

110TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 154

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko, a citizen and resident of Great Britain, suddenly fell ill on November 1, 2006, and died three weeks later in a London hospital;

Whereas British health officials concluded, following an autopsy, that Mr. Litvinenko died of radiation poisoning caused by ingestion of the radioactive

element polonium-210, and British law enforcement officials have announced that they are treating Mr. Litvinenko's death as a murder;

Whereas polonium-210, according to the Health Physics Society, radiates alpha particles that cannot penetrate paper or human skin but, if ingested through eating, drinking, or breathing, are extremely toxic, with the ability to destroy cells, damage vital organs such as the liver, kidneys, and bone marrow, cause cancer, and result in human death;

Whereas according to the Health Physics Society, just one millionth of a gram of polonium-210 can be fatal, an amount invisible to the naked eye;

Whereas 97 percent of the world's legal production of polonium-210 occurs at the Avangard nuclear facility in Russia, and Russia is the world's leading exporter of polonium-210 for commercial purposes;

Whereas polonium-210 is presently neither produced in nor commercially exported to Great Britain;

Whereas polonium-210, being especially dangerous to public health and safety if improperly handled, may attract the attention of terrorists because it can be easily and safely concealed and transported and is not usually detectable by radiation detectors;

Whereas this instance of poisoning by use of polonium-210 could serve as a model for future use of the radioactive element to assassinate individuals, poison and kill large numbers of people, or spread general panic and hysteria amongst the public;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko was a former agent and official in the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

during the period when present Russian President Vladimir Putin ran that agency;

Whereas in 1998 Mr. Litvinenko was fired from the Federal Security Service and subsequently arrested and briefly incarcerated without conviction for a criminal act after publicly accusing high-level officials of the Federal Security Service of crimes that included plotting assassination attempts;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko fled Russia and successfully sought asylum in Great Britain, becoming a naturalized British citizen in October 2006;

Whereas Mr. Litvinenko, after arriving in Britain, repeatedly accused the Federal Security Service and many of its officers, including now-President Putin, of involvement in organized crime, assassinations, and other illegal activity;

Whereas on November 1, 2006, before falling ill, Mr. Litvinenko reportedly met with three citizens of Russia, including former Federal Security Service agent Andrei Lugovoi;

Whereas the manner in which the polonium-210 was obtained, transported, and used must be fully investigated and revealed in order to reveal any defects or inadequacies in the present safeguard regime for that substance administered by the Russian Government and in order to prevent the unlawful, criminal, or terrorist acquisition or use of polonium-210 in the future;

Whereas the danger posed by polonium-210, as displayed by the discovery, subsequent to Mr. Litvinenko's death, of numerous cases of its exposure to objects and persons who had contact with Mr. Litvinenko and his meal companions, demonstrates the threat that the proliferation

and use of polonium-210 poses to the lives of innocents worldwide, as well as to international security;

Whereas on July 15, 2006, the United States and Russia jointly announced the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which “will enhance cooperation . . . to combat the global threat of nuclear terrorism . . . [including] determined and systematic efforts to improve accounting, control, and physical protection of nuclear material and radioactive substances, as well as security of nuclear facilities; [and] detect and suppress illicit trafficking or other illicit activities involving such materials, especially measures to prevent their acquisition and use by terrorists”;

Whereas Mr. Lugovoi has won immunity from prosecution as a member of the Russian Duma in December 2007 elections allegedly influenced by government electoral manipulation, which provides credence to claims that he has enjoyed official support in obtaining that office and its associated immunity; and

Whereas the British investigation into Mr. Litvinenko’s murder continues in an atmosphere of deteriorating relations between the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation due, in part, to a lack of agreement on the further pursuit of that investigation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

3 (1) the fatal radiation poisoning of Alexander
 4 Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the po-
 5 tential involvement of elements of the Russian Gov-

1 ernment in Mr. Litvinenko's death, and about the
2 security and proliferation of radioactive materials;

3 (2) the use of such radioactive materials in
4 such cases demonstrates a threat to the safety and
5 security of the people of the Russian Federation, the
6 United Kingdom, the United States, and other coun-
7 tries; and

8 (3) the President of the United States and the
9 Secretary of State should urge Russian President
10 Vladimir Putin and other officials of the Russian
11 Government to cooperate fully with the British Gov-
12 ernment in its investigation into Mr. Litvinenko's
13 death and to ensure the security of the production,
14 storage, distribution, and export of polonium-210 as
15 a material that may become dangerous to large
16 numbers of people if utilized by terrorists.

Passed the House of Representatives April 1, 2008.

Attest:

Clerk.

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Expressing the sense of Congress that the fatal radiation poisoning of Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in Mr. Litvinenko's death and about the security and proliferation of radioactive materials.