

reported on alleged corruption at high levels of the government;

Whereas, in July 1999, the Government of Russia created a new Ministry for Press, Television and Radio Broadcasting, and Mass Communications;

Whereas, in August 1999, the editors of fourteen of Russia's leading news publications sent an open letter to then Russian President Boris Yeltsin stating that high-ranking officials of the government were putting pressure on the mass media, particularly through unwarranted raids by tax police;

Whereas Mikhail Lesin, Minister for Press, Television and Radio Broadcasting, and Mass Communications, stated in October 1999 that the Russian Government would change its policies towards the mass media so as to address "aggression" by the Russian press;

Whereas the Russian Federal Security Service or "FSB" is reportedly implementing a technical regulation known as "SORM-2" by which it could reroute, in real time, all electronic transmissions over the Internet through FSB offices for purposes of surveillance, a likely violation of the Russian constitution's provisions concerning the right to privacy of private communications, according to Aleksei Simonov, President of the Russian "Glasnost Defense Foundation", a nongovernmental human rights organization;

Whereas such surveillance under SORM-2 would allow the Russian Federal Security Service access to passwords, financial transactions, and confidential company information, among other transmissions;

Whereas it is reported that over one hundred Russian journalists have been killed over the past decade, with few if any of the government investigations into those murders resulting in arrests, prosecutions, or convictions;

Whereas numerous observers of Russian politics have noted the blatant misuse of the leading Russian television channels, controlled by the Russian Government, to undermine popular support for political rivals of those supporting the government in the run-up to parliamentary elections held in December 1999;

Whereas it has been reported that Russian television stations controlled by the Russian Government were used to disparage opponents of Vladimir Putin during the campaign for the presidency in the beginning of this year, and whereas it has been reported that political advertisements by those candidates were routinely relegated by those stations to slots outside of prime time coverage;

Whereas manipulation of the media by the Russian Government appeared intent on portraying the Russian military attack on the separatist Republic of Chechnya to the maximum political advantage of the Russian Government;

Whereas in December 1999 two correspondents for "Reuters News Agency" and the "Associated Press" were reportedly accused of being foreign spies after reporting high Russian casualty figures in the war in Chechnya;

Whereas the arrest in January 2000, subsequent treatment by the Russian military, and prosecution by the Russian Government of Andrei Babitsky, a correspondent for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty covering the war in Chechnya, have constituted a violation of commitments made by the Russian Government to foster freedom of speech and of the press, and have reportedly constituted a violation of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation;

Whereas in January 2000 Aleksandr Khinshtein, a reporter for the newspaper "Moskovsky Komsomolets", was ordered by the Russian Federal Security Service to

enter a clinic over 100 miles from his home for a psychiatric examination after he accused top Russian officials of illegal activities, and such detainment in psychiatric wards was previously employed by the former Soviet regime to stifle dissent;

Whereas the Russian newspaper "Novaya Gazeta" was officially warned by the Russian Ministry of the Press for its printing of an interview with Aslan Maskhadov, the elected President of the Republic of Chechnya; an entire issue of "Novaya Gazeta", including several articles alleging massive campaign finance violations by the presidential campaign of Vladimir Putin, was lost to unidentified computer "hackers"; and a journalist for "Novaya Gazeta" was savagely beaten in May of this year;

Whereas President Thomas Dine of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty on March 14th, 2000, condemned the Russian Government's expanding efforts to intimidate the mass media, stating that those actions threaten the chances for democracy and rule of law in Russia;

Whereas "NTV", the only national independent television station, which reaches half of Russia and is credited with professional and balanced news programs, has frequently broadcast news stories critical of Russian Government policies;

Whereas on May 11, 2000, masked officers of the Russian Federal Security Service carrying assault weapons raided the offices of "Media-Most", the corporate owner of NTV and other independent media;

Whereas the May 11th raid on Media-Most represented a failure of recourse to normal legal mechanisms and conveyed the appearance of a politically-motivated attack on Russian independent media;

Whereas the raid on Media-Most was carried out under the authority of President Putin and Russian Government ministers who have not criticized or repudiated that action;

Whereas on June 12, 2000, Vladimir Gusinsky, owner of NTV and other leading independent media was suddenly arrested;

Whereas President Putin claimed not to have known of the planned arrest of Vladimir Gusinsky;

Whereas the continued functioning of an independent media is a vital attribute of Russian democracy and an important obstacle to the return of authoritarian or totalitarian dictatorship in Russia; and

Whereas a free news media 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: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That the Congress—

(1) expresses its continuing, strong support for freedom of speech and the independent media in the Russian Federation;

(2) expresses its strong concern over the failure of the government of the Russian Federation to privatize major segments of the Russian media, thus retaining the ability of Russian officials to manipulate the media for political or corrupt ends;

(3) expresses its strong concern over the pattern of Russian officials' surveillance and physical, economic, legal, and political intimidation of Russian citizens and of the Russian media that has now become apparent in Russia;

(4) expresses its strong concern over the pattern of manipulation of the Russian media by Russian Government officials for political and possibly corrupt purposes that has now become apparent;

(5) expresses profound regret and dismay at the detention and continued prosecution of

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Andrei Babitsky and condemns those breaches of Russian legal procedure and of Russian Government commitments to the rights of Russian citizens that have reportedly occurred in his detention and prosecution;

(6) expresses strong concern over the breaches of Russian legal procedure that have reportedly occurred in the course of the May 11th raid by the Russian Federal Security Service on Media-Most and the June 12th arrest of Vladimir Gusinsky; and

(7) calls on the President of the United States to express to the President of the Russian Federation his strong concern for freedom of speech and the independent media in the Russian Federation and to emphasize the concern of the United States that official pressures against the independent media and the political manipulation of the state-owned media in Russia are incompatible with democratic norms.

SEC. 2. TRANSMITTAL TO SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of State with the request that it be forwarded to the President of the Russian Federation.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 352.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall votes numbers 285 through 291.

Had I been present, I would have voted present on rollcall 285, yes on rollcall 286, yes on recall 287, no on rollcall 288, no on rollcall 289, yes on rollcall 290 and no on rollcall 291.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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COMMUNITY EMERGENCY ADJUSTMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, we are preparing tomorrow evening to drop an important piece of legislation, a bill whose short title is the Community Emergency Adjustment Act. It is a very simple and straightforward solution for communities who are experiencing sudden economic distress. That