

106TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 280

Expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to United States relations
with the Russian Federation in view of the situation in Chechnya.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 30, 2000

Mr. WELLSTONE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to United
States relations with the Russian Federation in view
of the situation in Chechnya.

Whereas the Senate of the United States unanimously passed
Senate Resolution 262 on February 24, 2000, con-
demning the indiscriminate use of force by the Govern-
ment of the Russian Federation against the people of
Chechnya, encouraging peace negotiations between the
Government of the Russian Federation and the leader-
ship of the Chechen Government, and urging the Govern-
ment of the Russian Federation to immediately grant
international organizations full and unimpeded access
into Chechnya in order to provide humanitarian assist-
ance and investigate alleged atrocities and war crimes;

Whereas the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Senate received credible evidence and testimony reporting grave human rights violations on both sides of the war in Chechnya;

Whereas the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate received credible evidence and testimony that Russian forces in Chechnya caused the deaths of countless thousands of innocent civilians and the displacement of well over 250,000 innocents; forcibly relocated refugee populations; and committed widespread atrocities including summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture, and rape;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation continues its military campaign in Chechnya through the use of indiscriminate force, causing further dislocation of people from their homes, the deaths of unarmed civilians and widespread suffering;

Whereas this war contributes to ethnic hatred and religious intolerance within the Russian Federation, and could divert much-needed international development assistance, undercut the ability of the international community to trust the Russian Federation as a signatory to international agreements, generate political instability within the Russian Federation, and be a continuing threat to the peace in the region; and

Whereas the Senate again expresses its deep concern over the war and humanitarian tragedy in Chechnya, and its desire for a peaceful and durable settlement to the conflict: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

1 (1) the lack of vigorous and sustained action of
2 most Western governments, including that of the
3 United States, to respond to the conflict in
4 Chechnya could be too easily interpreted by the Gov-
5 ernment of the Russian Federation as indifference to
6 it and thus allow that government to intensify and
7 expand its military campaign there, further contrib-
8 uting to the suffering of the Chechen people;

9 (2) the President of the Russian Federation,
10 Vladimir Putin, is responsible for the conduct of
11 Russian troops in and around Chechnya and has an
12 obligation to ensure compliance with international
13 humanitarian law and human rights norms, includ-
14 ing the obligation to prevent present and future
15 atrocities there, and to investigate fully atrocities al-
16 ready committed, and to initiate, where appropriate,
17 prosecutions against those accused;

18 (3) the Government of the Russian Federation
19 and the leadership of the Chechen Government
20 should immediately cease military operations in
21 Chechnya and seek a negotiated settlement to the
22 conflict there;

23 (4) the President of the Russian Federation
24 should—

1 (A) act immediately to end human rights
2 violations by Russian soldiers in Chechnya;

3 (B) allow immediate, full, and unimpeded
4 access into and around Chechnya international
5 monitors to assess and report on the situation
6 there and to investigate alleged atrocities and
7 war crimes;

8 (C) allow international humanitarian agen-
9 cies immediate, full, and unimpeded access to
10 Chechen civilians, including those in refugee,
11 detention, and “filtration” camps, or any other
12 facility where citizens of Chechnya are detained;
13 and

14 (D) investigate fully atrocities committed
15 in Chechnya, including those alleged in Alkhan-
16 Yurt and Grozny, and initiate, where appro-
17 priate, prosecutions against those accused;

18 (5) the President of the United States of Amer-
19 ica should—

20 (A) affirm respect for human rights, demo-
21 cratic rule of law, and international account-
22 ability as a foundation of United States foreign
23 policy;

24 (B) affirm respect for human rights, demo-
25 cratic rule of law, and international account-

1 ability as a condition for continued United
2 States-Russian cooperation;

3 (C) conduct a full and comprehensive re-
4 view of United States foreign policy toward the
5 Russian Federation with respect to its conduct
6 in Chechnya, and its implications for United
7 States-Russian relations;

8 (D) promote peace negotiations between
9 the Government of the Russian Federation and
10 the leadership of the Chechen Government
11 through third-party mediation by the OSCE As-
12 sistance Group in Chechnya, the United Na-
13 tions, or other appropriate parties;

14 (E) publicly and openly support societal
15 forces in the Russian Federation working to
16 preserve democracy there, including empowering
17 human rights activists and promoting programs
18 designed to strengthen the independent media,
19 trade unions, political parties, and other institu-
20 tions of a democratic civil society there; and

21 (F) take further, more tangible steps to
22 demonstrate to the Government of the Russian
23 Federation that the United States strongly con-
24 demns its conduct in Chechnya and its unwill-

1 ingness to find a just political solution to the
 2 conflict there, including—

3 (i) sponsoring a Resolution at the
 4 56th annual meeting of the United Nations
 5 Human Rights Commission in Geneva,
 6 Switzerland, expressing the Commission's
 7 serious concern about reports of very grave
 8 violations of human rights and humani-
 9 tarian law in Chechnya, and including pro-
 10 visions, such as the establishment of a
 11 Commission of Inquiry, to investigate accu-
 12 sations of violations of the Geneva Conven-
 13 tion Relative to the Protection of Civilian
 14 Persons in Time of War, and other inter-
 15 national humanitarian law;

16 (ii) supporting the appointment of a
 17 United Nations Special Rapporteur for
 18 Chechnya; and

19 (iii) placing the war in Chechnya at
 20 the top of the agenda of all high-level dip-
 21 lomatic meetings involving the United
 22 States and the Russian Federation; and

23 (6) the President of the United States should
 24 not reverse actions taken under paragraph (5)(f)

1 until the Government of the Russian Federation
2 has—

3 (A) acted forcefully and effectively to end
4 human rights violations by Russian soldiers in
5 Chechnya;

6 (B) provided full and unimpeded access
7 into and around Chechnya to international
8 monitors to assess and report on the situation
9 there and to investigate alleged atrocities and
10 war crimes;

11 (C) granted international humanitarian
12 agencies full and unimpeded access to Chechen
13 civilians, including those in refugee, detention,
14 and “filtration” camps, or any other facility
15 where citizens of Chechnya are detained; and

16 (D) begun to investigate fully atrocities
17 committed in Chechnya, including those alleged
18 in Alkhan-Yurt and Grozny, and initiated,
19 where appropriate, prosecutions against those
20 accused.

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