

SPECTER, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. WELLSTONE, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 279

Whereas the United States has shown leadership in promoting human rights, including the rights of women and girls, and was instrumental in the development of international human rights treaties and norms, including the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);

Whereas the Senate has already agreed to the ratification of several important human rights treaties, including the Genocide Convention, the Convention Against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

Whereas CEDAW establishes a worldwide commitment to combat discrimination against women and girls;

Whereas 165 countries of the world have ratified or acceded to CEDAW and the United States is among a small minority of countries, including Afghanistan, North Korea, Iran, and Sudan, which have not;

Whereas CEDAW is helping combat violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world;

Whereas CEDAW has had a significant and positive impact on legal developments in countries as diverse as Uganda, Colombia, Brazil, and South Africa, including, on citizenship rights in Botswana and Japan, inheritance rights in Tanzania, property rights and political participation in Costa Rica;

Whereas the Administration has proposed a small number of reservations, understandings, and declarations to ensure that U.S. ratification fully complies with all constitutional requirements, including states' and individuals' rights;

Whereas the legislatures of California, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Vermont have endorsed U.S. ratification of CEDAW;

Whereas more than one hundred U.S.-based, civic, legal, religious, education, and environmental organizations, including many major national membership organizations, support U.S. ratification of CEDAW;

Whereas ratification of CEDAW would allow the United States to nominate a representative to the CEDAW oversight committee; and

Whereas 2000 is the 21st anniversary of the adoption of CEDAW by the United Nations General Assembly: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should hold hearings on the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); and

(2) the Senate should act on CEDAW by July 19, 2000, the 20th anniversary of the signing of the convention by the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 280—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE WITH RESPECT TO UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN CHECHNYA

Mr. WELLSTONE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 280

Whereas the Senate of the United States unanimously passed Senate Resolution 262 on February 24, 2000, condemning the indiscriminate use of force by the Government of the Russian Federation against the people of Chechnya, encouraging peace negotiations between the Government of the Russian Federation and the leadership of the Chechen Government, and urging the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately grant international organizations full and unimpeded access into Chechnya in order to provide humanitarian assistance and investigate alleged atrocities and war crimes;

Whereas the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Senate received credible evidence and testimony reporting grave human rights violations on both sides of the war in Chechnya;

Whereas the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate received credible evidence and testimony that Russian forces in Chechnya caused the deaths of countless thousands of innocent civilians and the displacement of well over 250,000 innocents; forcibly relocated refugee populations; and committed widespread atrocities including summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture, and rape;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation continues its military campaign in Chechnya through the use of indiscriminate force, causing further dislocation of people from their homes, the deaths of unarmed civilians and widespread suffering;

Whereas this war contributes to ethnic hatred and religious intolerance within the Russian Federation, and could divert much-needed international development assistance, undercut the ability of the international community to trust the Russian Federation as a signatory to international agreements, generate political instability within the Russian Federation, and be a continuing threat to the peace in the region; and

Whereas the Senate again expresses its deep concern over the war and humanitarian tragedy in Chechnya, and its desire for a peaceful and durable settlement to the conflict: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the lack of vigorous and sustained action of most Western governments, including that of the United States, to respond to the conflict in Chechnya could be too easily interpreted by the Government of the Russian Federation as indifference to it and thus allow that government to intensify and expand its military campaign there, further contributing to the suffering of the Chechen people;

(2) the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, is responsible for the conduct of Russian troops in and around Chechnya and has an obligation to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights norms, including the obligation to prevent present and future

atrocities there, and to investigate fully atrocities already committed, and to initiate, where appropriate, prosecutions against those accused;

(3) the Government of the Russian Federation and the leadership of the Chechen Government should immediately cease military operations in Chechnya and seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict there;

(4) the President of the Russian Federation should—

(A) act immediately to end human rights violations by Russian soldiers in Chechnya;

(B) allow immediate, full, and unimpeded access into and around Chechnya to international monitors to assess and report on the situation there and to investigate alleged atrocities and war crimes;

(C) allow international humanitarian agencies immediate, full, and unimpeded access to Chechen civilians, including those in refugee, detention, and “filtration” camps, or any other facility where citizens of Chechnya are detained; and

(D) investigate fully atrocities committed in Chechnya, including those alleged in Alkhan-Yurt and Grozny, and initiate, where appropriate, prosecutions against those accused;

(5) the President of the United States of America should—

(A) affirm respect for human rights, democratic rule of law, and international accountability as a foundation of United States foreign policy;

(B) affirm respect for human rights, democratic rule of law, and international accountability as a condition for continued United States-Russian cooperation;

(C) conduct a full and comprehensive review of United States foreign policy toward the Russian Federation with respect to its conduct in Chechnya, and its implications for United States-Russian relations;

(D) promote peace negotiations between the Government of the Russian Federation and the leadership of the Chechen Government through third-party mediation by the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, the United Nations, or other appropriate parties;

(E) publicly and openly support societal forces in the Russian Federation working to preserve democracy there, including empowering human rights activists and promoting programs designed to strengthen the independent media, trade unions, political parties, and other institutions of a democratic civil society there; and

(F) take further, more tangible steps to demonstrate to the Government of the Russian Federation that the United States strongly condemns its conduct in Chechnya and its unwillingness to find a just political solution to the conflict there, including—

(i) sponsoring a Resolution at the 56th annual meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, expressing the Commission's serious concern about reports of very grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law in Chechnya, and including provisions, such as the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, to investigate accusations of violations of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and other international humanitarian law;

(ii) supporting the appointment of a United Nations Special Rapporteur for Chechnya; and

