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President Clinton to speak with leading government representatives.

OTS (05.10.2000) / HRWF International Secretariat (10.10.2000) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: info@hrwf.net - The U.S. Congress' Committee on International Relations has unanimously passed a clearly worded resolution that calls for President Clinton to take up violations of religious freedom with representatives of the Austrian federal government. Besides Austria, France, Germany and Belgium were also among those who have to face reproach for their politics of discrimination against religious minorities.

Resolution number 588 more clearly than ever before reflects the distinct position of the U.S. committee members that drastic measures will be required in response to the violation of religious freedom and to the violation of the ban on discrimination in several western European states.

The main points of criticism on Austria's dealing with Scientologists are the discriminatory measures on the civil, political and economical levels, the "Federal Law on religious denominations" which is meant to prevent acknowledgment of various religions, as well as the "Federal Center for Sect Issues" which was established by Families Minister Martin Bartenstein and which "disseminates official propaganda on religious groups not recognized by the government," as the resolution says literally.

"More than anybody else, the OeVP party, which has been been most diligent in the work of establishing this religious politic of discrimination, should finally break the hold of the state churches and go the path of equal treatment and of dialogue. There has not been any room on the international stage for measures of systematic persecution against people who think differently for a long time," Scientology spokesman Andreas Boeck commented on the resolution.

The resolution names a a broad palette of measures in France, Germany, Austria and Belgium which discriminate against Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Scientologists, charismatics, Jehova's Witnesses, Moslems, Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints) and other communities.