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EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WITH RESPECT TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC AND PROSPEROUS REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PEACEFUL AND JUST RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT WITH GEORGIA'S INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BORDERS

MARKUP

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND EURASIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H. Res. 526

APRIL 26, 2012

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THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2012

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND EURASIA,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Dan Burton (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. BURTON. The subcommittee will come to order. Pursuant to notice, the subcommittee meets this morning to mark up a strongly bipartisan measure, H. Res. 526, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect toward the establishment of a democratic and prosperous Republic of Georgia and the establishment of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict with Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

Without objection, we will consider en bloc the resolution and the bipartisan manager's amendment, Burton amendment 46, that was sent to your offices on Wednesday and that all members have in front of them.

So without objection, the resolution and the manager's amendment are considered read and open for amendment at any point.

[H. Res. 526 and the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Mr. Burton follow:]

IV

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 526

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect toward the establishment of a democratic and prosperous Republic of Georgia and the establishment of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict with Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 24, 2012

Mr. SHUSTER (for himself and Ms. SCHWARTZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect toward the establishment of a democratic and prosperous Republic of Georgia and the establishment of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict with Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

Whereas a democratic and stable Republic of Georgia is in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States;

Whereas the security of the Black Sea and South Caucasus region is important for Euro-Atlantic security, transportation, and energy diversification to and from Central Asia;

Whereas Georgia has been a reliable partner and ally in enhancing global peace and stability with its significant contribution to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed in January 2009, outlines the importance of the bilateral relationship as well as the intent of both countries to expand democracy and economic programs, enhance defense and security cooperation, further trade and energy cooperation, and build people-to-people cultural exchanges;

Whereas in October 2010, at the meeting of the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, "the United States will not waver in its support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity";

Whereas successive United States Administrations have supported Georgia's aspirations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

Whereas it was declared by the Heads of State and Government participating in the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, and reaffirmed in 2009 at the Summit in Strasbourg and Kehl and in 2010 at the Summit in Lisbon, that Georgia will become a member of NATO;

Whereas the August 2008, military conflict between Russia and Georgia resulted in civilian and military causalities, the violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and increased the number of internally displaced persons there;

Whereas large numbers of the Georgian population remain forcefully displaced from the Abkhazia and South Ossetia

regions of Georgia as a result of the August 2008 military conflict as well as the earlier conflicts in the 1990s;

Whereas since 1993, the territorial integrity of Georgia has been reaffirmed by the international community in 36 United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas the August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement negotiated by the European Union Presidency and agreed to by the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation, provides that all Russian troops shall be withdrawn to pre-conflict positions;

Whereas the Russian Federation opposed consensus on the extension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Georgia, vetoed the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and blocked the work of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

Whereas the United States supports Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia;

Whereas Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated in Tbilisi on July 5, 2010, that, "We continue to call for Russia to abide by the August 2008 ceasefire commitment . . . including ending the occupation and withdrawing Russian troops from South Ossetia and Abkhazia to their pre-conflict positions";

Whereas the White House released a Fact Sheet on July 24, 2010, calling for "Russia to end its occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia . . ." and for "a return of international observers to the two occupied regions of Georgia";

Whereas Vice President Joseph Biden stated in Tbilisi in July 2009 that the United States "will not recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states";

Whereas Human Rights Watch concluded in its 2011 World Report that "Russia continued to exercise effective control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, preventing international observers' access and vetoing international missions working there";

Whereas Human Rights Watch concluded in its 2011 World Report that "Russia continued to occupy Georgia's breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and strengthened its military presence in the region by establishing a military base and placing an advanced surface-to-air missile system in Abkhazia";

Whereas the Senate of the 112th United States Congress adopted a resolution in July 2011 affirming the United States' support for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the country of Georgia and calling upon Russia to remove its occupying forces from Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

Whereas the United States Helsinki Commission called Russia to cease its continuing, illegal occupation of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and allow those who fled their homes during the 2008 war to go back without preconditions;

Whereas the Russian Federation therefore remains in violation of August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement;

