

Statement on H Con Res 154

Expressing concern over Russian involvement in Alexander Litvinenko's murder

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Mr. Speaker: I rise in strong opposition to this ill-conceived resolution. The US House of Representatives has no business speculating on guilt or innocence in a crime that may have been committed thousands of miles outside US territory. It is arrogant, to say the least, that we presume to pass judgment on crimes committed overseas about which we have seen no evidence.

The resolution purports to express concern over the apparent murder in London of a shadowy former Russian intelligence agent, Alexander Litvinenko, but let us not kid ourselves. The real purpose is to attack the Russian government by suggesting that Russia is involved in the murder. There is little evidence of this beyond the feverish accusations of interested parties. In fact, we may ultimately discover that Litvinenko's death by radiation poisoning was the result of his involvement in an international nuclear smuggling operation, as some investigative reporters have claimed. The point is that we do not know. The House of Representatives has no business inserting itself in disputes about which we lack information and jurisdiction.

At a time when we should be seeking good relations and expanded trade with Russia, what is the benefit in passing such provocative resolutions? There is none.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into the Congressional Record a very thought-provoking article by Edward Jay Epstein published recently in the New York Sun, which convincingly calls into question many of the assumptions and accusations made in this legislation. I would encourage my colleagues to read this article and carefully consider the wisdom of what we are doing.

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