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House of Representatives

CONGRESSIONAL SALUTE TO THE
PEOPLE OF NORTH CAUCASIA ON
THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THEIR DECLARATION OF INDE-
PENDENCE

HON. ROBERT A. ROE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1976

Mr. ROE. Mr. Speaker, I have received a communique from the Honorable Tscherim Soobzokov of my congressional District, who is President of the Committee for Liberation of North Caucasia, Inc., requesting that I call to the attention of you and our colleagues here in the Congress the plight of the freedom-loving people of North Caucasia in seeking independence as a free state among the nations of the world and join with North Caucasians of Paterson, N.J. and the North Caucasian-American community throughout our country in commemorating this week, May 9-15 of our Bicentennial Year, as North Caucasian Independence Week.

On May 11, 1918 the North Caucasians, having survived many, many battles since the Russian conquest of 1864, declared their independence and with your permission, I would like to insert at this point in our historical journal of Congress a brief summary of the oppression of the North Caucasians forwarded to me by the Committee for Liberation of North Caucasia, Inc. The summary is as follows:

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OPPRESSION OF NORTH CAUCASIANS

The North Caucasians have suffered Russian enslavement for a long time, but little of this has been known to the free world. One of the reasons is that the North Cau-

casians are little known, and their cause is overshadowed by other enslaved European people who are better known to the Western World, such as the Poles, Hungarians, and the Ukrainians. Since the suffering of the North Caucasians, as well as of these peoples, is a result of Soviet Imperialism and since freedom should be enjoyed by all peoples regardless of nationality, it is important that the oppression of North Caucasians be made known.

The North Caucasians are the peoples who inhabit the Caucasus, now under Soviet rule. Through the ages, the North Caucasian people struggled bitterly against any oppressor who tried to deny them the right to be free. In the 19th century, however, with an intensification of the Tsarist Russian imperial scheme to reach the warm waters of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, the North Caucasian position became more serious. Being inhabitants of the corridor which leads to the Persian Gulf, the North Caucasians fell under constant Russian aggression. From the outset, the North Caucasians realized, owing to their small numbers, the futility of their fight against the colossus, Russia. But they made their choice to die on their feet rather than to live on their knees. The whole first part of the 19th century, the North Caucasians fought the tremendous Russian Army without any outside help. After six decades of fighting, in 1864, Russia claimed that she pacified the North Caucasians by forcing over half a million people into mass exile. Most of these exiles were scattered into the Ottoman Empire and their descendants are still living in several countries of the Middle East.

The North Caucasians who remained in the Caucasus under Tsarist rule, tried through several sporadic uprisings to regain their freedom and independence, but without any success. When the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 took place, the North Caucasians as well as other subjugated peoples of the Caucasus, believed that their golden opportunity to re-establish themselves, as a free people, had come and they began to organize themselves into a democratic republic. But as soon as the Bolsheviks established themselves, the whole Caucasus once again came under the Rus-

sian yoke. This time the Russians instead of being white, were red, more efficient, and more ruthless. They enforced their collectivization on the people, massacring anybody who did not accept so called Marxist doctrine. Many North Caucasians who took arms against the new master of the Caucasus were killed, and some, who escaped, moved out of the Caucasus. Thus the second exodus of the North Caucasians took place.

Between the two World Wars, the North Caucasians experienced the most severe rules and subjugation in their history. When the Second World War started, once again the North Caucasians took it as an opportunity to free themselves and joined sides against their Communist masters. Again they were suppressed, and again some managed to escape to the free world. The North Caucasians of Paterson are some of these who found a haven in the United States and belong to the third exodus of the North Caucasian peoples.

Although the North Caucasians of Paterson are lucky to find a refuge in the United States, where they enjoy the blessings of its democratic institutions and human rights, they cannot free themselves from thoughts of their brothers, sisters, sons and daughters who are not free but are enslaved in the fullest meaning of that word. Therefore, the North Caucasians of Paterson deem it their duty to raise their voice and let Americans and the peoples of the free world know about their case and cause.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of my Congressional District and the State of New Jersey, I join in this annual observance of the North Caucasians of Paterson and trust that through our mutual endeavors and responsibilities that we will strive to continue to achieve international understanding and agreement that will eliminate the oppression of people and restore "human rights" and the rights of self-determination by the peoples of the so-called captive nations of the world.