and active participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development;

Whereas the Baltic States have been loyal NATO allies, contributing to regional and global security through operations in Afghanistan and leadership in the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Estonia, the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia, and the NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence in Lithuania;

Whereas the Baltic States contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area by spending at least 2 percent of gross domestic product for defense and to global security through determined participation in international allied operations and missions;

Whereas Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were among the first countries to participate in the National Guard State Partnership Program with the Maryland, Michigan, and

Pennsylvania National Guards, respectively, and, since 1993, have provided additional opportunities to enhance military readiness and interoperability between the United States and Baltic forces;

Whereas, in 2019, the United States and the Baltic States signed the Security Cooperation Roadmaps, outlining joint security cooperation priorities from 2019 to 2024;

Whereas the Baltic States are actively involved in security assistance, promotion of democracy, and protection of human rights across Eastern Europe, including in Ukraine and Belarus, in the face of aggression and an increase of troops in Belarus by the Russian Federation and the manipulation of the migrant crisis in Europe by the Lukashenko regime;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has pursued an aggressive campaign of intimidation against the Baltic States including the repeated violation of the sovereign airspace with military aircraft, and the harassment of government officials, private citizens, and military personnel stationed in Europe and abroad through disinformation, propaganda, and other cyberattacks;

Whereas since the restoration of independence, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have faced persistent aggression, intimidation, and cyberattacks from the Russian Federation and, as a result, have worked to shape total defense strategies to counter intervention by the Russian Federation;

Whereas after building trade ties with Taiwan, the Government of Lithuania has faced severe economic and diplomatic coercion from the People's Republic of China including a discriminatory and illegal customs blockade on

products from Lithuania and imports containing Lithuanian parts, prompting the European Union to formally refer the matter to the World Trade Organization as a violation of international trade rules;

Whereas, on January 24, 2022, the Secretary of Defense put 8,500 members of the United States Armed Forces on high alert for potential deployment to Eastern Europe as part of a NATO response force in reaction to Russia's destabilizing military force deployments in Belarus, along Russia's border with Ukraine, and in the Black Sea;

Whereas, on February 22, 2022, in response to the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russian air, land, and naval forces, the President of the United States ordered the rapid deployment of an infantry battalion task force, F-35 fighter aircraft, and AH-64 attack helicopters to uphold NATO security commitments to the Baltic States;

Whereas support for the Baltic States by the United States remains a crucial factor for countering military, economic, and diplomatic coercion by the Governments of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, and the People's Republic of China, and complements the efforts of NATO to strengthen its deterrence and defense posture, including enhanced forward presence in the eastern part of the NATO alliance;

Whereas the Baltic States have been models of democratic governance with strong institutions and respect for civil liberties and the rule of law, which are cherished shared values between the Baltic States and the United States; and

Whereas since the restoration of independence, the democratic and economic development and progress of the Bal-

tic States has established Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as 3 shining beacons of freedom: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes 100 years of continuous diplo-
3 matic relations between the United States and Esto-
4 nia, Latvia, and Lithuania;

5 (2) looks forward to strengthening diplomatic
6 relations between the Baltic States and the United
7 States;

8 (3) recognizes the courage and resilience of the
9 people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in their
10 fight for freedom and democracy in the face of per-
11 sistent coercion, intimidation, and aggressive behav-
12 ior by the Russian Federation;

13 (4) stands in solidarity with the Baltic States
14 against all forms of economic, diplomatic, or military
15 coercion by the Russian Federation, the Republic of
16 Belarus, the People’s Republic of China, and other
17 authoritarian governments;

18 (5) commits to providing continued support for
19 the Baltic States through economic and security co-
20 operation, including through the Baltic Security Ini-
21 tiative, and further strengthening transatlantic ties
22 and regional security through the North Atlantic
23 Treaty Organization; and

1 (6) affirms its desire that the next 100 years of
2 friendship between the Baltic States and the United
3 States continue to build on the positive achievements
4 and progress made since the Baltic States restored
5 their independence.

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