

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 502

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives congratulating the people of Colombia for completing free and democratic elections on June 21, 1998, congratulating the President-elect on his victory, and calling on the new government and all other parties to the current conflict in Colombia to renew their efforts to end the guerrilla and paramilitary violence which continues to pose a serious threat to democracy as well as economic and social stability in Colombia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 15, 1998

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

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives congratulating the people of Colombia for completing free and democratic elections on June 21, 1998, congratulating the President-elect on his victory, and calling on the new government and all other parties to the current conflict in Colombia to renew their efforts to end the guerrilla and paramilitary violence which continues to pose a serious threat to democracy as well as economic and social stability in Colombia.

Whereas on June 21, 1998, close to eleven million Colombians went to the polls in a clear affirmation of the

democratic process and cast their vote for a new President to lead that nation into the next century;

Whereas the citizens of Colombia, in voting in near record numbers, not only cast their vote for political, economic, and social reform, they voted for a mandate for peace, expressing their discontent with the guerrilla war and paramilitary violence and for the need for the government to try to resolve the conflict;

Whereas an estimated 70,000 people have died as a direct result of the internal fighting over the last decade which has resulted in the deaths associated with the guerrilla and paramilitary violence as being the leading cause of death in Colombia;

Whereas the recent surge of guerrilla and paramilitary violence has created more than 300,000 refugees over the last three years and an estimated total of over 1,000,000 Colombians displaced by the violence over the past decade;

Whereas in the past eight months, paramilitary death squads have massacred close to 100 civilians in the towns of Mapiripan, Miraflores and elsewhere;

Whereas the operations of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the various paramilitary units have become increasingly dependent on and interconnected with the narcotics trade;

Whereas the FARC, the last known group to be holding three United States missionaries hostage, refuses to release these innocent individuals or account for their whereabouts; and

Whereas the continued campaign of the guerrillas and the paramilitaries ultimately poses a major threat to the very democracy of Colombia and stability of the region: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) congratulates the people of Colombia for
3 their recent demonstration of support for the demo-
4 cratic process as well as for political, economic and
5 social change in that nation;

6 (2) congratulates President-elect Andres
7 Pastrana for his election victory and for his commit-
8 ment to seek an end to the guerrilla and para-
9 military violence in Colombia;

10 (3) urges the guerrilla leaders of the FARC and
11 the ELN to end the violence, sever their relationship
12 with narcotics traffickers, and negotiate a peace ac-
13 cord with the new Government of Colombia and take
14 their agenda into the political arena for debate;

15 (4) urges the incoming government of Presi-
16 dent-elect Pastrana to take greater action against
17 paramilitary units that commit gross human rights
18 violations;

19 (5) calls on the leadership of the FARC and the
20 ELN to release any and all hostages currently being
21 held, including the three American missionaries, or
22 to account for their whereabouts;

1 (6) calls upon the international community to
2 play a more proactive role in trying to resolve the in-
3 ternal conflict by encouraging all sides to return to
4 the negotiating table; and

5 (7) urges the current United States Adminis-
6 tration to reevaluate United States policies toward
7 Colombia, to commit to assist the new President-
8 elect to find a peaceful resolution to the internal
9 conflict, and to review the need for United States as-
10 sistance to help strengthen political stability and fos-
11 ter economic growth.

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