

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 61

Expressing the sense of Congress that the Government of the Russian Federation's continued membership in the G8 should be conditioned on its compliance with its international obligations and commitment to democratic principles and standards.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 25, 2009

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. MACK, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. McCOTTER, and Mr. POE of Texas) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the Government of the Russian Federation's continued membership in the G8 should be conditioned on its compliance with its international obligations and commitment to democratic principles and standards.

Whereas the Group of Eight (G8) is comprised of France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Japan, and Russia;

Whereas the leaders of the G8 member states gather annually to tackle global challenges, which include strengthening international trade and promoting peace and democracy;

Whereas prior to Russia's participation in the organization, the then Group of Seven (G7) consisted solely of countries with advanced economies and democratic governments;

Whereas after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia undertook steps to implement political and economic reforms;

Whereas the decision to invite Russia to participate and become a member of the G8 was based on the recognition of the Government of the Russian Federation's commitment to pursue continued democratization and market reforms;

Whereas under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, both as President and Prime Minister of Russia, the Russian Federation has reversed its steps toward true democracy and engaged in hostile acts against its neighbors;

Whereas, since Vladimir Putin assumed the office of the Presidency of the Russian Federation in 2000, the Russian Federation has, among other things, cracked down on opposition political parties, suppressed independent media, and restricted activities of human rights organizations;

Whereas, according to a 2007 report on Russia issued by Freedom House, "Judges [in Russia] often report feeling pressured by federal authorities . . .", that "Corruption throughout the government and business world is pervasive . . . [and that the] government's continuing campaign against nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), particularly those with foreign funding, curtailed the activities of human rights groups, and fine-tuning of the

electoral laws made life more difficult for opposition parties”;

Whereas, according to the Department of State’s 2007 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, “[Russian] government security forces were allegedly involved in unlawful killings, politically motivated abductions, and disappearances in Chechnya, Ingushetia and elsewhere in the North Caucasus.”;

Whereas, the Russian Federation’s human rights abuses and failure to address corruption in the North Caucasus have contributed to the increase in violence in the region and have enhanced the opportunities for radical Islamists to recruit followers there;

Whereas, according to a 2006 report issued by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Russian Federation’s “policy seems to have been focused not on market reforms but on tightening the state’s grip on the ‘commanding heights’ of the economy”;

Whereas reports indicate that high-level officials in the Russian Federation have benefitted from the diversion of substantial revenues from state-owned and state-influenced energy entities and from private energy enterprises that have been subjected to pressures by the government authorities;

Whereas the Russian Federation has consolidated its control over Russia’s oil and gas sectors through harassment of domestic and foreign energy companies;

Whereas the Russian Federation has apparently used its influence over its vast energy resources as a political tool

in relations with its neighbors, including the Republic of Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus;

Whereas through its state-owned or influenced energy companies, Russia has tried to gain control over pipelines, storage facilities, ports, and other energy infrastructure in the rest of Europe to further enhance its position of increasing dominance in European energy markets, and in a number of cases where energy infrastructure had been purchased by non-Russian companies, subsequently shut off energy supplies to the energy facilities involved;

Whereas the Russian Federation has failed to fulfill the commitment it made in 1999 at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Summit in Istanbul to withdraw its military forces from the Transnistrian territory of the Republic of Moldova by the end of 2002;

Whereas the Russian Federation has, for years, sought to manipulate ethnic conflicts in Georgia and its separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and made numerous efforts to undermine Georgia's sovereignty, including, among other things, providing arms to the separatist movements within Georgia, boycotting Georgia's major export products, violating Georgian airspace, shooting down an unmanned Georgian drone, and shutting off gas and electricity supplies to Georgia;

Whereas prior to attacking Georgia in August 2008, Russia had increased its forces and military equipment in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and granted Russian citizenship and passports to those living in those Georgian enclaves, thereby escalating tensions in these regions;

Whereas Russia's military invasion of Georgia in August 2008 violated Georgia's territorial integrity, caused tens of thousands of persons to be internally displaced, and inflicted massive destruction by the bombing of Georgian infrastructure, including ports, bridges, and railroads;

Whereas, on August 26, 2008, Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, although they are internationally recognized as part of Georgia's territory;

Whereas, on September 8, 2008, Russia's Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov indicated that Russia will significantly increase the number of troops in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and, according to a statement made on October 20, 2008, by the chief of the Russian general staff, General Nikolai Makarov, Russia will establish permanent military bases in those separatist regions;

Whereas, on January 26, 2008, Russian officials stated that Russia will soon start building a naval base in Georgia's Black Sea separatist region of Abkhazia; and

Whereas the abovementioned policies and actions by the Russian Federation undermine global security and democracy and weaken economic stability and development and thereby contradict the values, principles, and objectives of the original seven member states of the G8: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) notes the undemocratic nature of the Gov-
 4 ernment of the Russian Federation's actions and

1 policies restricting political and media freedoms and
2 also its failure to respect and protect human rights;

3 (2) condemns Russia's violation of the Republic
4 of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and
5 Russia's continued failure to withdraw its troops
6 from Georgian territory;

7 (3) calls upon the President to urge the leaders
8 of the governments of the other six original member
9 states of the G8 to condition Russia's continued
10 membership in the G8 on its adherence and commit-
11 ment to the values shared by the other members of
12 the organization, including: democracy, respect for
13 human rights, promotion of peace and stability, and
14 proper protection of investment; and

15 (4) calls upon the President and the Secretary
16 of State to work with the governments of the six
17 other original member states of the G8 to terminate
18 the Russian Federation's participation in the G8
19 with such termination of membership to continue
20 until the President, after consulting with the other
21 six member states, determines and reports to Con-
22 gress that the Government of the Russian Federa-
23 tion has—

24 (A) taken demonstrable and substantive
25 steps toward removing the official and unofficial

1 restrictions that it currently imposes on legiti-
2 mate political opposition parties and move-
3 ments, independent media, human rights
4 groups, and nongovernment organizations, and
5 that violate the principles of organizations such
6 as the Organization for Security and Coopera-
7 tion in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Eu-
8 rope;

9 (B) taken substantive measures to imple-
10 ment free market reforms and affirmative steps
11 in tackling corruption on all levels, particularly
12 within the government and within the govern-
13 ment's highest levels;

14 (C) ceased to use energy as a political tool
15 against its neighbors and has demonstrated a
16 commitment to adhere to proper market-based
17 policies regarding its energy sector, including
18 but not limited to providing legal protections
19 and fairly enforcing those protections in regard
20 to both domestic and foreign investors, and
21 opening up its oil and gas pipelines to invest-
22 ment and operation by non-Russian investors;

23 (D) fulfilled its commitments to withdraw
24 its military forces from the Transnistrian re-
25 gion of the Republic of Moldova;

1 (E) fully and verifiably withdrawn its
2 troops from all of the territory of Georgia; and

3 (F) ceased any and all actions and policies
4 that currently violate or would threaten the sov-
5 ereignty and territorial integrity of neighboring
6 states.

○