Whereas at the April 15, 2011, meeting in Berlin, Germany, between the Georgia foreign minister and foreign minister of NATO, Secretary of State Clinton stated, "U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity

remains steadfast . . . . We share Georgian concerns regarding recent Russian activities that can negatively affect regional stability.";

Whereas on November 23, 2010, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili committed before the European Parliament that "Georgia will never use force to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty";

Whereas the Government of Georgia has demonstrated its overall commitment to democratic and economic reforms;

Whereas Georgia has initiated positive developments and commitment in the areas of constitutional reforms, strengthening the role of Parliament, institutionalizing judicial independence, and utilizing international election organizations and transparency; and

Whereas OSCE determined that Georgia's May 2010 municipal elections "were marked by clear improvements and efforts by the authorities to address problems occurring during the election process": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports strengthened United States engagements with the Republic of Georgia aimed at helping Georgia enhance its security and to restore its territorial integrity through exclusively peaceful means;

(2) views with particular gravity direct threats to Georgia's security and encourages the United States Government, in the event of such a threat, to consult promptly with the Government of Georgia

with respect to what support, diplomatic or otherwise, or assistance it can extend to Georgia;

(3) supports the implementation of the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, with a mutual desire to strengthen the bilateral relationship across political, economic, trade, energy, cultural, scientific, people-to-people, defense, and security fields;

(4) supports Georgia's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership aspirations and to advance further implementation of decisions taken by the allies at the NATO Summits in Bucharest, Strasbourg and Kehl, and Lisbon with regard to Georgia's NATO membership;

(5) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to support the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Georgia and the inviolability of its borders, and to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as regions of Georgia illegally occupied by the Russian Federation and calls on the Russian Federation to end the occupation of those regions and fulfill all terms and conditions of the August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement;

(6) calls upon the Russian Federation, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Nauru to reverse the rec-

ognition of the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent and respect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;

(7) welcomes Georgia's "State Strategy on Occupied Territories" and "Engagement Action Plan", and supports peaceful, constructive engagement and confidence building measures between the Government of Georgia and the authorities in control in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and encourages increased people-to-people contacts;

(8) urges the Government of Russia and the authorities in control in the regions to allow for the full and dignified, secure, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons and international missions access to the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

(9) recognizes progress and encourages Georgia to continue strengthening its democracy by implementing reforms that expand media transparency and freedoms, increase government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, promote political competition and democratic electoral processes, strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence, and further implement judicial reforms; and

(10) affirms that a peaceful resolution to the conflict is a key priority for the United States in the Caucasus region, and that lasting regional stability can only be achieved through peaceful means and long-term diplomatic and political dialogue between all parties.

○

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE TO H. RES. 526 OFFERED BY MR. BURTON OF INDIANA

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas a democratic and stable Republic of Georgia is in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States;

Whereas the security of the Black Sea and South Caucasus region is important for Euro-Atlantic security, transportation, and energy diversification to and from Central Asia;

Whereas Georgia has been a reliable partner and ally in enhancing global peace and stability with its significant contribution to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed in January 2009, outlines the importance of the bilateral relationship as well as the intent of both countries to expand democracy and economic programs, enhance defense and security cooperation, further trade and energy cooperation, and build people-to-people cultural exchanges;

Whereas in October 2010, at the meeting of the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, "the United States will not waver in its support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity";

Whereas successive United States Administrations have supported Georgia's aspirations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

Whereas it was declared by the Heads of State and Government participating in the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, and reaffirmed in 2009 at the Summit in Strasbourg and Kehl and in 2010 at the Summit in Lisbon, that Georgia is a NATO aspirant country, and will become a member of NATO;

Whereas the North Atlantic Council Foreign Ministers, meeting on December 7, 2011, applauded the significant operational support provided to NATO by aspirant partners Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas the August 2008, military conflict between Russia and Georgia resulted in civilian and military causalities, the violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and increased the number of internally displaced persons there;

Whereas large numbers of the Georgian population remain forcefully displaced from the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia as a result of the August 2008 military conflict as well as the earlier conflicts in the 1990s;

