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CAPTIVE NATIONS WEEK

Twenty-five years ago, by a joint resolution approved July 17, 1959, Congress requested the President each year to proclaim the third week in July as Captive Nations Week. At that time, many people believed that the liberation of the Captive Peoples could be accomplished within a few years with just a little encouragement from the West.

Now, in 1984, we have the bad news and the good news. The bad news is that none of the Captive Nations listed in the 1959 resolution has shaken off the yoke of tyranny and, worse, the number of Captive Nations has significantly increased. The good news is that no additional country has fallen to the Communists since Ronald Reagan became President.

It's funny the way that no single event was ever the target of such vehement verbal abuse by the Kremlin bosses as the original Captive Nations resolution. Khrushchev was so angry that it was his principal complaint when Vice President Richard Nixon visited Moscow later that month.

The Soviets obviously have total control over the Captive Nations. But de facto control does not satisfy them; they yearn for the mantle of legality. They want the West to admit that Soviet control of the satellite nations is both legitimate and permanent.

The Soviets also know that the desire for liberty of the Captive Peoples, and the smoldering unrest this causes, is the Achilles heel of their empire. Even better than most Americans, the Kremlin bosses recognize the truth of the original Congressional resolution when it identified the link between "the national security of the United States" and the keeping alive of "the desire for liberty and independence on the part of the peoples of these conquered nations."

That's why the rise of the Solidarity labor union in Poland was perceived as a mortal danger so imminent that the Soviet KGB hatched a plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II. Of all the Captive Nations, Bulgaria is the most slavish lackey of the Soviet KGB, and the evidence is now abundant that Agca was the centerpiece of a well-planned conspiracy.

"Human rights" has become one of the most popular themes in the media. All those who

are interested in "human rights" ought to be very interested in the fate of the Captive Nations where there are little or no human rights.

It is elementary that the most important human right would be the right not to be killed. Yet, nothing in all history can compare to the record of the Communists when it comes to killing.

Killing people whom the state finds inconvenient to have around is an essential part of Communism in both theory and practice. Karl Marx laid down the dictum in his "Communist Manifesto": "You must, therefore, confess that by 'individual' you mean no other person than the bourgeois, the middle-class owner of property. This person must indeed be swept out of the way, and made impossible."

The historical evidence is overwhelming that Communism in practice takes Marx's words literally, not rhetorically. Congressional investigating committees estimated the number of people killed by the Soviet Communists at 35 to 45 million, and the number killed by the Chinese Communists at 34 to 62 million.

Other authorities, such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, place the total much higher. Antonov-Ovseyenko, whose father led the Bolshevik attack on the Czar's palace in 1917, calculates that the number killed as a result of the Communist takeover of Russia is 100 million people.

The killings by Communists have not slacked off, but are just as savage as in the time of Stalin. Americans were told that we had to get our troops out of Southeast Asia in order "to stop the killing." But after we departed and the dedicated Communists took over, then the killing began in earnest.

Reliable estimates are that the current regime of Communists who took command in Cambodia killed between two and three million persons out of the population of seven million. Their foreign minister, Ieng Sary said, "As long as we have one million left, that will be enough to make the new man."

Captive Nations Week this year is surely a good time to talk about the lack of human rights -- especially in the nations enslaved by the Communists.