



An Open Letter to the G7 Leaders “The Other Russia”

We wish to express our gratitude to the courageous men and women attending “The Other Russia” Summit today and tomorrow in Moscow. This alternative to the G8 summit has been organized by Garry Kasparov, Lyudmila Alekseyeva and other Russian human rights and political leaders. The laudable purpose of the “Other Russia” Summit is to focus the world’s attention on the increasingly autocratic and repressive policies of the Russian Government.

“The Other Russia” will bring together distinguished diplomats and politicians, academicians and civil society leaders from Russia, Europe and the United States to examine the deplorable state of human rights and the rule of law in Russia. Experts will document Russia’s alarming number of political prisoners, the Kremlin’s control over the media, the dangerous increase in government corruption, the continued violence in Chechnya and the return of a one-party state.

“The Other Russia” Summit will examine these economic and political trends, hoping to provide the Russian people with a clearer picture of what the further loss of human and political rights will mean to them. The gathering is also meant to impress upon the G7 leaders, who will be meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin this coming weekend in St. Petersburg, that there is another Russia—a Russia at odds with the corrupt, authoritarian regime which President Putin and those around him appear resolved to impose.

We urge our leaders - **Prime Minister Tony Blair, President George W. Bush, President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Romano Prodi** - not to equivocate when they meet the Russian President this weekend. He must be put on notice that Russia’s current domestic and foreign policies are unacceptable to its neighbors, to the international community and to many of its own citizens.

President Putin must be made to understand that fairness towards his political opponents and critics, the release of political prisoners and Russia's constructive engagement with its neighbors in Asia, the Middle East and Europe, are the standards by which his Government will be judged. Russia must meet these standards of justice, freedom and of internationally acceptable diplomacy if it wishes to remain a member of the G8 and of the community of democratic nations.

Today, Russia is moving in the wrong direction.

With the re-imposition of state control of the media, the nationalization of the YUKOS Oil Company, the abolition of elected governors, overt and covert meddling in the affairs of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Lithuania and outright support for the dictatorship in Belarus, the new NGO law restricting the work of human rights groups and other non-government organizations in Russia, and the imprisonment of political opponents like Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Mikhail Trepashkin, the Government of Russia is deliberately turning back the clock.

We appeal to the G7 leaders to raise these issues directly with President Putin this weekend in St. Petersburg. And we salute those who are in Moscow today, meeting in a hostile and dangerous environment to prove that a democratic Russia, "The Other Russia," does indeed exist.

Signatories: (Institutions are listed for purposes of identification only.)

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Paul Berman – Writer, US
Carl Bildt – Former Prime Minister of Sweden
Roberta Bonazzi – Director, European Foundation for Democracy
Elena Bonner – Honorary Chair, The Andrei Sakharov Foundation
Michael Bourdeaux – Founder / President, Keston Institute, Oxford University, UK
Pascal Bruckner – Philosopher, France
Ian J. Brzezinski – Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy
Hans Christoph Buch – Writer, Germany
Vladimir Bukovsky – Cambridge University, UK
Leos Carax – Film director, France
Patrice Chéreau – Film and theater director, France
Daniel Cohn-Bendit – Member, European Parliament, Germany
Pierre Daix – Writer, France
Prof. Nicholas Daniloff – Northeastern University, US

Ruth Daniloff – Writer, US
Fertilio Dario – Comitatus libertates
Franco Debenedetti – Senator, Italy
Martin Dewhirst – University of Glasgow, Scotland
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