

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 31

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the humanitarian safeguards these treaties provide in times of armed conflict.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 10, 1999

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Oregon) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the humanitarian safeguards these treaties provide in times of armed conflict.

Whereas the Geneva Conventions of 1949 set basic humane standards of behavior during armed conflict, and are the major written source of international humanitarian law;

Whereas these Conventions prescribe humane treatment for civilian populations, wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel, and prisoners of war during armed conflict;

Whereas these Conventions recognize the International Committee of the Red Cross as an independent and neutral organization whose humanitarian mission is to protect

and assist civilians, prisoners of war, and other victims of armed conflict;

Whereas “the red cross in a field of white” is not an ordinary organizational symbol, but one to which the international community has granted the ability to impose restraint during war and to protect human life;

Whereas the American Red Cross and its sister national societies are members of a world-wide organization rooted in the provisions of international humanitarian law and dedicated to the promulgation of its principles, among which are the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

Whereas the international programs of the American Red Cross bring relief from natural and manmade disasters abroad, contribute to the development of nonprofit relief organizations abroad, and include the teaching of international humanitarian law throughout the United States;

Whereas many domestic programs of the Red Cross in health and safety, disaster, blood, youth, and service to the members of the Armed Forces of the United States grew out of a response to armed conflict;

Whereas, thanks to the efforts of Clara Barton and Frederick Douglass, the United States ratified in 1882 the first convention for the amelioration of the condition of wounded and sick members of the armed forces in the field;

Whereas in 1955 the United States ratified the Geneva Conventions of 1949; and

Whereas the Geneva Conventions of 1949 are among the most universally ratified treaties in the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring),*

3 **SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

4 The Congress—

5 (1) recognizes the historic and humanitarian
6 significance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and
7 celebrates the 50th anniversary of the signing of
8 these treaties;

9 (2) exhorts combatants everywhere to respect
10 the red cross emblem in order to protect innocent
11 and vulnerable populations on every side of conflicts;

12 (3) commends the International Committee of
13 the Red Cross and the more than 175 national Red
14 Cross and Red Crescent societies, including the
15 American Red Cross, on their continuing work in
16 providing relief and assistance to the victims of war
17 as prescribed by these Conventions;

18 (4) applauds the Promise of Humanity gath-
19 ering organized by the American Red Cross in 1999
20 in Washington, D.C., as an important reminder of
21 our responsibilities to educate future generations
22 about the principles of international humanitarian
23 law;

24 (5) commends the efforts of the International
25 Committee of the Red Cross and the more than 175

1 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, in-
 2 cluding the American Red Cross, for their work in
 3 educating the world's citizens about the humani-
 4 tarian principles of international humanitarian law
 5 as embodied in the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

6 (6) invites the American Red Cross during this
 7 anniversary year to assist Congress in educating its
 8 Members and staff about the Geneva Conventions of
 9 1949;

10 (7) supports the anniversary theme of the
 11 International Committee of the Red Cross that
 12 "Even War Has Limits"; and

13 (8) calls upon the President to issue a procla-
 14 mation recognizing the anniversary of the Geneva
 15 Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the Conven-
 16 tions themselves as critically important instruments
 17 for protecting human dignity in times of armed con-
 18 flict and limiting the savagery of war.

19 **SEC. 2. GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949 DEFINED.**

20 In this concurrent resolution, the term "Geneva Con-
 21 ventions of 1949" means the following conventions, done
 22 at Geneva in 1949:

23 (1) Convention for the Amelioration of the Con-
 24 dition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in
 25 the Field (6 UST 3114).

1 (2) Convention for the Amelioration of the Con-
2 dition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members
3 of the Armed Forces at Sea (6 UST 3217).

4 (3) Convention Relative to the Treatment of
5 Prisoners of War (6 UST 3316).

6 (4) Convention Relative to the Protection of Ci-
7 vilian Persons in Time of War (6 UST 3516).

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