Whereas since 1993, the territorial integrity of Georgia has been reaffirmed by the international community in 36 United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas the August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement negotiated by the European Union Presidency and agreed to by the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation, provides that all Russian troops shall be withdrawn to preconflict positions;

Whereas the Russian Federation opposed consensus on the extension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Georgia, vetoed the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and blocked the work of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

Whereas the United States supports Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia;

Whereas Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated in Tbilisi on July 5, 2010, that, "We continue to call for Russia to abide by the August 2008 ceasefire commitment. . .including ending the occupation and withdrawing Russian troops from South Ossetia and Abkhazia to their pre-conflict positions";

Whereas the White House released a Fact Sheet on July 24, 2010, calling for "Russia to end its occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. . ." and for "a return of international observers to the two occupied regions of Georgia";

Whereas Vice President Joseph Biden stated in Tbilisi in July 2009 that the United States "will not recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states";

Whereas Human Rights Watch concluded in its 2011 World Report that "Russia continued to exercise effective control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, preventing international observers' access and vetoing international missions working there";

Whereas Human Rights Watch concluded in its 2011 World Report that "Russia continued to occupy Georgia's

breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and strengthened its military presence in the region by establishing a military base and placing an advanced surface-to-air missile system in Abkhazia";

Whereas the Senate of the 112th United States Congress adopted a resolution in July 2011 affirming the United States' support for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the country of Georgia and calling upon Russia to remove its occupying forces from Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

Whereas the United States Helsinki Commission called Russia to cease its continuing, illegal occupation of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and allow those who fled their homes during the 2008 war to go back without preconditions;

Whereas the Russian Federation therefore remains in violation of August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement;

Whereas at the April 15, 2011, meeting in Berlin, Germany, between the Georgia foreign minister and foreign ministers of NATO, Secretary of State Clinton stated, "U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity remains steadfast . . . . We share Georgian concerns regarding recent Russian activities that can negatively affect regional stability.";

Whereas on November 23, 2010, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili committed before the European Parliament that "Georgia will never use force to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty";

Whereas the Government of Georgia has demonstrated its overall commitment to democratic and economic reforms;

Whereas Georgia has initiated positive developments and commitment in the areas of constitutional reforms, strengthening the role of Parliament, institutionalizing judicial independence, and utilizing international election organizations and transparency; and

Whereas OSCE determined that Georgia's May 2010 municipal elections "were marked by clear improvements and efforts by the authorities to address problems occurring during the election process": Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) supports strengthened United States en-
2 gagements with the Republic of Georgia aimed at
3 helping Georgia enhance its security and to restore
4 its territorial integrity through exclusively peaceful
5 means;
6 (2) supports the implementation of the United
7 States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership,
8 with a mutual desire to strengthen the bilateral rela-
9 tionship across political, economic, trade, energy,
10 cultural, scientific, people-to-people, defense, and se-
11 curity fields;
12 (3) supports Georgia's North Atlantic Treaty
13 Organization (NATO) membership aspirations and
14 to advance further implementation of decisions taken

by the allies at the NATO Summits in Bucharest, Strasbourg and Kehl, and Lisbon with regard to Georgia's NATO membership;

(4) urges President Barack Obama to lead a diplomatic effort to ensure that the May 2012 NATO Summit recognizes the significant progress made by Georgia on its path toward NATO membership, provides clear benchmarks for Georgia to meet in order to achieve full membership, including the conditions to reach unanimous agreement for membership within the alliance, and a call on Russia to end the occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to completely withdraw its troops from the internationally recognized borders of Georgia;

(5) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to support the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Georgia and the inviolability of its borders, and to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as regions of Georgia illegally occupied by the Russian Federation and calls on the Russian Federation to end the occupation of those regions and fulfill all terms and conditions of the August 12, 2008, ceasefire agreement;

(6) calls upon the Russian Federation, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Tuvalu, and Nauru to reverse the recognition of the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent and respect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;

(7) supports the Government of Georgia's commitment to a policy of peaceful, constructive engagement and confidence building measures towards the occupied territories and encourages it to continue to uphold economic and human rights, ensure freedom of movement, facilitate people-to-people contacts, and to preserve cultural heritage, language, and ethnic identity aimed at reconciling divided communities of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

