

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 425

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the continued participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of Eight must be conditioned on Russia's own voluntary acceptance of and adherence to the norms and standards of democracy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 12, 2000

Mr. LANTOS (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. BERMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the continued participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of Eight must be conditioned on Russia's own voluntary acceptance of and adherence to the norms and standards of democracy.

Whereas in 1991 and subsequent years the leaders of the Group of Seven ("G7"), the forum of the heads of state or heads of government of the major free-market economies of the world which meet annually in a summit meeting, invited Russia to a post-summit dialogue, and in 1998 the leaders of the Group of Seven formally invited Russia to participate in an annual gathering that thereafter became known as the Group of Eight ("G8"), al-

though the Group of Seven have continued to hold informal summit meetings and ministerial meetings that do not include Russia;

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

Whereas those countries which are members of the Group of Seven are pluralistic democratic societies with democratic political institutions and practices, and they have committed themselves to the observance of universally recognized standards of human rights, respect for individual liberties and democratic political practices;

Whereas a free news media and freedom of speech are fundamental to the functioning of a democratic society and essential for the protection of individual liberties, and such freedoms can exist only in an environment that is free of state control of the news media, that is free of any form of state censorship or official coercion of any kind, and that is protected and guaranteed by the rule of law;

Whereas the Russian Federation has engaged in a series of government actions that are hostile and threatening to privately-owned, independently operated media enterprises, particularly those new outlets that have been critical of government policies and government actions; and

Whereas the continued participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of Eight must be conditioned on Russia's own voluntary acceptance of and adherence to the norms and standards of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that the
3 participation of the Russian Federation in the Group of
4 Eight must be linked to the Russian Federation's adher-
5 ence to the norms and standards of democracy,
6 including—

7 (1) the existence of a free, unfettered press that
8 fosters the development of an independent media
9 and the free exchange of ideas and views, including
10 opportunities for private ownership of media enter-
11 prises, the right of people to receive news without
12 government interference and harassment, and the
13 freedom of journalists to publish opinions and news
14 reports without fear of censorship or punishment;

15 (2) the freedom of all religious groups freely to
16 practice their faith in Russia, without undue govern-
17 ment interference on the rights and the peaceful ac-
18 tivities of such religious organizations;

19 (3) equal treatment and respect for the human
20 rights and the right to own private property of all
21 citizens of the Russian Federation;

22 (4) initiation of genuine negotiations for a just
23 and peaceful resolution of the conflict in Chechnya,
24 including a full investigation of the conflict and
25 bringing to justice those individuals, civilian or mili-

1 tary, who in a court of law are found to be guilty
2 of violating human rights;

3 (5) respect for the rule of law and improvement
4 of civil and legal institutions to implement and de-
5 fend these rights; and

6 (6) reform of the judicial system to prevent the
7 arbitrary detention of citizens and provide for a
8 speedy trial and equal access to the judicial system.

9 The President and the Secretary of State are re-
10 quested to convey to appropriate officials of the Govern-
11 ment of the Russian Federation, including the President,
12 the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs,
13 this expression of the views of the Congress.

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