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Congress of the United States  
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Mr. Barry Lowenkron  
Assistant Secretary for Democracy Human Rights and Labor  
U.S. Department Of State  
2201 C Street, Nw  
Washington, D.C. 20520-0001

Dear Assistant Secretary Lowenkron,

As you are in the process of drafting the forthcoming U.S. State Department 2006 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, I write to express my concern regarding the status and treatment of former YUKOS Oil Company majority shareholders Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev and my belief that both men should be identified as political prisoners.

The trial and sentencing of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev remains an important concern. I believe that the Khodorkovsky-Lebedev trial and the related confiscation of YUKOS assets demonstrates a gross lack of due process within the legal system. I ask you to fully examine the record of human rights abuses in Russia over the past year, including the Khodorkovsky and Lebedev cases. The absence of rule of law in the trial, sentencing and imprisonment of Khodorkovsky and Lebedev has been widely recognized inside and outside Russia by human rights groups and other organizations as a serious miscarriage of justice.

Based on this analysis, I believe Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev should be identified as political prisoners in the 2006 U.S. State Department *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Roger F. Wicker  
Co-Chairman, Russia Working Group  
Congressional Human Rights Caucus