

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 23

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 19, 2009

Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and objectives of the Prague Conference
on Holocaust Era Assets.

Whereas the Government of the Czech Republic will host the Conference on Holocaust Era Assets in Prague from June 26, 2009, through June 30, 2009 (in this preamble referred to as the “Prague Conference”);

Whereas the Prague Conference will facilitate a review of the progress made since the 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust Era Assets, in which 44 countries, 13 non-governmental organizations, and numerous scholars and Holocaust survivors participated;

Whereas a high-level United States delegation participated in the Washington Conference, led by then-Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs Stuart Eizenstat, Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel, Federal Judge Abner Mikva, senior diplomats, and a bipartisan group of Members of Congress;

Whereas then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright delivered the keynote address at the Washington Conference, articulating the commitment of the United States to Holocaust survivors and urging conference participants to “chart a course for finishing the job of returning or providing compensation for stolen Holocaust assets to survivors and the families of Holocaust victims”;

Whereas the Prague Conference is expected to review the issues agreed on at the Washington Conference, including issues relating to financial assets, bank accounts, insurance, and other financial properties;

Whereas the Prague Conference is expected to include a special session on social programs for Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi atrocities;

Whereas at the Prague Conference, working groups are expected to convene to discuss Holocaust education, remembrance and research, looted art, Judaica and Jewish cultural property, and immovable property, including both private, religious, and communal property;

Whereas the participation and leadership of the United States at the highest level is critically important to ensure a successful outcome of the Prague Conference;

Whereas Congress supports further inclusion of Holocaust survivors and their advocates in the planning and proceedings of the Prague Conference;

Whereas the United States strongly supports the immediate return of, or just compensation for, property that was illegally confiscated by Nazi and Communist regimes;

Whereas many Holocaust survivors lack the means for even the most basic necessities, including proper housing and health care;

Whereas the United States and the international community have a moral obligation to uphold and defend the dignity of Holocaust survivors and to ensure their well-being;

Whereas the Prague Conference is a critical forum for effectively addressing the increasing economic, social, housing, and health care needs of Holocaust survivors in their waning years;

Whereas then-Senator Barack Obama, during his visit in July 2008 to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel, stated, “Let our children come here and know this history so they can add their voices to proclaim ‘never again.’ And may we remember those who perished, not only as victims but also as individuals who hoped and loved and dreamed like us and who have become symbols of the human spirit.”; and

Whereas the Prague Conference may represent the last opportunity for the international community to address outstanding Holocaust-era issues: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) supports the goals and objectives of the
4 2009 Prague Conference on Holocaust Era Assets;

5 (2) applauds the Government of the Czech Re-
6 public for hosting the Prague Conference and for its
7 unwavering commitment to addressing outstanding
8 Holocaust-era issues;

9 (3) applauds the countries participating in the
10 Prague Conference for the decision to seek justice

1 for Holocaust survivors and to promote Holocaust
2 remembrance and education;

3 (4) expresses strong support for the decision by
4 those countries to make the economic, social, hous-
5 ing, and health care needs of Holocaust survivors a
6 major focus of the Prague Conference, especially in
7 light of the advanced age of the survivors, whose
8 needs must be urgently addressed;

9 (5) urges countries in Central and Eastern Eu-
10 rope that have not already done so—

11 (A) to return to the rightful owner any
12 property that was wrongfully confiscated or
13 transferred to a non-Jewish individual; or

14 (B) if return of such property is no longer
15 possible, to pay equitable compensation to the
16 rightful owner in accordance with principles of
17 justice and through an expeditious claims-driv-
18 en administrative process that is just, trans-
19 parent, and fair;

20 (6) urges all countries to make a priority of re-
21 turning to Jewish communities any religious or com-
22 munal property that was stolen as a result of the
23 Holocaust;

24 (7) calls on all countries to facilitate the use of
25 the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Con-

(8) calls on the President to send a high-level official, such as the Secretary of State or an appropriate designee, to represent the United States at the Prague Conference; and

8 (9) urges other invited countries to participate
9 at a similarly high level.

Attest: NANCY ERICKSON,
Secretary.