
FREEDOM Support Act Signed Into Law

By

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President of the United States of America

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Today I have signed into law S. 2532, the "FREEDOM [Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets] Support Act." This historic legislation authorizes a range of programs to support free market and democratic reforms being undertaken in Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, and the other states of the former Soviet Union. In particular, the bill endorses the \$12 billion increase in the U.S. share of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and authorizes \$410 million in U.S. bilateral assistance. In addition, the bill removes a number of outdated Cold War legislative restrictions on U.S. relations with the new independent states.

I am proud that the United States has this historic opportunity to support democracy and free markets in this crucially important part of the world. While it is clear to all that the future of the new independent states of the former Soviet Union is in their own hands, passage of the FREEDOM Support Act demonstrates the commitment of the United States to support this endeavor.

Once again, the American people have united to advance the cause of freedom, to win the peace, to help transform former enemies into peaceful partners. This democratic peace will be built on the solid foundations of political and economic freedom in Russia and the other independent states. We must continue to support reformers in Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, and the other new states.

I am pleased that the bill draws our private sector, as never before, into the delivery of technical assistance to Russia and the other new states. Various provisions of this bill will call upon the specialized skills and expertise of the U.S. private sector. S. 2532 will provide support for the trade and investment activities of U.S. companies to help lay the economic and commercial foundations upon which the new democracies will rest. This is an investment in our future as well as theirs.

The IMF quota increase will ensure that the IMF has adequate resources to promote free markets in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere throughout the world. By contributing to a more prosperous world economy, the IMF will expand markets for U.S. exporters and increase jobs for American workers.

This bill will allow us to provide humanitarian assistance during the upcoming winter; to support democratic reforms and free market systems; to encourage trade and investment, to support the development of food distribution systems; to assist in health and human services programs; to help overcome problems in energy, civilian nuclear reactor safety, transportation, and telecommunications; to assist in dealing with dire environmental problems in the region; and to establish a broad range of people-to-people exchanges designed to bury forever the distrust and misunderstanding that characterized our previous relations with the former Soviet Union.

The bill also provides additional resources and authorities to support efforts to destroy nuclear and other weapons, and to convert to peaceful purposes the facilities that produce these weapons.

We undertake these programs of assistance out of a commitment to increased security for ourselves, our allies, and the peoples of the new independent states. These programs will enhance our security through demilitarization and humanitarian and technical assistance.

A number of provisions in the bill, however, raise constitutional concerns. Some provisions purport to direct me or my delegates with respect to U.S. participation in international institutions. Under our constitutional system, the President alone is responsible for such matters. I therefore will treat such provisions as advisory.

Furthermore, the bill could interfere with my supervisory power over the executive branch by giving a subordinate official in the Department of State the authority to resolve certain interagency disputes and by regulating how other agencies handle license applications by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. I will interpret these provisions in the light of my constitutional responsibilities.

The bill also authorizes the creation of supposedly non-governmental entities—the Democracy Corps and a foundation that will conduct scientific activities and exchanges—that would be subject to Government direction, established to carry out Government policies, and largely dependent on Government funding. As I have said before, entities that are neither clearly governmental nor clearly private undermine the principles of separation of powers and political accountability. In determining whether to exercise the authority granted by this bill, I will consider, and I direct the Director of the National Science Foundation to consider, whether these entities can be established and operate in conformity with those principles.

I also note a concern with the provision under which Freedom of Information Act litigation involving the Democracy Corps would be the "responsibility" of the Agency for International Development. This responsibility should not be understood in any way to detract from the Attorney General's plenary litigating authority. Therefore, I direct the Agency for International Development to refer all such matters to the Attorney General consistent with his current authority.

GEORGE BUSH