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H. RES. 137

Reaffirming the importance of upholding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in United States foreign policy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

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

RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the importance of upholding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in United States foreign policy.

Whereas strong democracies make strong partners for the United States in fostering the peace and prosperity that our citizens desire;

Whereas democratic principles and values have come under increasing strain around the world as governments backslide on their commitments to govern justly, transparently, and with respect for the rights of their citizens;

Whereas support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law is consistent with our national character and founding values;

Whereas the promotion, protection, and advancement of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law around the

world have been core, bipartisan components of United States foreign policy essential to the achievement of other United States foreign policy goals, including reducing poverty and racial inequality, promoting peaceful resolution of conflict, strengthening global alliances, ensuring gender equality, expanding prosperity, fostering greater security for all people, and sustaining the global environment;

Whereas the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 states that “a principal goal of the foreign policy of the United States is to promote the increased observance of internationally recognized human rights by all countries”;

Whereas the United States, as a signatory of the Helsinki Final Act, has joined other like-minded countries in affirming its commitment to respecting “human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.”;

Whereas this commitment includes respecting the rights of “minorities to equality before the law . . . [and] the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms”;

Whereas it is longstanding United States policy to work alongside like-minded democratic governments, legislatures, civil society leaders and organizations, academic institutions and scholars, independent media and journalists, anti-corruption activists, and international organizations worldwide to promote, protect, and advance the cause of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law;

Whereas civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and journalists play a critical role in promoting human

rights, transparency, accountability, and good governance, and around the world often face smear campaigns, criminalization, or other governmental constraints on their work, including intimidation, death threats, arbitrary detention, physical attacks, sexual violence, enforced disappearances, and murder;

Whereas racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of ethnic and religious discrimination threaten the rights, safety, and prosperity of individuals around the world;

Whereas support for democracy around the world enhances regional peace and stability, opens doors for economic opportunity, and provides a counterweight to violent and radical extremism—all of which are in the national security interests of the United States and its allies;

Whereas democratic systems of government enshrine the individual human rights of all citizens, so that every individual can contribute to and enjoy the benefits of peaceful, prosperous societies;

Whereas the United States supports the existence of and has often worked in partnership with independent and multilateral human rights organizations, both at local and international levels, and has used their reporting for policy development and referred to their findings in the annual Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and other United States policy documents;

Whereas the idea of America enshrined in our democratic principles is one of our greatest competitive strengths, such that when we abandon these values and adopt the flawed principles and tactics of our adversaries, we be-

come weaker as a country and undermine our standing around the world;

Whereas some countries are actively promoting an authoritarian model of government as an alternative to the model long advanced by the United States based on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, with the authoritarian model representing a threat to the role and influence of the United States in the world;

Whereas some countries hostile to the democratic principles and values the United States has long promoted are also working to erode international alliances and organizations dedicated to advancing those principles, thereby placing United States security and economic interests at risk; and

Whereas the United States has historically allied most closely and productively with those countries committed to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reaffirms the bipartisan commitment of the
3 United States to upholding democracy, human
4 rights, and the rule of law, at home and in the
5 world;

6 (2) acknowledges that United States national
7 security is enhanced in a world in which countries
8 share a commitment to universal rights and free-
9 doms and observe the democratic rule of law, and in
10 which prosperity and justice create the conditions
11 for peace;

1 (3) promotes, supports, and encourages greater
2 respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of
3 law throughout the world for all people, including
4 women and minorities, whose rights should be af-
5 forded equal protection under the law;

6 (4) encourages the United States Government
7 to work constructively with all countries and multi-
8 lateral institutions that seek to advance the cause of
9 freedom, peace, and security, which can be achieved
10 only through democracy, respect for human rights,
11 and the rule of law;

12 (5) calls on the United States Government to
13 continue its longstanding support for organizations
14 dedicated to promoting, protecting, and advancing
15 democracy, human rights, and the rule of law world-
16 wide;

17 (6) supports the United States Government's
18 crucial role in ending racial injustice and religious
19 persecution as a key priority of U.S. policy and an
20 integral part of its mission to promote, protect, and
21 advance democracy, human rights, and the rule of
22 law around the world;

23 (7) urges the United States Government to con-
24 tinue its strong support for human rights defenders,
25 civil society activists, scholars, and independent jour-

1 nalists working to promote, protect, and advance de-
2 mocracy, human rights, and the rule of law world-
3 wide;

4 (8) affirms that the United States Government
5 must serve as an example for countries around the
6 world by showing the highest level of respect for de-
7 mocracy, human rights, and the rule of law at home;
8 and

9 (9) calls on all branches of the Federal Govern-
10 ment to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human
11 Rights, the Refugee Convention Protocol of 1967,
12 the International Covenant on Civil and Political
13 Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, and other relevant
14 international human rights agreements ratified by
15 the United States.

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