(iii) placing the war in Chechnya at the top of the agenda of all high-level diplomatic meetings involving the United States and the Russian Federation; and

(6) the President of the United States should not reverse actions taken under paragraph (5)(f) until the Government of the Russian Federation has—

(A) acted forcefully and effectively to end human rights violations by Russian soldiers in Chechnya;

(B) provided full and unimpeded access into and around Chechnya to international monitors to assess and report on the situation there and to investigate alleged atrocities and war crimes;

(C) granted international humanitarian agencies full and unimpeded access to Chechen civilians, including those in refugee, detention, and “filtration” camps, or any other facility where citizens of Chechnya are detained; and

(D) begun to investigate fully atrocities committed in Chechnya, including those alleged in Alkhan-Yurt and Grozny, and initiated, where appropriate, prosecutions against those accused.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to the continuing war in Chechnya and to remind the international community that our lack of vigorous and sustained action to respond to the conflict there could be too easily interpreted by the Russian Government as indifference to it. We must act to again remind the newly elected President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, that he is responsible for the conduct of Russian troops in and around Chechnya and has an obligation to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights norms; and we must act to urge the Government of the Russian Federation and the leadership of the Chechen Government to immediately cease military operations in Chechnya and to seek a negotiated just settlement to the conflict there.

Today I am offering a Resolution which urges the Administration to sponsor a Resolution condemning the Russian Federation’s conduct in Chechnya at the annual United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting that is currently underway in Geneva, Switzerland, to support the appointment of a U.N. Special Rapporteur for Chechnya, and to place the war in Chechnya at the top of the agenda of all high-level diplomatic meetings involving the United States and the Russian Federation. The United States must publicly and actively affirm respect for human rights, democratic rule of law and international accountability as a foundation of United States policy and not simply pay them lip service.

Sunday night we watched as acting President Vladimir Putin was elected President of the Russian Federation. As the President of a fully sovereign state I do not question President Putin’s authority to combat what it perceives as terrorism on its own soil and to ensure the integrity of its borders, nor do I dismiss credible reports of grave violations of human rights on both sides of this war. I do, however, condemn the continuing indiscriminate

use of force by the Russian military in Chechnya and the blatant disregard it continues to show for international humanitarian law there.

Last month the Senate Foreign Relations Committee heard evidence and testimony reporting that Russian forces in Chechnya have caused the deaths of countless thousands of innocent civilians and the displacement of well over 250,000 innocents; forcibly relocated refugee populations; and committed widespread atrocities including summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture, and rape. While they claim to have begun to open up access to the region, the Russian government continues to effectively deny international organizations full and unimpeded access into Chechnya to assess and report on the situation there, to investigate alleged atrocities and war crimes, and to provide humanitarian relief.

I am not alone in my concern about the situation in Chechnya. Last November both the House and Senate passed resolutions expressing grave concern regarding the armed conflict in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation and condemning the violence in Chechnya. On February 24 of this year, the Senate unanimously agreed to Senate Resolution 262, calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Chechnya, and Senate Resolution 261, regarding the detention of the journalist Andrei Babitsky. Finally, just a few weeks ago on March 9, Senate Resolution 269, regarding relations with the Russian Federation given its conduct in Chechnya, was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

We have all read editorials on Chechnya in the news media written by our own colleagues, witnessed a joint conference on Chechnya by the Commonwealth of Independent States Inter-parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament, heard claims by a leading Russian human rights activist who is also a member of the Russian Parliament offering fierce criticism of the Russian government’s efforts in Chechnya, and listened as just this past week at the annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva, Secretary Albright objected to the indiscriminate use of force against civilians in Chechnya and proclaimed that allegations of Russian human rights violations are serious and must be addressed urgently. In a phone call to congratulate President Putin on his victory in the Presidential election, President Clinton expressed his hope that Mr. Putin would carry out impartial and transparent investigations of reported human rights violations in Chechnya and provide prompt and full access for international organizations and the press. But, Mr. President, even after all this commentary, and numerous meetings

designed to press the Russians to change course, the situation has changed hardly at all.

I fully support Secretary Albright’s decision to address the allegations of gross human rights abuses by Russian soldiers in Chechnya in her address to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and the President’s raising this issue again in his phone call to President Putin, but the grave situation in Chechnya demands that we do more. The annual meeting of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights provides a major forum for addressing human rights concerns and for expressing international commentary on the human rights performance of all nations. The Government of the Russian Federation must be held accountable for its conduct in Chechnya and should be forced to defend itself against allegations of grave human rights violations there, in the full light of public scrutiny.

The administration should bring a resolution expressing the Commission’s serious concern about reports of gross human rights abuses and other violations of humanitarian law in Chechnya, including provisions urging the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate violations of the Geneva Convention and other international humanitarian law. It must also support the appointment of a United Nations Special Rapporteur for Chechnya to assess and report on the situation there, and place the war in Chechnya at the top of the agenda of all high-level diplomatic meetings involving the United States and the Russian Federation.

Mr. President, it is high time the United States expressed its commitment to human rights, democratic rule of law, and international accountability through concrete action. We must send a message to the Russian Federation, as well as the international community, that respect for these important principles will be a condition for continued cooperation with the United States. We must demand concrete action by the Government of the Russian Federation to end human rights violations by Russian soldiers in Chechnya, to investigate, where appropriate, those accused of violations, and to ease the suffering of civilians there. We must not be diverted by verbal commitments by the Russian leadership that never come to fruition. We need to exercise our leadership now. The international community and the people of Chechnya deserve no less.