

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 304

Expressing the condemnation of the continued egregious violations of human rights in the Republic of Belarus, the lack of progress toward the establishment of democracy and the rule of law in Belarus, calling on President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's regime to engage in negotiations with the representatives of the opposition and to restore the constitutional rights of the Belarusian people, and calling on the Russian Federation to respect the sovereignty of Belarus.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 12, 2000

Mr. GEJDENSON (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BLAGOJEVICH, Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. CARSON, Mr. PHELPS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HILLIARD, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. DEUTSCH, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MOAKLEY, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. UPTON, Mr. OBEY, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. DOOLEY of California, Ms. WATERS, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. RIVERS, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. WEYGAND, Mrs. CLAYTON, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. BERRY, Mr. PALLONE, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. KLECZKA, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HOEFFEL, Mr. BALDACCI, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. WAMP, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin, Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mr. LINDER, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. STARK, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. REYES, Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WEINER, Mr. MINGE, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. WYNN, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. FROST, and Ms. DELAURO) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the condemnation of the continued egregious violations of human rights in the Republic of Belarus, the lack of progress toward the establishment of democracy and the rule of law in Belarus, calling on President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's regime to engage in negotiations with the representatives of the opposition and to restore the constitutional rights of the Belarusian people, and calling on the Russian Federation to respect the sovereignty of Belarus.

Whereas the United States has a vital interest in the promotion of democracy abroad and supports democracy and economic development in the Republic of Belarus;

Whereas in the Fall of 1996, Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka devised a controversial referendum to impose a new constitution on Belarus and abolish the Parliament, the 13th Supreme Soviet, replacing it with a rubber-stamp legislature;

Whereas President Lukashenka organized a referendum in violation of the 1994 Belarusian Constitution, which illegally extended his term of office to 2001;

Whereas Lukashenka's legal term in office expired in July 1999;

Whereas Belarus has effectively become an authoritarian police state, where human rights are routinely violated;

Whereas Belarusian economic development is stagnant and living conditions are deplorable;

Whereas in May 1999, the Belarusian opposition challenged Lukashenka's unconstitutional lengthening of his term by

staging alternative presidential elections, unleashing the government crackdown;

Whereas the leader of the opposition, Semyon Sharetsky, was forced to flee Belarus to the neighboring Baltic state of the Republic of Lithuania in fear for his life;

Whereas several leaders of the opposition, including Viktor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, and Yuri Zakharenka have disappeared;

Whereas the Belarusian regime harasses and persecutes the independent media and works to actively suppress freedom of speech;

Whereas former Prime Minister Mikhail Chygir, who was a candidate in the opposition's alternative presidential elections in May 1999, was held in pretrial detention on trumped up charges from April through November 1999;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime provoked the clashes between riot police and demonstrators at the October 17, 1999, "Freedom March", which resulted in injuries to demonstrators and scores of illegal arrests;

Whereas hundreds of peaceful demonstrators and over thirty journalists were arrested during a March 25, 2000, pro-democracy rally in Miensk, once again illustrating the Lukashenka regime's disregard for freedom of assembly, association, and information;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime has refused to engage in meaningful dialogue with the opposition and has used the tactics of delay and obfuscation in disregarding the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)-mediated dialogue process;

Whereas genuine dialogue with the opposition and legitimate, free and fair elections cannot take place in the present climate of repression and fear existing in Belarus;

Whereas on April 3, 1996, Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin and President Lukashenka signed an agreement to form a Union State of Russia and Belarus;

Whereas there have been credible press reports that the Government of the Russian Federation has been providing assistance to the Lukashenka regime since the signing of the agreement to form a Union State, such as official Russian Federation Government credits, uncollected customs duties, assistance for export sales of Belarusian arms and joint manufacturing of arms, and reduced prices for energy supplies;

Whereas there has been a credible estimate cited in press reports that Russian Federation economic subsidies to Belarus reached \$1,500,000,000 to \$2,000,000,000 in 1996 and 1997 alone, enabling the Lukashenka regime to maintain a large police force and state control of the economy;

Whereas the Union Treaty, signed on December 8, 1999, by Belarus and the Russian Federation, undermines Belarus sovereignty and the prospect of democracy;