(8) urges the Government of Russia and the authorities in control in the regions to allow for the full and dignified, secure, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons and international missions access to the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

(9) recognizes progress on government transparency and economic reforms and encourages Georgia to continue strengthening its democracy by im-

plementing reforms that expand media transparency and freedoms, increase government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, promote political competition and democratic electoral processes, strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence, and further implement judicial reforms; and

(10) affirms that a peaceful resolution to the conflict is a key priority for the United States in the Caucasus region, and that lasting regional stability can only be achieved through peaceful means and long-term diplomatic and political dialogue between all parties.

☒

Mr. BURTON. All members are given leave to insert written remarks into the record, and I will now recognize members—I will start with myself—to make opening statements on this.

As chairman of this subcommittee, I led a bipartisan delegation to Georgia, where we engaged with Georgia's President, Prime Minister, parliamentarians, and various ministers of the current government. Our conversations were widespread, and included the country's ongoing democratic and economic reforms, as well as the need for greater cooperation between the United States and Georgia.

Our conversations were not limited to the governing United National movement, but included representatives from the leading Christian Democrats Party and the Free Democrats Party, among others.

We must remember that Georgia is a country in transition. It is not perfect. It is still in development, and its government is young. However, I believe Georgia is moving in the right direction, and its democracy will become one of the strongest and most vibrant in the region. It is in the best interests of the United States to work and partner with the Government of Georgia to encourage and foster a strong democracy.

While in Georgia, I witnessed the progress of reforms, including the opening of their market. As many know, Georgia's annual foreign direct investment is fast approaching 1 billion U.S. dollars, as the country continues to attract international investors. For example, the ever-popular Donald Trump was in Batumi just this week to announce a major development under his Trump brand of properties. I wonder where that guy gets all that money. [Laughter.]

Concerning Georgia's NATO aspirations, it is my belief that Georgia is an excellent candidate and deserves to be given a membership application plan or another clear path for entry at the Chicago Summit. Such action will help facilitate additional reforms that the country needs to make.

Although not tied to membership, NATO countries should recognize Georgia's commitment to Afghanistan, where it will soon deploy the highest troop level per capita of any contributing nation, with no caveats. Many Georgian soldiers are deployed in the dangerous Helmand Province, where they fight side-by-side with the U.S. soldiers.

Sadly, just this week a decorated sergeant of the Georgian Army lost his life in Helmand Province when an IED destroyed his vehicle, and we wish him and his family and the people of Georgia the best regarding his loss, and they have our deepest sympathy.

This resolution, H. Res. 526, is a representative of a bipartisan effort to recognize Georgia and the progress it has made, and symbolizes U.S. support for a young but growing democracy. I want to thank Representative Shimkus and Representative Schwartz for their efforts in the introduction of this resolution. I want to thank Ranking Member Meeks, my good buddy, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, and Ranking Member Berman, and their staffs, for their support in this subcommittee's efforts to move this resolution.

I now recognize Mr. Meeks for an opening statement.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Chairman Burton. I want to thank you for bringing this resolution to a markup today, and I also want to

thank you for your flexibility on the language. We have had some conversation back and forth, and you and your staff have been very flexible in working with us as we try to tweak language and get what should be appropriate. So it is always a delight working with you, my friend, and it is my delight.

And it is probably no coincidence that we are marking up this resolution in the context of a NATO Summit hearing, as Georgia is a NATO aspirant, a country with a strong pro-Western orientation, and they have proven themselves very capable and reliable allies in Afghanistan and other conflict zones. NATO members are bound by a common adherence to democratic norms. The Georgian Government's efforts to build on reforms made to date, to foster greater political competition, labor rights, judicial independence, and media access, will be an opportunity for Georgia to prove itself when measured by international standards.

To paraphrase Ambassador-designee Richard Norland's recent statement, allowing opposition candidates to campaign and compete freely in upcoming parliamentary and Presidential elections will bring Georgia closer to Euro-Atlantic standards and integration, and facilitate Georgia's NATO aspirations.

