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CAPTIVE NATIONS WEEK

This week we are officially celebrating Captive Nations Week, an annual observan e designated by Congress and proclaimed by the President in accordance with Public Law 86-90.

The Captive Nations Resolution, which was passed by overwhelming majorities in Congress and signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower, lists 22 nations that have been enslaved by "Communist Russia," and then states: "It is vital to the national security of the United States that the desire for liberty and independence on the part of the peoples of these conquered nations should be steadfastly kept alive."

The original passage of the Captive Nations Resolution in **19f9** worried the Kremlin dictators more than any action the United States has ever taken, more ven than our annual appropriations for military weapons. The Kremlin dictators were shaken by our official declaration that the United States does not consider their rule over the satellite nations either legitimate or permanent.

Nikita Khrushchev was so upset at the Captive Nations Resolution approval on July 17, 1959 that he could talk of little else when Vice President Richard Nixon visited Moscow later that month. Khrushchev's reaction made it clear that the Resolution had inadvertently touched the Achilles heel of the Communist colossus.

Everyone knows that the Soviets enjoy total control over the Captive Nations of Eastern Europe. But de facto control is not enough for the Kremlin dictators. They yearn for the mantle of legality. They have always had a perpetual passion to extract an admission by the West that Soviet control of the satellite nations

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is both legitimate and permanent.

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This is why for 19 years the Soviets kept calling for "European Security Conference whose principal purpose would be to proclaim that the West acknowledges and recognizes Soviet occupation of nine Eastern European countries as lawful.

The United States finally agreed to participate in such a conference, and the first session took place in Helsinki in July 1973. The Soviets made no secret of their objectives, bluntly proclaiming that they specifically reserve the right to carry out future Czechoslovakia-type invasions of any East European satellites.

This so-called right to invade a peaceful neighbor is called the Brezhnev Doctrine.

The United States ignored this flaunting of Soviet aggressive intentions and continued to negotiate until 1976 when the Helsinki Agreement was signed. The Soviets interpreted this agreement as tacit recognition of the legitimacy of their control of Eastern European countries.

The permanence of Soviet control, however, is again in jeopardy because of Leonid Brezhnev's illness. According to the Washington Post, French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing told Secretary of State Cyrus Vance what many have suspected but feared to say, namely, that Brezhnev's physical condition at their recent Paris Conference was so poor that he was unable to engage in any meaningful conversation. Official denials were unpersuasive.

Despite his failing health, Brezhnev recently fired the President of the U.S.S.R. and assumed that post himself. The vote to elect him was unanimous. No one dared vote against him.

When Brezhnev dies or collapses, the Soviet Union will start a period of indecision among the leaders and an opportunity for the Captive Nations to proclaim their independence and freedom. The Kremlin could not cope with a rebellion involving most of its citizens. During the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, Russian soldiers refused to fire on the Freedom Fighters and Khru hev had to bring in Siberian troops.

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