Public Law 97-157
97th Congress

Joint Resolution

Mar. 22, 1982
[H.J. Res. 373]

Expressing the sense of Congress that the Government of the Soviet Union should respect the rights of its citizens to practice their religion and to emigrate, and that these matters should be among the issues raised at the thirty-eighth meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at Geneva in February 1982.

Whereas the Soviet authorities have mounted a triple assault on their Jewish community, (1) the number of Jews allowed to emigrate has been reduced from a high of four thousand seven hundred and forty-six in the month of October 1979 to a total of only nine thousand four hundred in all of 1981, the lowest number since emigration began, (2) frequent harassments, arrests, and trials have become an almost daily occurrence, and (3) unparalleled assaults on Jewish self-study groups occur in the major urban areas; and

Whereas such harassment and obstacles to free movement violate the obligations of the Soviet Union to respect the rights of freedom of thought, conscience, expression, religion, and emigration, as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at Helsinki, and the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Now, therefore, be it

United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, 1982. U.S. delegation.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the President should instruct the United States delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights meeting in Geneva in February 1982 to carry to the Commission the message that the Soviet Union should respect the rights of its citizens to practice their religion and to emigrate, should stop its harassments, arrests, and trials of the members of its Jewish community, and should stop its assaults on Jewish self-study groups;

(2) the Government of the Soviet Union should comply with its obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at Helsinki, and the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by ceasing the indiscriminate arrests and trials of Jewish activists, by ending the assaults on Jewish self-study groups, and by opening its doors to those who wish to emigrate;

(3) the President should express to the Government of the Soviet Union the strong and continuing opposition of the United States to such harassment of its citizenry, and the obstacles it presents to those who wish to emigrate; and

(4) the President should reiterate to the Government of the Soviet Union that the United States, in evaluating its relations

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with other nations, will consider the extent to which they honor their commitments under international law, particularly their commitments concerning human rights.

SEC. 2. The President shall transmit copies of this resolution to the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to the United States and to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

Approved March 22, 1982.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 373 (S.J. Res. 154):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 128 (1982):
Mar. 2, considered and passed House.
Mar. 4, S.J. Res. 154 considered in Senate; H.J. Res. 373 considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 18, No. 12 (1982):
Mar. 22, Presidential statement.