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S. CON. RES. 14

Expressing the sense of Congress that the continued participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of 8 nations should be conditioned on the Russian Government voluntarily accepting and adhering to the norms and standards of democracy.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 17, 2005

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BURNS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the continued participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of 8 nations should be conditioned on the Russian Government voluntarily accepting and adhering to the norms and standards of democracy.

Whereas the countries that comprise the Group of 7 nations are pluralistic societies with democratic political institutions and practices, committed to the observance of universally recognized standards of human rights, respect for individual liberties, and democratic principles;

Whereas in 1991 and subsequent years, the leaders of the Group of 7 nations, heads of the governments of the

major free market economies of the world who meet annually in a summit meeting, invited then-Russian President Boris Yeltsin to a post-summit dialogue;

Whereas in 1998, the leaders of the Group of 7 nations formally invited President Boris Yeltsin of Russia to participate in an annual gathering that subsequently was known as the Group of 8 nations, although the Group of 7 nations have continued to hold informal summit meetings and ministerial meetings that do not include the Russian Federation;

Whereas the invitation to President Yeltsin to participate in the annual summits was in recognition of his commitment to democratization and economic liberalization, despite the fact that the Russian economy remained weak and the commitment of the Russian Government to democratic principles was uncertain;

Whereas under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, the Russian Government has attempted to control the activities of independent media enterprises, nongovernmental organizations, religious organizations, and other pluralistic elements of Russian society in an attempt to mute criticism of the government;

Whereas under the leadership of President Putin, the Russian Government has suppressed the activities of independent journalists, international observers, and human rights monitoring organizations, and has blocked the renewal of the mandate of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to operate inside Chechnya in an attempt to block public scrutiny of the war in Chechnya;

Whereas the suppression by the Russian Government of independent media enterprises has resulted in widespread government control and influence over the media in Russia, stifling freedom of expression and individual liberties that are essential to any functioning democracy;

Whereas the arrest and prosecution of prominent Russian business leaders who had supported the political opposition to President Putin are examples of selective application of the rule of law for political purposes;

Whereas the courts of the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Greece have consistently ruled against extradition warrants issued by the Russian Government after finding that the cases presented by the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation have been inherently political in nature;

Whereas Russian military forces continue to commit brutal atrocities against the civilian population in Chechnya and have been implicated in abductions of Chechen civilians who filed cases before the European Court of Human Rights;

Whereas leaders of the Group of 7 nations have repeatedly expressed that a military solution in Chechnya is not possible;

Whereas in the aftermath of the tragic siege of School No. 1 in Beslan, Russia that occurred during September 2004, which was an act of terrorism abhorrent to all civilized people, President Putin cited violence in the North Caucasus as a pretext for consolidating centralized power and proposed to abolish the popular election of regional governors in favor of presidential appointment of such officials;

Whereas the catastrophic consequences of the siege of School No. 1 in Beslan and of the continued violence in Chechnya demonstrate the need to search for political solutions and to commence negotiations between the Government of Russia and moderate Chechen separatists, giving moderates credence over extremist elements;

Whereas the Government of Russia initially supported the undemocratic results of the November 21, 2004, runoff in the Ukrainian presidential election, in spite of widespread election fraud and mass demonstrations in support of a new, legitimate election, which raised concerns among the Group of 7 nations that the commitment of the Government of Russia to democratic standards is waning;

Whereas a wide range of observers at think tanks and non-governmental organizations have expressed deep concern that the Russian Federation is moving away from the political and legal underpinnings of a market economy and have identified the continuing war in Chechnya as a major threat to stability and democracy in Russia; and

Whereas the continued participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of 8 nations, including the opportunity for the Russian Government to host the Group of 8 nations in 2006 as planned, is a privilege that is premised on the Government of Russia voluntarily accepting and adhering to the norms and standards of democracy, including governmental accountability, transparency, and the rule of law: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
- 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

1 (1) the selective prosecution of political oppo-
2 nents and the suppression of free media by the Rus-
3 sian Federation, and the continued commission of
4 widespread atrocities in the conduct of the brutal
5 war in Chechnya, do not reflect the minimum stand-
6 ards of democratic governance and rule of law that
7 characterize every other member state in the Group
8 of 8 nations;

9 (2) the continued participation of the Russian
10 Federation in the Group of 8 nations, including the
11 opportunity for the Russian Government to host the
12 Group of 8 nations summit in 2006 as planned,
13 should be conditioned on the Russian Government
14 accepting and adhering to the norms and standards
15 of free, democratic societies as generally practiced by
16 every other member nation of the Group of 8 na-
17 tions, including—

18 (A) the rule of law, including protection
19 from selective prosecution and protection from
20 arbitrary state-directed violence;

21 (B) a court system free of political influ-
22 ence and manipulation;

23 (C) a free and independent media;

1 (D) a political system open to participation
2 by all citizens and which protects freedom of ex-
3 pression and association; and

4 (E) the protection of universally recognized
5 human rights; and

6 (3) the President and the Secretary of State
7 should work with the other members of the Group
8 of 7 nations to take all necessary steps to suspend
9 the participation of the Russian Federation in the
10 Group of 8 nations until the President, after con-
11 sultation with the other members of the Group of 7
12 nations, determines and reports to Congress that the
13 Russian Government is committed to respecting and
14 upholding the democratic principles described in
15 paragraph (2).

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