Whereas the Consultative Council of Belarusian opposition parties appealed to the Government of the Russian Federation, the State Duma, and the Federation Council calling for a cessation of support for the Lukashenka regime;

Whereas the former Chairmen of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet, Stanislav Shushkevich and Semyon Sharetsky, have stated that economic support from the Russian Federa-

tion has been crucial to the survival of the Lukashenka regime;

Whereas a Union Treaty between the Russian Federation and Belarus was ratified by the Russian Parliament and the illegitimate parliament of Belarus;

Whereas the Union Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Lukashenka regime violates Russian Federation Government respect for the sovereignty of Belarus per the memorandum on security guarantees signed by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin at the December 1994 Summit of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Heads of State in Budapest, Hungary; and

Whereas the introduction of any nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus, a declared non-nuclear state under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, would be a violation of Belarus's obligations under that Treaty: Now, therefore, be it

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

3            (1) condemns continued egregious violations of  
4        human rights by President Alyaksandr  
5        Lukashenka's regime in the Republic of Belarus;

6            (2) further condemns the Lukashenka regime's  
7        conviction and sentencing of Andrei Klimov, Vasiliy  
8        Leonov, and Vladimir Koudinov on politically moti-  
9        vated charges and urges their release;

10           (3) is gravely concerned about the disappear-  
11        ances of Viktor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, and

1 Yuri Zakharenka and calls on the Lukashenka re-  
2 gime to ensure a full and timely investigation of  
3 these cases;

4 (4) calls for immediate dialogue between the  
5 Lukashenka regime and the opposition and the res-  
6 toration of a democratically elected government in  
7 Belarus;

8 (5) urges the Lukashenka regime to respect  
9 and ensure the human rights of all Belarusian citi-  
10 zens, including those members of the opposition who  
11 are currently being illegally detained in violation of  
12 their constitutional rights and further urges the re-  
13 gime to respect the rule of law and an independent  
14 judiciary;

15 (6) further urges Lukashenka to hold legiti-  
16 mate, free and fair parliamentary elections in ac-  
17 cordance with Organization for Security and Co-  
18 operation in Europe (OSCE) standards;

19 (7) supports the appeal by the Consultative  
20 Council of Belarusian opposition parties to the Gov-  
21 ernment of the Russian Federation, the State  
22 Duma, and the Federation Council calling for a ces-  
23 sation of support for the Lukashenka regime;

1           (8) calls on the international community to sup-  
2           port the opposition in Belarus by continuing to meet  
3           with the legitimately elected parliament;

4           (9) supports Belarus’s sovereignty, independ-  
5           ence, and territorial integrity, as well as its market  
6           democratic transformation and integration among  
7           the broader trans-Atlantic community of nations;

8           (10) calls on the President of the United  
9           States—

10                   (A) to ensure assistance to and cooperation  
11                   with Belarusian opposition figures;

12                   (B) to ensure that adequate resources are  
13                   made available on an urgent basis to support  
14                   those programs aimed at strengthening inde-  
15                   pendent media, human rights, civil society,  
16                   independent trade unions, and the democratic  
17                   opposition in Belarus; and

18                   (C) to support the free flow of information  
19                   into Belarus;

20           (11) calls on the President of the United States  
21           to raise the issue of financial support provided by  
22           the Russian Federation to the Lukashenka regime  
23           at the highest levels of the Russian Federation Gov-  
24           ernment;

1           (12) calls on the President of the United States  
2           to urge the Government of the Russian Federation,  
3           in accordance with its international commitments, to  
4           fully respect the sovereignty of Belarus, particularly  
5           in light of the illegitimate nature of the Lukashenka  
6           regime; and

7           (13) calls on the President of the United States  
8           to prepare and transmit to the Congress a report  
9           on—

10                   (A) the human rights situation, democratic  
11                   process, elections, independence of the media,  
12                   and the Lukashenka regime’s control of the  
13                   economy in Belarus;

14                   (B) the steps undertaken by the United  
15                   States to persuade the Russian Federation Gov-  
16                   ernment to end support to the Lukashenka re-  
17                   gime in Belarus; and

18                   (C) the status of Russian Federation-  
19                   Belarus military integration.

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