

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 226

Calling for free and fair parliamentary elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 29, 2005

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. McCAIN, and Mr. HAGEL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Calling for free and fair parliamentary elections in the
Republic of Azerbaijan.

Whereas the Republic of Azerbaijan is scheduled to hold elections for its parliament, the Milli Majlis, in November 2005;

Whereas Azerbaijan has enjoyed a strong relationship with the United States since its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991;

Whereas international observers monitoring Azerbaijan's October 2003 presidential election found that the pre-election, election day, and post-election environments fell short of international standards;

Whereas the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) in Baku, Azerbaijan, deployed by the Organiza-

tion for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, found that there were numerous instances of violence by both members of the opposition and government forces;

Whereas the international election observers also found inequality and irregularities in campaign and election conditions, including intimidation against opposition supporters, restrictions on political rallies by opposition candidates, and voting fraud;

Whereas Azerbaijan freely accepted a series of commitments on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law when that country joined the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a participating State in 1992;

Whereas, following the 2003 presidential election, the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 1358 (2004) demanding that the Government of Azerbaijan immediately implement a series of steps that included the release of political prisoners, investigation of election fraud, and the creation of public service television to allow all political parties to better communicate with the people of Azerbaijan;

Whereas, since the 2003 presidential election, the Government of Azerbaijan has taken some positive steps by releasing some political prisoners and working toward the establishment of public service television;

Whereas a genuinely free and fair election requires that citizens be guaranteed the right and opportunity to exercise their civil and political rights, free from intimidation, undue influence, threats of political retribution, or other forms of coercion by national or local authorities or others;

Whereas a genuinely free and fair election requires government and public authorities to ensure that candidates and political parties enjoy equal treatment before the law and that government resources are not employed to the advantage of individual candidates or political parties; and

Whereas the establishment of a transparent, free and fair election process for the 2005 parliamentary elections is an important step in Azerbaijan's progress toward full integration into the democratic community of nations: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) calls on the Government of the Republic of
3 Azerbaijan to hold orderly, peaceful, and free and
4 fair parliamentary elections in November 2005 in
5 order to ensure the long-term growth and stability of
6 the country;

7 (2) calls upon the Government of Azerbaijan to
8 guarantee the full participation of opposition parties
9 in the upcoming elections, including members of op-
10 position parties arrested in the months leading up to
11 the November 2005 parliamentary elections;

12 (3) calls upon the opposition parties to fully
13 and peacefully participate in the November 2005
14 parliamentary elections, and calls upon the Govern-
15 ment of Azerbaijan to create the conditions for the
16 participation on equal grounds of all viable can-
17 didates;

1 (4) believes it is critical that the November
2 2005 parliamentary elections be viewed by the peo-
3 ple of Azerbaijan as free and fair, and that all sides
4 refrain from violence during the campaign, on elec-
5 tion day, and following the election;

6 (5) supports recommendations made by the
7 Council of Europe on amendments to the Unified
8 Election Code of Azerbaijan, specifically to ensure
9 equitable representation of opposition and pro-gov-
10 ernment forces in all election commissions;

20 (8) calls upon the Government of Azerbaijan to
21 guarantee freedom of speech and freedom of assem-
22 bly.

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