

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 66

Urging the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to ensure a democratic, transparent, and fair process for the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 27, 2005.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 17, 2005

Mr. McCAIN (for himself and Mr. BIDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Urging the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to ensure a democratic, transparent, and fair process for the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 27, 2005.

Whereas on August 31, 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic declared independence from the Soviet Union;

Whereas the Kyrgyz Republic has been ruled by a single President since gaining independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union;

Whereas President Askar Akaev's initial years of power were marked by numerous democratic reforms, including the establishment of independent media and opposition party representation in a bi-cameral parliament;

Whereas in recent years, these democratic reforms have been scaled back or eliminated;

Whereas today in the Kyrgyz Republic, virtually all major television outlets are controlled or influenced by the President's family or the state;

Whereas the political system of the Kyrgyz Republic has been characterized by the Department of State as marred by "serious irregularities" and its human rights record has been described by the Department of State as "poor";

Whereas in 2002, Government forces shot 4 opposition demonstrators in the southern Aksy region;

Whereas in 2003, President Akaev called for a referendum, with little notice, on a group of Constitutional amendments, leaving both voters and the opposition unprepared to effectively participate in the vote;

Whereas the 2003 referendum vote on the Constitutional amendments was not transparent and contained numerous instances of fraud;

Whereas a genuinely free and fair democratic election requires a period of political campaigning in an environment in which administrative action, violence, intimidation, and detention do not hinder the parties, political associations, or the candidates from presenting their views and qualifications to the citizenry;

Whereas unimpeded access to television, radio, print, and Internet media on a non-discriminatory basis is fundamental to a genuinely free and fair democratic election;

Whereas a genuinely free and fair election requires that all eligible citizens be guaranteed the right and effective opportunity to exercise their civil and political rights, including the right to vote, and the right to seek and acquire information upon which to make an informed vote, free from intimidation, undue influence, attempts at vote

buying, threats of political retribution, or other forms of coercion;

Whereas the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, as a participating state in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has accepted numerous specific commitments governing the conduct of elections, including the provisions of the Copenhagen Document;

Whereas reports indicate that authorities within the Kyrgyz government have stepped up repressive activities ahead of the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 27, 2005, including unfairly excluding opposition candidates from running for office, launching new restrictions on freedom of assembly, harassing opposition supporters and civil society activists, publicly warning against a “Ukraine scenario”, and attempting to equate political opposition with subversion; and

Whereas the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 27, 2005, will provide an unambiguous test of the extent of the commitment of the Kyrgyz authorities to implementing democratic reforms and building a society based on free elections and the rule of law: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) acknowledges and welcomes the strong relationship formed between the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic since the restoration of independence in 1991;

6 (2) expresses its strong and continuing support for the efforts of the Kyrgyz people to establish a

1 full democracy, the rule of law, and respect for
2 human rights in the Kyrgyz Republic;

3 (3) urges the Kyrgyz Republic to meet its Orga-
4 nization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
5 commitments on democratic elections; and

6 (4) urges the Kyrgyz authorities to ensure—

7 (A) the full transparency of election proce-
8 dures before, during, and after the 2005 par-
9 liamentary elections;

10 (B) the right to vote for all eligible citizens
11 of the Kyrgyz Republic;

12 (C) unimpeded access by all parties and
13 candidates to print, radio, television, and Inter-
14 net media on a non-discriminatory basis; and

15 (D) the right of opposition parties and
16 candidates to assemble freely, campaign openly,
17 and contest the upcoming elections on an equal
18 basis as all other parties, including the party
19 currently in control of the Parliament.

○