

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 623

Calling on the Secretary of State to designate the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 9, 2022

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

RESOLUTION

Calling on the Secretary of State to designate the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Whereas, pursuant to section 1754(c) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (50 U.S.C. 4813(c)), section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2779A), and section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2371), the authority to designate a country as a state sponsor of terrorism rests with the Secretary of State;

Whereas Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea, Iran, and Syria are designated as state sponsors of terrorism;

Whereas, at the direction of President Vladimir Putin, the Government of the Russian Federation has and continues

to promote acts of international terrorism against political opponents and nation states;

Whereas, under the orders of President Putin, the Government of the Russian Federation engaged in a campaign of terror, utilizing brutal force targeting civilians during the Second Chechen War;

Whereas actions by the Government of the Russian Federation against civilian centers, such as Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, left countless innocent men, women, and children dead or wounded;

Whereas, since 2014, the Government of the Russian Federation has supported separatists engaging in acts of violence against Ukrainian civilians in the Donbas region;

Whereas, since the entry of the Russian Federation into the Syrian Civil War in 2015, the Russian Federation has targeted innocent civilians in Syria with attacks on civilian markets, medical facilities, and schools;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation provides material support to Syria, a nation currently designated as a state sponsor of terrorism, that has been used to target the Syrian people;

Whereas, according to the Congressional Research Service, the Russian Federation spreads terror throughout the world through private military networks of mercenaries, such as the Wagner Group, in an effort to “project power cheaply and deniably”;

Whereas the Wagner Group collaborates with the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation to support the foreign policy objectives of the Russian Federation;

Whereas the Department of the Treasury identifies the Wagner Group as “a designated Russian Ministry of Defense

proxy force” and states that “Wagner’s activities in other countries, including Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, and Libya, have generated insecurity and incited violence against innocent civilians”;

Whereas it was reported in February 2022 that more than 400 Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group were dispatched to Kyiv with orders from the Kremlin to assassinate President Volodymyr Zelensky and members of the Government of Ukraine;

Whereas, on March 14, 2022, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Zbigniew Rau stated that actions of the Government of the Russian Federation in Ukraine against innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure is “state terrorism”;

Whereas, on March 17, 2022, President Volodymyr Zelensky called for the world to acknowledge the Russian Federation as a terrorist state;

Whereas the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has appealed to Congress to encourage the Department of State to recognize the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism noting that “the Russian Federation has for years supported and financed terrorist regimes and terrorist organizations, including being the main supplier of weapons to the Assad regime in Syria and supporting terrorists in the Middle East and Latin America, organizing acts of international terrorism, including the poisoning of the Skripal family in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the downing of a civilian Malaysian airliner and other acts of terrorism”;

Whereas, on April 27, 2022, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated before Congress that “there’s no doubt in

my mind that the Russians are terrorizing the Ukrainian people”;

Whereas, at the direction of President Putin, the Russian Federation has and continues to commit war crimes by directing and authorizing the indiscriminate targeting of civilian centers within Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, and Ukraine, resulting in the deaths of countless innocent men, women, and children;

Whereas armed forces of the Russian Federation have committed numerous summary executions against innocent civilians and have attempted to cover their atrocities with mass graves across Ukraine; and

Whereas, when responding to questions regarding designating the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism, the spokesperson for the Department of State stated that “we are going to look at all potential options—options that are available to us under the law, options that would be effective in holding Russia to account—and if a tool is available and effective, we won’t hesitate to use it”:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) views the actions of the Government of the
3 Russian Federation, at the direction of President
4 Vladimir Putin, as acts of terrorism; and

5 (2) calls on the Secretary of State to designate
6 the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of ter-
7 rorism.

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