

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. J. RES. 3

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## JOINT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to human rights in Central Asia.

Whereas the Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are providing the United States with assistance in the war in Afghanistan, from military basing and overflight rights to the facilitation of humanitarian relief;

Whereas in turn the United States victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan provides important benefits to the Central Asian nations by removing a regime that threatened their security and by significantly weakening the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist organization that had previously staged armed raids from Afghanistan into the region;

Whereas the United States has consistently urged the nations of Central Asia to open their political systems and economies and to respect human rights, both before and since the attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are members of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), both of which confer a range of obligations with respect to human rights on their members;

Whereas while the United States recognizes marked differences among the social structures and commitments to democratic and economic reform of the Central Asian nations, the United States notes nevertheless, according to the State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, that all five governments of such nations, to differing degrees, restrict freedom of speech and association, restrict or ban the activities of human rights organizations and other non-governmental organizations, harass or prohibit independent media, imprison political opponents, practice arbitrary detention and arrest, and engage in torture and extrajudicial executions;

Whereas by continuing to suppress human rights and to deny citizens peaceful, democratic means of expressing their convictions, the nations of Central Asia risk fueling popular support for violent and extremist movements, thus undermining the goals of the war on terrorism;

Whereas President George W. Bush has made the defense of human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women and private property, free speech, equal justice, religious tolerance strategic goals of United States foreign policy in the Islamic world, arguing that “a truly strong nation will permit legal avenues of dissent for all groups that pursue their aspirations without violence”; and

Whereas Congress has expressed its desire to see deeper reform in Central Asia in past resolutions and other legislation, most recently conditioning assistance to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on their progress in meeting commitments to the United States on human rights and democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*  
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*  
3 That it is the sense of Congress that—

4            (1) the governments of Kazakhstan,  
5 Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and  
6 Uzbekistan should accelerate democratic reforms  
7 and fulfill their human rights obligations, including,  
8 where appropriate, by—

9            (A) releasing from prison anyone jailed for  
10 peaceful political activism or the nonviolent ex-  
11 pression of their political or religious beliefs;

12            (B) fully investigating any credible allega-  
13 tions of torture and prosecuting those respon-  
14 sible;

15            (C) permitting the free and unfettered  
16 functioning of independent media outlets, inde-  
17 pendent political parties, and nongovernmental  
18 organizations, including by easing registration  
19 processes;

20            (D) permitting the free exercise of reli-  
21 gious beliefs and ceasing the persecution of  
22 members of religious groups and denominations  
23 that do not engage in violence or political  
24 change through violence;

1 (E) holding free, competitive, and fair elec-  
2 tions; and

3 (F) making publicly available documenta-  
4 tion of their revenues and punishing those en-  
5 gaged in official corruption;

6 (2) the President, the Secretary of State, and  
7 the Secretary of Defense should—

8 (A) continue to raise at the highest levels  
9 with the governments of the nations of Central  
10 Asia specific cases of political and religious per-  
11 secution, and to urge greater respect for human  
12 rights and democratic freedoms at every diplo-  
13 matic opportunity;

14 (B) take progress in meeting the goals  
15 specified in paragraph (1) into account when  
16 determining the scope and nature of our diplo-  
17 matic and military relations and assistance with  
18 each of such governments;

19 (C) ensure that the provisions of foreign  
20 operations appropriations Acts are fully imple-  
21 mented to ensure that no United States assist-  
22 ance benefits security forces in Central Asia  
23 that are implicated in violations of human  
24 rights;

1 (D) press the Government of  
2 Turkmenistan to implement the helpful rec-  
3 ommendations contained in the so-called “Mos-  
4 cow Mechanism” Report of the Organization for  
5 Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)  
6 respect the right of all prisoners to due process  
7 and a fair trial and release democratic activists  
8 and their family members from prison;

9 (E) urge the Government of Russia not to  
10 extradite to Turkmenistan members of the po-  
11 litical opposition of Turkmenistan;

12 (F) work with the Government of  
13 Kazakhstan to create a political climate free of  
14 intimidation and harassment, including releas-  
15 ing political prisoners and permitting the return  
16 of political exiles, and to reduce official corrup-  
17 tion, including by urging the Government of  
18 Kazakhstan to cooperate with the ongoing De-  
19 partment of Justice investigation;

20 (G) support through United States assist-  
21 ance programs individuals, nongovernmental or-  
22 ganizations, and media outlets in Central Asia  
23 working to build more open societies, to support  
24 the victims of human rights abuses, and to ex-  
25 pose official corruption; and

1           (H) press the Government of Uzbekistan  
2           to implement fully the recommendations made  
3           to the Government of Uzbekistan by the United  
4           Nation's Special Rapporteur on Torture; and  
5           (3) increased levels of United States assistance  
6           to the governments of the nations of Central Asia  
7           made possible by their cooperation in the war in Af-  
8           ghanistan can be sustained only if there is substan-  
9           tial and continuing progress towards meeting the  
10          goals specified in paragraph (1).

Passed the Senate May 1, 2003.

Attest:

*Secretary.*

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