independence and sovereignty of Ukraine and progress of its political and economic reforms. I commend Chairman GILMAN for his introduction of this important resolution and efforts to ensure its passage.

On August 24, Ukraine celebrated its fifth anniversary of independence. In doing so, Ukraine confounded the predictions of some Western analysts—made only a few years ago—that it would break up or soon return to Russia's orbit. Despite the considerable challenges Ukraine continues to face, this strategically important country has emerged as a stable state where political differences, while at times intense, are resolved peacefully and democratically. The most recent evidence of this is the Ukrainian parliament's adoption of a new constitution in June.

During the last 5 years, Ukraine has made significant progress both at home and abroad. On the international scene, Ukraine has exhibited stability in a volatile region. United States-Ukrainian relations are now on a solid footing and are stronger than ever. The United States is committed to helping Ukraine consolidate its independence through economic and political reform.

In 1994, Ukraine signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] at the OSCE Summit in Budapest and ratified START–I, and just a few months ago, on May 31, the last former Soviet nuclear weapons were removed from Ukrainian soil. While strengthening its ties with the West, Ukraine is also attempting to forge a constructive relationship with all its neighbors, especially Russia, while emphasizing its independence and resisting Russian attempts at greater CIS military and political integration. In fact, just last month, Ukraine's defense minister refused to sign a CIS statement on NATO expansion. In so doing, he underscored Ukraine's belief that every independent state has the right to make its own decision on entry into NATO consistent with OSCE principles. While outstanding problems with Russia remain, including the contentious issue of basing for the Black Sea Fleet, efforts are continuing toward their resolution.

The consolidation of Ukraine's statehood is also evident in the domestic arena. In June, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a constitution after years of wrangling, further stabilizing the political situation and paving the way to more vigourous reform efforts, particularly in the economic sphere. Also, tensions in Crimea have diminished in the last year and the new Crimean authorities appear to be more cooperative with the Ukrainian Government. Moreover, human rights, including minority rights, continue to be generally respected in Ukraine and the interethnic conflicts so common in many other countries of the region have not appeared in Ukraine.

In the past year, Ukraine has also witnessed the beginnings of an economic overhaul: Prices for many goods have been freed; the budget deficit has been reduced; and inflation has gone down. Just a few days ago, Ukraine's long-awaited new currency, the hryvna, was introduced.

Mr. Speaker, despite the positive developments I have outlined, Ukraine still faces serious challenges—economic ills; a crippling bureaucracy; corruption; the lack of a legal structure which hampers business and foreign investment; the growth of organized crime and the lack of developed democratic institutions and civil society. House Concurrent Resolution 120 underscores the dependence of Ukraine's economic and social stability on its ability to build a stable market-based economy and a legal system based on the rule of law. This resolution, I am pleased to say, also addresses another major challenge for Ukraine, by urging Kyiv to continue its cooperative efforts with the G–7 to safely and expeditiously shut down the nuclear reactors at Chornobyl. Last May, the House unanimously approved a resolution that I introduced on the Chornobyl disaster which underscored the importance of G–7 efforts to assist Ukraine in closing down Chornobyl, and I am pleased that the international community has recently showed signs of greater willingness to assist Ukraine in this important endeavor.

Indeed, Ukraine's struggle toward political and economic reforms—to overcome the devastating legacy of Soviet rule—will be formidable. But this process, too, must be kept in perspective. Let us keep in mind that, historically, the Ukrainian people have shown a tremendous ability to overcome extremely unfavorable odds. As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I have long tracked developments in Ukraine and supported the Ukrainian people in their struggle for freedom—well before Ukraine became independent. I am familiar with the tremendous sacrifices it took to achieve independence. Despite the fact that independence arrived peacefully 5 years ago, in 1991, it was hard won, and there are still some in Russia, including among the political elite, who have not reconciled themselves to an independent Ukraine. Throughout this bloody century, millions of Ukrainians sacrificed their very lives or well-being because of their commitment to freedom and independence. In short, you might say that the Ukrainian people, in achieving independence and maintaining and strengthening it over the last 5 years, have already beat the odds.

Mr. Speaker, I also think of how far Ukraine has already come since independence. Given that 5 years ago Ukraine in many repsects had to start from scratch—lacking the necessary institutions and state structures—I am optimistic with respect to Ukraine's future and confident that the people of Ukraine will overcome any challenges that lie ahead. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 120 stresses the importance which this Congress attaches to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and urges continued United States assistance to Ukraine for its political and economic reforms. By providing this support, we will help the Ukrainian people to overcome the challenges that lie ahead and will be acting in a way that comports with both our national interests and our long-standing values.

HONORING IRWIN TOWNSHIP'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. WILLIAM F. CLINGER, JR.

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the community of Irwin Township, PA.

On Saturday, August 17, 1996, and Sunday, August 18, 1996, the citizens of Irwin Township will gather to celebrate their 200th anniversary. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Irwin Township on such a special occasion.

Irwin Township, a small township in the western part of Pennsylvania, extends for over 21,580 acres and has road mileage in excess of 42 miles. A small community, Irwin Township has approximately 1,200 residents.

Once a farming and oil well drilling community, Irwin Township today has many residents who are employed as millworkers in its surrounding communities.

As with many small towns across this Nation, Irwin Township is also a community with strong religious ties. This is so much so that Irwin Township alone has seven churches within its boundaries.

With their 200th anniversary on August 17 and 18, Irwin Township has become an inspiration to all small communities throughout this country, and will continue to be as we enter the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize Irwin Township, PA, on their 200th anniversary. Once again, I congratulate the community of Irwin Township and offer my best wishes for continued success.

A TRIBUTE TO EDITH MORRISON

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, today the south Florida community mourns the loss of Edith Morrison—an admired community leader, beloved wife, mother, and grandmother. I join with Edith's family and her many friends to mourn her loss and remember her positive impact on the south Florida community.

Upon moving to south Florida from New York, Edith immediately assumed a top leadership role in our community. Succeeding her husband Julius as president of the Sunrise Democratic Club, Edith was an outspoken public figure known for her honesty and integrity. Edith was known among her friends as a woman who always knew the facts of every important issue. Forever a jealous advocate of equal opportunity for all people, Edith knew when to be out front on an issue and when to exert quiet influence behind the scenes with the utmost dignity. Edith gave generously of her time, having served as president of the Sunrise Lakes Women's Club, active in local labor organizations, and as a lifetime member of B'nai B'rith.

Among her family, Edith is remembered as the loving wife of her late husband Julius, the mother of her two children—Marcie and Ross—and as the grandmother of four grandchildren. In life, she earned the highest respect and admiration of all who her knew her. In death, she is remembered as a revered leader who gave unselfishly to her family and community. For all of us whose lives were touched by Edith, we will miss her dearly.