

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 103

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should maintain approximately 100,000 United States military personnel in the Asia and Pacific region until such time as there is a peaceful and permanent resolution to the major security and political conflicts in the region.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 20, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER (for himself and Mr. SPENCE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should maintain approximately 100,000 United States military personnel in the Asia and Pacific region until such time as there is a peaceful and permanent resolution to the major security and political conflicts in the region.

Whereas the stability of the Asia-Pacific region is a matter of vital national interest affecting the well-being of all Americans;

Whereas the nations of the Pacific Rim collectively represent the United States largest trading partner and are expected to account for almost one-third of the world's economic activity by the start of the next century;

Whereas the increased reliance by the United States on trade and Middle East oil sources has reinforced United States security interests in the Southeast Asia shipping lanes through the South China Sea and the key straits of Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, and Makassar;

Whereas the South China Sea is a vital conduit for United States Navy ships passing from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf;

Whereas maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is a fundamental interest of the United States;

Whereas the threats of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the emerging nationalism amidst long-standing ethnic and national rivalries, and the unresolved territorial disputes combine to create a political landscape of potential instability and conflict that would jeopardize the interests of the United States and the safety of United States nationals in this region;

Whereas a critical component of the East Asia strategy of the United States is maintaining forward deployed forces in Asia to ensure broad regional stability, to help to deter aggression, and to contribute to the political and economic advances of the region from which the United States benefits;

Whereas the forward presence of the United States in Northeast Asia enables the United States to respond to regional contingencies, to protect sea lines of communication, to sustain influence, and to support operations as distant as operations in the Persian Gulf;

Whereas the military forces of the United States serve to prevent the political or economic control of the Asia-Pacific region by a rival, hostile power or coalition of such pow-

ers, thus preventing any such group from having command over the vast resources, enormous wealth, and advanced technology of the region;

Whereas allies of the United States in the region can base their defense planning on a reliable American security commitment, a reduction of which could stimulate an arms buildup in the region;

Whereas the Joint Announcement of the United States-Japan Security Consultative Committee of December 1996, acknowledged that “the forward presence of U.S. forces continues to be an essential element for pursuing our common security objectives”;

Whereas the administration has committed itself on numerous occasions to maintain approximately 100,000 troops in the region, most recently by the President in Australia and the Secretary of State in the Republic of Korea;

Whereas the United States and Japan signed the United States-Japan Security Declaration in April 1996, in which the United States reaffirmed its commitment to maintain this level of 100,000 United States military personnel in the region;

Whereas the United States military presence is warmly and widely welcomed by the nations of the region as serving stability and signaling United States engagement;

Whereas the nations of East Asia and the Pacific consider the commitment of the forces of the United States to be so vital to their future that they scrutinize actions of the United States for any sign of weakened commitment to the security of the region;

Whereas the reduction of forward-based military forces could negatively affect the ability of the United States to con-

tribute to the peace and stability of the Asia and Pacific region;

Whereas reduction in the number of forward-based troops reduces the perception of American capability and commitment in the region that cannot be completely offset by modernization of the remaining forces;

Whereas during time of crisis, redeployment of forces previously removed from the area might itself be deemed an act of provocation that could be used as a pretext by a hostile power for armed aggression within the region, and the existence of that possibility might hinder this redeployment; and

Whereas proposals to reduce the forward presence of the United States in Asia or drastically subordinate security interests to United States domestic budgetary concerns immediately erode the perception of the commitment of the United States to its alliances and interests in the region: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
- 2 resentatives that the United States should maintain ap-
- 3 proximately 100,000 United States military personnel in
- 4 the Asia and Pacific region until such time as there is
- 5 a peaceful and permanent resolution to the major security
- 6 and political conflicts in the region.

