

108TH CONGRESS
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S. J. RES. 3

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 5, 2003

Referred to the Committee on International Relations

JOINT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to human rights in Central Asia.

Whereas the Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are providing the United States with assistance in the war in Afghanistan, from military basing and overflight rights to the facilitation of humanitarian relief;

Whereas in turn the United States victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan provides important benefits to the Central Asian nations by removing a regime that threatened their security and by significantly weakening the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist organization that had previously staged armed raids from Afghanistan into the region;

Whereas the United States has consistently urged the nations of Central Asia to open their political systems and economies and to respect human rights, both before and since the attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are members of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), both of which confer a range of obligations with respect to human rights on their members;

Whereas while the United States recognizes marked differences among the social structures and commitments to democratic and economic reform of the Central Asian nations, the United States notes nevertheless, according to the State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, that all five governments of such nations, to differing degrees, restrict freedom of speech and association, restrict or ban the activities of human rights organizations and other non-governmental organizations, harass or prohibit independent media, imprison political opponents, practice arbitrary detention and arrest, and engage in torture and extrajudicial executions;

Whereas by continuing to suppress human rights and to deny citizens peaceful, democratic means of expressing their convictions, the nations of Central Asia risk fueling popular support for violent and extremist movements, thus undermining the goals of the war on terrorism;

Whereas President George W. Bush has made the defense of human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women and private property, free speech, equal justice, religious tolerance strategic goals of United States foreign policy in the Islamic world, arguing that “a truly strong nation will permit legal avenues of dissent for all groups that pursue their aspirations without violence”; and

Whereas Congress has expressed its desire to see deeper reform in Central Asia in past resolutions and other legisla-

tion, most recently conditioning assistance to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on their progress in meeting commitments to the United States on human rights and democracy: Now, therefore, be it

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

4 (1) the governments of Kazakhstan,
 5 Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and
 6 Uzbekistan should accelerate democratic reforms
 7 and fulfill their human rights obligations, including,
 8 where appropriate, by—

9 (A) releasing from prison anyone jailed for
 10 peaceful political activism or the nonviolent ex-
 11 pression of their political or religious beliefs;

12 (B) fully investigating any credible allega-
 13 tions of torture and prosecuting those respon-
 14 sible;

15 (C) permitting the free and unfettered
 16 functioning of independent media outlets, inde-
 17 pendent political parties, and nongovernmental
 18 organizations, including by easing registration
 19 processes;

20 (D) permitting the free exercise of reli-
 21 gious beliefs and ceasing the persecution of
 22 members of religious groups and denominations

1 that do not engage in violence or political
2 change through violence;

3 (E) holding free, competitive, and fair elec-
4 tions; and

5 (F) making publicly available documenta-
6 tion of their revenues and punishing those en-
7 gaged in official corruption;

8 (2) the President, the Secretary of State, and
9 the Secretary of Defense should—

10 (A) continue to raise at the highest levels
11 with the governments of the nations of Central
12 Asia specific cases of political and religious per-
13 secution, and to urge greater respect for human
14 rights and democratic freedoms at every diplo-
15 matic opportunity;

16 (B) take progress in meeting the goals
17 specified in paragraph (1) into account when
18 determining the scope and nature of our diplo-
19 matic and military relations and assistance with
20 each of such governments;

21 (C) ensure that the provisions of foreign
22 operations appropriations Acts are fully imple-
23 mented to ensure that no United States assist-
24 ance benefits security forces in Central Asia

1 that are implicated in violations of human
2 rights;

3 (D) press the Government of
4 Turkmenistan to implement the helpful rec-
5 ommendations contained in the so-called “Mos-
6 cow Mechanism” Report of the Organization for
7 Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
8 respect the right of all prisoners to due process
9 and a fair trial and release democratic activists
10 and their family members from prison;

11 (E) urge the Government of Russia not to
12 extradite to Turkmenistan members of the po-
13 litical opposition of Turkmenistan;

14 (F) work with the Government of
15 Kazakhstan to create a political climate free of
16 intimidation and harassment, including releas-
17 ing political prisoners and permitting the return
18 of political exiles, and to reduce official corrup-
19 tion, including by urging the Government of
20 Kazakhstan to cooperate with the ongoing De-
21 partment of Justice investigation;

22 (G) support through United States assist-
23 ance programs individuals, nongovernmental or-
24 ganizations, and media outlets in Central Asia
25 working to build more open societies, to support

1 the victims of human rights abuses, and to ex-
2 pose official corruption; and

3 (H) press the Government of Uzbekistan
4 to implement fully the recommendations made
5 to the Government of Uzbekistan by the United
6 Nation's Special Rapporteur on Torture; and

7 (3) increased levels of United States assistance
8 to the governments of the nations of Central Asia
9 made possible by their cooperation in the war in Af-
10 ghanistan can be sustained only if there is substan-
11 tial and continuing progress towards meeting the
12 goals specified in paragraph (1).

Passed the Senate May 1, 2003.

Attest: EMILY J. REYNOLDS,
Secretary.