Now, I want to commend the Georgian Government's progress on government transparency and fight against corruption, political, economic, and judicial reforms, and encourage Georgia to continue its modernization process. We have got to continue to move. We can never be content. There is always room for improvement. And we have got to continue to encourage that kind of improvement and democratization.

And so, as a result of that, as a result of what we see happening, as a result we see forward movement. I encourage my colleagues to support H. Res. 526, in order to strengthen U.S. engagement with the Republic of Georgia, by helping Georgia to enhance its security and restore its territorial integrity through peaceful means, and supporting the Government of Georgia's commitment to a policy of peaceful and constructive engagement with the authorities in control of South Ossettia and Abkhazia. It is with that that I think we can work collectively together, and we can make improvements.

And we have got to continue, because democracy is always something that is a continuing event. We are still working on our democracy, here in the United States. No one gets it right. So we are still progressing and trying to make sure that we continue forward with democratization.

So with that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. SCHMIDT [presiding]. Thank you, and the Chair will now recognize herself for an opening statement.

First off, I want to thank the committee for demonstrating leadership on this very important issue. And it is a bipartisan piece of legislation, and toward that end I applaud it.

But I also want to highlight something beyond just this resolution, and that is NATO itself and the Chicago Summit. Given the nature of the global environment in which we live, and this seemingly never-ending list of rogue states with which we must contend, I understand the need for and the support and continued existence of a strong and vibrant NATO.

In fact, in today's world, where friendship and cooperation with other nations is so incredibly essential to the successful completion of many of our national goals and objectives, particularly in the realm of national security, our involvement in NATO is as necessary as it was when it was founded on April the 4th, 1949, and it is to that end that I look forward to the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago this May.

But unfortunately, my expectations for the summit are low. And I say that they are low because it is what is not on the agenda that concerns me. What we have missed on this agenda—intentionally, I think, it is off the agenda—is the issue of NATO's expansion. With regard to the matter of membership for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, and Montenegro, the administration has been conspicuously quiet. In fact, it looks like they are AWOL.

Perhaps my biggest concern lies with Macedonia itself, a good friend to the United States. Although not a member, Macedonia has long supported the joint security goals and objectives of NATO. The Macedonian military has supported, like other countries not in NATO, missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Lebanon, et cetera.

In 2008, Macedonia completed its membership action plan in preparation for its entry into NATO. And yet, because of an imprudent decision by a country to unilaterally veto Macedonia's admission to NATO, ostensibly on the disagreement with what Macedonia wants to call itself, Macedonia remains a member in waiting. Apparently article X of the North Atlantic Treaty, the so-called Open Door Policy, is not so open.

In Macedonia, we have a country that has honored and fulfilled its requirements for NATO's membership, just as we have with other countries. We have a country that has provided more support for NATO missions, both in talent and in treasure, than many NATO members have themselves, and yet we have a country that is desirous of supporting NATO's goals and objectives and is denied entry.

It is not too late, and I hope the Chicago Summit refocuses its position and allows for a good dialogue and an expansion for its membership.

I yield back my time.

Now I would like to recognize Congressman Engel for his opening statement.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. And let me just first of all say, I am delighted to be here. I think the subject matter is very, very important, and of course the resolution about our friends in Georgia, I am excited to support it. I am, coincidentally, going to have dinner with the Ambassador, Georgian Ambassador, this evening.

I have always been a long-standing friend and supporter of Georgia, and I am a long-standing supporter of Georgia becoming a member of NATO, as are other countries as well, and I hope that that will happen. Other countries, as well, such as Kosovo, and others who aspire to get in.

I think the West needs to expand, just as we expanded NATO when the Soviet Union fell. I think it is important that we continue

to expand it, and those countries that want to become part of the Western Alliance can become part of the Western Alliance.

I would be remiss—well, let me just say this. We just met—many of us had lunch today with Sali Berisha, the Albanian Prime Minister, who is in town, and we talked a great deal at that luncheon about Albania's successful membership in NATO. And I am delighted that Albania is a member of NATO.

