

Whereas the March 2006 report from of the Independent Task Force on Russia of the Council on Foreign Relations stated that “to protect the credibility of the G-8 at a time when many are questioning Russia’s chairmanship, the United States should make clear that this role does not exempt Russian policies and actions from critical scrutiny”;

Whereas the United States recognizes and applauds the proud history of achievement, creativity, and sacrifice of the people of Russia;

Whereas the United States seeks the development of Russia as a strong, responsible, democratic partner in promoting global peace and security; and

Whereas the United States believes that both the people of Russia and the Government of the Russian Federation will be shackled in their efforts to build a strong society domestically and contribute to the work of the international community so long as the Government of the Russian Federation fails to fully embrace the values of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) in order to preserve the integrity of the G-8 as a forum of the leading industrialized democracies of the world, President George W. Bush and other heads of state attending the G-8 Summit should explicitly, frankly, and honestly engage Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin in a dialogue about the anti-democratic behavior of the Government of the Russian Federation;

(2) the United States and other democratic countries should reaffirm their support for civic and non-governmental organizations working to promote democracy and the rule of law in Russia;

(3) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to ensure that it guarantees the full range of civil and political rights to its citizens, as it is obligated to do under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(4) consistent with its obligations under the International Covenant, the Government of the Russian Federation should take steps to cease its interference with foreign news organizations, including the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty;

(5) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to combat rising racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in Russian society; and

(6) the United States and countries of the G-8 should reaffirm their support for new democracies on the borders of Russia and, where applicable, expedite their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions to provide a bulwark for democracy in eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

#### EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 500.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 500) expressing the sense of Congress that the Russian Federation should fully protect the freedoms of all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, as stipulated by the Russian Constitution and international standards.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 500) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

#### S. RES. 500

Whereas the Russian Federation is a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and has freely committed to fully respect the rights of individuals, whether alone or in community with others, to profess and practice religion or belief;

Whereas the 1989 Vienna Concluding Document calls on OSCE participating States to “take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or communities on the grounds of religion or belief” and to “grant upon their request to communities of believers, practicing or prepared to practice their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, recognition of the status provided for them in the respective countries”;

Whereas Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation declares that “everyone shall be guaranteed the right to freedom of conscience, to freedom of religious worship, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion” and Article 8 of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations provides for registration for religious communities as “religious organizations,” if they have at least 10 members and have operated within the Russian Federation with legal status for at least 15 years;

Whereas religious freedom has advanced significantly for the vast majority of people in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union;

Whereas many rights and privileges afforded to religious communities in the Russian Federation remain contingent on the ability of the communities to obtain government registration;

Whereas some religious groups have not attempted to register with government authorities due to theological considerations, and other communities have been unjustly denied registration or had their registration improperly terminated by local authorities;

Whereas many of the unregistered communities in the Russian Federation today were never registered under the Soviet system because they refused to collaborate with that government’s anti-religious policies and they are now experiencing renewed discrimination and repression by authorities of the Russian Federation;

Whereas over the past 2 years there have been an estimated 10 arson attacks on unregistered Protestant churches, with little or no effective response by law enforcement officials to bring the perpetrators to justice;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation reacted swiftly in response to the January 2006 attack on a Moscow synagogue, but there have been numerous other anti-Semitic attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions in the Russian Federation, and there is increasing tolerance of anti-Semitism in certain segments of society in that country;

Whereas there has been evidence of an increase in the frequency and severity of op-

pressive actions by security forces and federal and local officials against some Muslim communities and their members;

Whereas there are many cases involving restitution for religious property seized by the Soviet regime that remain unresolved;

Whereas in some areas of the Russian Federation law enforcement personnel have carried out acts of harassment and oppression against members of religious communities peacefully practicing their faith and local officials have put overly burdensome restrictions on the ability of some religious communities to engage in religious activity; and

Whereas the United States has sought to protect the fundamental and inalienable right of individuals to profess and practice their faith, alone or in community with others, according to the dictates of their conscience, and in accordance with international agreements committing nations to respect individual freedom of thought, conscience, and belief: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of Congress that the United States Government should—

(1) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure full protection of freedoms for all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, and end the harassment of unregistered religious groups by the security apparatus and other government agencies, thereby building upon the progress made over the past 15 years in promoting religious freedom in the Russian Federation;

(2) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure that law enforcement officials vigorously investigate and prosecute acts of violence, arson, and desecration perpetrated against registered and unregistered religious communities, as well as make certain that government authorities are not complicit in such incidents;

(3) continue to raise concerns with the Government of the Russian Federation over violations of religious freedom, including those against unregistered religious communities, especially indigenous denominations not well known in the United States;

(4) ensure that United States Embassy officials engage local officials throughout the Russian Federation, especially when violations of freedom of religion occur, and undertake outreach activities to educate local officials about the rights of unregistered religious communities;

(5) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to invite the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chair-in-Office and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the Russian Federation and discuss with federal and local officials concerns about the religious freedom of both registered and unregistered religious communities; and

(6) urge the Council of Europe, its member countries, and the other members of the G-8 to raise issues relating to religious freedom with Russian officials in the context of the Russian Federation’s responsibilities both as President of the Council in 2006 and as a member of the G-8.

#### MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 9

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 9) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

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ORDERS FOR MONDAY, JULY 17,  
2006

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 12 noon on Monday, July 17. I further ask that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with the time equally divided until 12:30. Further, I ask that at 12:30 the Senate proceed to the stem cell bills as under the previous order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we made real progress this week in passing a very important bill, the Homeland Security appropriations bill, under the leadership of Chairman JUDD GREGG, who did a superb job on a very important bill which adds billions of dollars to issues we spend a lot of time talking about and debating but that puts real money, real resources where they are needed: over \$14 billion for issues surrounding tightening our borders, increasing the number of border security agents by 1,000, increasing the number of detention beds by over 1,000, and well over \$14 billion for border security and immigration issues. It is a very important bill.

Over the course of this month I also intend to address other issues surrounding securing our homeland, issues such as the Department of Defense authorization and our military construction bills, all of which focus on getting money down to where it is needed, protecting our homeland, supporting our troops here and overseas.

Also, it was an interesting week in that we had very positive economic developments announced with not just the 5.4 million jobs that have been created over the last 30 months or so, not just the low unemployment—4.6 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s, but the fact that the deficit is coming down much faster than anyone had anticipated. That is in large part—in most part—because of the pro-growth President-Bush-led policies of less taxation which promotes that strong economic growth. Revenues are coming into the Federal Government with lower tax rates, and the revenues are coming in much faster than anticipated because of those policies. And

those increased revenues coming in, by definition, lower that deficit. The deficit is projected this year to be 30 percent lower than what we thought it was going to be just in February, earlier this year.

The important thing to recognize, as we have this great, what we call “macro” or large global prosperity, in the sense of our global or American economy here, with 5.6 percent growth in GDP last quarter, the fastest it has been in years and years—at the same time we have the squeeze that is on our average person, average taxpayer out there today. That is due in part to the high gasoline prices that we are going to see go up again—in part because of the international turmoil in the Middle East, the fact we are 60 percent dependent on the Middle East. Our response on this floor should be and will be to address issues surrounding lowering that dependence on foreign sources of oil. I hope we can do that in the next several weeks.

We had a very positive bipartisan announcement about opening exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. It is bipartisan, so I am very hopeful about that.

Health care is another one of those issues that squeezes people so much because health care prices continue to go up two to three times faster than wages. When that is the case, you get squeezed as an individual. So in spite of the great macro numbers around the United States of America, the individual feels squeezed with gasoline prices and health care. So small business health plans are something we should come back to, something we need to come back to and address. Most people today work for what we call small businesses. These small business health reform plans allow small businesses and the individuals to have lower health care costs. They slow that growth of health care costs over time and hit at one of the major reasons they feel the pinch.

I mentioned energy. A lot of that focuses on the area called 181, in the Gulf of Mexico. And I mentioned health care costs with the focus on the small business health plans. We have the support of 56 Senators on the floor, and I need 60 Senators to actually pass that bill. So I hope a few more of our Senators will recognize, from a small business perspective, from the perspective of the individual employee, how important it is to allow small businesses to group together, to have the purchasing power to get those lower costs, to get those lower charges just like the big companies can get—the clout, the muscle you can get by grouping small business together.

It is common sense. The American people scratch their heads and say: Why can't you pass it? We have majority support.

We don't have 60 people yet supporting it. We need to work on that, and I think we have to do it sometime this year.

Let me just comment and then I am going to take a short break and I will

come back to the floor to make a final comment on stem cells. On Monday we will begin the debate on the three bills—one, a fetal farming bill, a second bill that looks at alternative ways of developing pluripotent cells or embryo-like cells—very exciting research—and a third, the House bill which increases Federal support for embryonic stem cells that are derived from embryos that are otherwise going to be discarded. Those are the exact words in that bill.

We will have very good debate. It will be on Monday and Tuesday of next week. We will have those votes starting at 3:45 on Tuesday. Each of those votes will have 60 votes for passage. People ask why. We all agree to that because we can spend weeks and weeks on the floor of the Senate and with all the filibuster and cloture and the like, that is what you end up with, is you have to have a 60-vote threshold. That is why we have agreed with that.

Mr. President, I will close and will come back and within 10 minutes or so speak on stem cells for about 4 or 5 minutes, and at that time we will formally close.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Monday, the Senate will begin debate on three important pieces of legislation under an agreement that was reached between both sides of the aisle several days ago. Those three bills are as follows:

The Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act, a bill sponsored by Senator SANTORUM and Senator SPECTER; second, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which is the bill from the House, H.R. 810—the House—Castle and DeGette, Senate—Specter and Hatch bill; and, third, the Fetus Farming Prohibition Act of 2006—the Santorum and Brownback bill.

It was 5 years ago almost exactly—on July 18, 2001, before the administration laid out its policy—that I laid out a comprehensive proposal to promote stem cell research within a strong ethical and moral framework. I proposed at that time on the floor 10 specific interdependent principles. I also laid out a proposal and told policymakers and my colleagues I felt it was our responsibility to assess and to reassess, on a periodic basis, whatever we or the administration does because of the rapidly advancing science that so characterizes this decade or the 21st century.

As this century progresses and as science advances—and it is skyrocketing in terms of the advances