

URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO ENSURE THAT THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TO BE
HELD ON JULY 3, 2005, ARE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE
WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FREE AND FAIR
ELECTIONS

MARKUP
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H. Con. Res. 155

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:38 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Henry J. Hyde (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Chairman HYDE. The Committee will come to order.

Prior to convening the hearing, a business meeting of the Committee will come to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to seek consideration of the following resolution which the Members have before them, H. Con. Res. 155, Urging the Government of the Republic of Albania to ensure that the parliamentary elections to be held July 3, 2005, are conducted in accordance with international standards for free and fair elections.

[The resolution referred to follows:]

HCON 155 IH

109th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. CON. RES. 155

Urging the Government of the Republic of Albania to ensure that the parliamentary elections to be held on July 3, 2005, are conducted in accordance with international standards for free and fair elections.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 17, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Mr. ENGEL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Urging the Government of the Republic of Albania to ensure that the parliamentary elections to be held on July 3, 2005, are conducted in accordance with international standards for free and fair elections.

Whereas the United States maintains strong and friendly relations with the Republic of Albania and appreciates the ongoing support of the people of Albania;

Whereas the President of Albania has called for elections to Albania's parliament, known as the People's Assembly, to be held on July 3, 2005;

Whereas Albania is one of 55 participating States in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), all of which have adopted the 1990 Copenhagen Document containing specific commitments relating to the conduct of elections;

Whereas these commitments, which encourage transparency, balance, and impartiality in an election process, have become the standard by which observers determine whether elections have been conducted freely and fairly;

Whereas, though improvements over time have been noted, the five multiparty parliamentary elections held in Albania between 1991 and 2001, as well as elections for local offices held between and after those years, fell short of the standards in the Copenhagen Document to varying degrees, according to OSCE and other observers;

Whereas with OSCE and other international assistance, the Government of Albania has improved the country's electoral and legal framework and enhanced the capacity to conduct free and fair elections;

Whereas subsequent to the calling of elections, Albania's political parties have accepted a code of conduct regarding their campaign activities, undertaking to act in accordance with the law, to refrain from inciting violence or hatred in the election campaign, and to be transparent in disclosing campaign

funding; and

Whereas meeting the standards in the Copenhagen Document for free and fair elections is absolutely essential to Albania's desired integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as to Albania's progress in addressing official corruption and combatting organized crime: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress--

(1) welcomes the opportunity for the Republic of Albania to demonstrate its willingness and preparedness to take the next steps in European and Euro-Atlantic integration by holding parliamentary elections on July 3, 2005, that meet the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) standards for free and fair elections as defined in the 1990 Copenhagen Document;

(2) firmly believes that the citizens of Albania, like all people, should be able to choose their own representatives in parliament and government in free and fair elections, and to hold these representatives accountable through elections at reasonable intervals;

(3) supports commitments by Albanian political parties to adhere to a basic code of conduct for campaigning and urges such parties and all election officials in Albania to adhere to laws relating to the elections, and to conduct their activities in an impartial and transparent manner, by allowing international and domestic observers to have unobstructed access to all aspects of the election process, including public campaign events, candidates, news media, voting, and post-election tabulation of results and processing of election challenges and complaints;

(4) supports assistance by the United States to help the people of Albania establish a fully free and open democratic system, a prosperous free market economy, and its rightful place in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and

(5) encourages the President to communicate to the Government of Albania, to all political parties and candidates, and to the people of Albania the high importance attached by the Government of the United States to this parliamentary election as a central factor in determining the future relationship between the United States and Albania.

END

The Chairman adjourned the business meeting of the Committee.
[Whereupon, at 10:38 a.m., the Committee proceeded to the noticed hearing.]