But as we talk about the Chicago Summit and U.S. policy, I want to highlight something that is unfolding with regard to the Chicago Summit, and that is Turkey's apparent blocking Israel from participating in the NATO summit. Israel has long participated in the Summit, and has long shown itself to be a very loyal and pro-Western ally of both the United States and NATO.

Turkey, which is a NATO member and sadly, in my opinion, has not acted like one for a long, long, time, or for the past few years at least, is blocking Israel because of a dispute with the flotilla incident, where Turkish nationals and others tried to illegally blockade the Israeli blockade of Gaza, which is legal according to international law. And unfortunately, there was a loss of life and Turkey is demanding all kinds of apologies for it, while refusing to look at its own culpability in the face.

And I just want to voice my disgust at the Government of Turkey for, at least up until now, blocking Israel from participating at the NATO Summit in Chicago. It is an international disgrace. I think Turkey's actions in cozying up to the worst elements are abhorrent. I think that Turkey's policies have just been terrible.

And you know, many of us yesterday attended the Armenian rally here in Washington. And it is 100 years after the Armenian genocide, and Turkey still refuses to acknowledge it, which is another disgrace. So I just want to highlight what I unfortunately regard as disgusting Turkish policy. And Turkey ought to immediately withdraw its blocking of Israel from attending the NATO Summit in Chicago.

And with that, I yield back.

Ms. SCHMIDT. Thank you. And now I yield to recognize an opening statement for Congressman Poe from Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I think the United States should reward our international friends, and not reward our enemies.

We have good friends that sent troops to Iraq, and large contributors to our mission in Afghanistan, than even some of our NATO members sent. In other words, we have folks that sent people to Afghanistan that aren't NATO members, and our NATO members, some of them, did not come up to the plate as well as our non-NATO allies.

These people, these countries, patrol the ISAF headquarters in Kabul, and work alongside our American officers and troops in Afghanistan. If they can protect the tent of NATO, they should be able to sleep in the tent of NATO, one would think. There are enough countries out there that hate us. We give billions of dollars every year to Pakistan, and that doesn't seem to keep them from hating Americans.

But here we have countries that tend to like the United States. They want to be in NATO. They haven't just talked the talk, but

they have walked the walk and stepped up when the international community needed them. They have met NATO's requirements, instituted tough economic and democratic reforms, but they are still not in NATO. They have made the hard sacrifices. They have fought shoulder to shoulder with our troops on the battlefield, but the door to NATO membership remains closed.

This isn't just in our friends' interest. It is in America's interest, too, that we open the door. We have the opportunity, through mutual defense, to bring peace to unstable regions. Where there is peace, we know that economic development and prosperity often follows. Trade and foreign direct investments start to grow as relationships are made. From peace to economic growth, there is a lot on the line for us and for our friends.

I am concerned that NATO's enlargement is not a top priority for the United States. It is not even on the agenda of the upcoming NATO Summit in Chicago. If our friends do all they need to do, and more, to meet NATO's requirements, and don't get in, what is the message we are sending them? How long can we expect them to wait?

It kind of reminds me of the days when I would ask a gal to a dance, and she would turn me down enough times, I quit asking her to the dance. That happened a lot, unfortunately. But it is that situation. They keep wanting to go to the dance, and we just don't respond in a positive manner. It is time to take those friends in, so we can all dance together. The longer we take, the more we are risking public opinion turning against NATO membership. They will start looking elsewhere for friends that really want them to be involved with them. The United States may have lost opportunities if we continue to delay, delay, delay.

There are enough countries around the world that don't like us. It is about time we start rewarding the countries that do actually like the United States.

And I yield back. Thank you, Madam.

Ms. SCHMIDT. Thank you. Hearing no further requests for recognition, and no further amendments to the resolution, the pending question is on the en bloc resolution and the manager's amendment.

Before I say that, I would like to say that any other member that wishes to put remarks into the record will be able to do so.

So, hearing no further requests for recognition, the pending question is on the en bloc resolution and the manager's amendment.

Are there any amendments?

[No response.]

