

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 296

Urging the President to negotiate a new base rights agreement with the Government of the Republic of Panama in order for United States Armed Forces to be stationed in Panama for the purposes of defending the Panama Canal.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 20, 2001

Mr. BARR of Georgia (for himself, Mr. BACHUS, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. GOODE, and Mrs. MYRICK) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Urging the President to negotiate a new base rights agreement with the Government of the Republic of Panama in order for United States Armed Forces to be stationed in Panama for the purposes of defending the Panama Canal.

Whereas the Panama Canal remains a vital economic and strategic asset to the United States, its allies, and the world;

Whereas the United States has maintained a military presence in the Republic of Panama since Panama gained its

independence in 1903, ensuring the protection of the Canal and its unfettered operations;

Whereas the United States Armed Forces have depended upon the Panama Canal for rapid transit in times of global conflict, including during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Persian Gulf War;

Whereas the 1977 Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal provides that Panama and the United States have the joint responsibility to ensure that the Panama Canal will remain open and secure, and provides that each signatory, in accordance with their constitutional processes, shall defend the Canal against any threat to its neutrality and shall have the right to act against threats against the peaceful transit of vessels through the Canal;

Whereas the Government of Panama, in the bilateral Protocol of Exchange of instruments of ratification, agreed to consider negotiating future arrangements or agreements to maintain military forces necessary to fulfill the responsibility of both signatories to maintain the neutrality of the Canal;

Whereas the common interests of Panama and the United States have produced close relations between the two nations and a shared interest in protecting the Canal and its operations;

Whereas the attacks against the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001, have called for increased security at all key economic and strategic locations in the United States and abroad; and

Whereas the Panama Canal will continue to serve as a vital link in our military efforts to combat international terrorism and therefore, must remain safe and secure: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the President should negotiate a new base
4 rights agreement with the Government of the Republic
5 of Panama—

6 (A) to permit stationing of United States
7 Armed Forces in Panama; and

8 (B) to ensure that the Panama Canal re-
9 mains open, secure, and neutral, consistent with
10 the Panama Canal Treaty, the Treaty Con-
11 cerning the Permanent Neutrality and Oper-
12 ation of the Panama Canal, and the resolutions
13 of ratification thereto; and

14 (2) the President should ensure that United
15 States military facilities which could be utilized for
16 stationing of United States Armed Forces should be
17 fully maintained and secured if the Government of
18 Panama is willing to enter into good faith negotia-
19 tions for a continued United States military pres-
20 ence in Panama.

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