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6/12/73

Mr. Speaker, today I join with others of my colleagues in commemorating a sad anniversary. It is now 33 years since the Soviets invaded Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and seized them by force of arms.

The United States and other freedom-loving nations of the world stood by while this tragedy occurred. We can take ~~any~~ ^{only} comfort in the fact that the U.S. has never recognized the ~~forced~~ ^{forcible} annexation of Lithuania and the other Baltic States into the Soviet Union.

Now we stand on the threshold of a new era of peace. We are beginning talks that promise to build a foundation for improved relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. But what of the Baltic States?

Lithuania fell under the yoke of Soviet dictatorship on June 15, 1940. Are we now to forget that act of infamy? Nay, it must never be acceded to by the Lithuanians themselves or by any of the freedom-loving peoples of the earth. It is a horrible injustice which must one day be put right.

Today I voice my continuing support for the just efforts of Lithuanians everywhere to reestablish their country as an independent state and to free their homeland from Russian control.

It is my view that any man who is dedicated to the principles of freedom and justice and informs himself of the manner in which the Soviet Union subjugated the Lithuanian people cannot help but be their ally in a persistent struggle to free them.

I am not surprised that Lithuanians consider themselves ~~betrayed~~ ^{betrayed} by the agreement entered into Feb. 11, 1945, at Yalta by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. There is no question that the Yalta Agreement appeared to seal the fate of all of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Government of the United States had clearly closed its eyes to aggression by the Soviet Union after fighting a bloody war to cleanse the world of aggression by Nazi Germany and Japan.

Yet it is a fact of historic importance that the United States has never recognized the validity of the Russian occupation of the Baltic nations. And in this there is hope for Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians--and for the entire world. It means that the concept of freedom still lives--that it can never be extinguished by force of arms or the brutal suppression of a people. It means that there must come a time when the forces of freedom will rally to turn back the forces of darkness and oppression. Let us today look to the future and pledge that we will never rest until the Baltic States are once again free and independent.####