Ms. SCHMIDT. No. Okay. All those in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Ms. SCHMIDT. Any opposed?

[No response.]

Ms. SCHMIDT. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the en bloc measures are agreed to.

Without objection, H. Res. 526 is amended, and will be reported as a single amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the staff are directed to make technical and conforming changes.

I want to thank all of our members and staff on both sides of the aisle for the good work and the cooperation that went into this

markup today. And, having concluded our business, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:52 p.m., the subcommittee proceeded to other business.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP AND HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia
Dan Burton (R-IN), Chairman

April 25, 2012

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN markup of the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, to be held in **Room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building (and available live via the Committee website at http://www.hcfa.house.gov)**:

DATE: Thursday, April 26, 2012

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

MARKUP OF: H. RES. 526, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect toward the establishment of a democratic and prosperous Republic of Georgia and the establishment of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict with Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Europe and Eurasia* MARKUP

Day *Thursday* **Date** *April 26, 2012* **Room** *2172*

Starting Time *2:30* **Ending Time** *2:54*

Recesses [ ] (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Jean Schmidt

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [ ]
Stenographic Record [✓]

BILLS FOR MARKUP: *(Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)*

H. Res. 526, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect toward the establishment of a democratic and prosperous Republic of Georgia and the establishment of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict with Georgia's internationally recognized borders

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dan Burton, Gregory Meeks, Theodore Deutch, Eliot Engel, Tim Griffin, Ted Poe, Jean Schmidt

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Chairman Dan Burton opening statement

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: *(Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)*

The chair called up H. Res. 526 for consideration by the Subcommittee.
Pursuant to a unanimous consent request, the bill and an amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the chair were considered en bloc, and were agreed to by voice vote.
H. Res. 526, as amended, was ordered reported to the full Committee by unanimous consent.

RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): *(Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)*

Subject	Yeas	Nays	Present	Not Voting
Voice vote				

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *2:54 PM*

Marla Walker
Subcommittee Staff Director

Remarks of the Honorable Dan Burton, Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

H. Res. 526, Support Our Strategic Partnership with Georgia

*****As prepared for delivery*****

April 26, 2012

As Chairman of this Subcommittee, I led a bipartisan delegation to Georgia where we engaged with Georgia's President, Prime Minister, Parliamentarians, and various ministers of the current government. Our conversations were widespread and included the country's ongoing democratic and economic reforms as well as the need for greater cooperation between the United States and Georgia. Our conversations were not limited to the governing United National Movement, but included representatives from the leading Christian Democrats party and Free Democrats party, among others.

We must remember that Georgia is a country in transition. It is not perfect, it is still in development, and its government is young. However, I believe Georgia is moving in the right direction and its democracy will become one of the strongest and most vibrant in the region. It is in the best interest of the United States to work and partner with the government of Georgia to encourage and foster a strong democracy.

While in Georgia, I witnessed the progress of reforms, including the opening of their market. As many know, Georgia's annual Foreign Direct Investment is fast approaching a billion U.S. dollars annually as the country continues to attract international investors. For example, Donald Trump was in Batumi just this week to announce a major development under his Trump brand of properties.

Concerning Georgia's NATO aspirations, it is my belief that Georgia is an excellent candidate and deserves to be given a Membership Action Plan or another clear path for entry at the Chicago Summit. Such action will help facilitate additional reforms that the country needs to make. Although not tied to membership, NATO countries should recognize Georgia's commitment to Afghanistan where it will soon deploy the highest troop level per capita of any contributing nation– with no caveats. Many Georgian soldiers are deployed in the dangerous Helmand province where they fight side-by-side with U.S. soldiers. Sadly, just this week a decorated sergeant of the Georgian army lost his life in Helmand province when an IED destroyed his vehicle.

This resolution, H. Res. 526, is representative of a bipartisan effort to recognize Georgia and the progress it has made and symbolizes U.S. support for a young, but growing democracy. I want to thank Rep. Shimkus and Rep. Schwartz for their efforts and introduction of this resolution. I want to thank Ranking Member Meeks, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, and Ranking

Member Berman and their staff for their support of this Subcommittee's efforts to move this resolution.

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