

S. CON. RES. 113

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas international humanitarian law is, quintessentially, about principle, establishing standards of conduct that can not be breached under any circumstance, or for any calculation of political efficacy or utility;

Whereas the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a worldwide institution in which all national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies have equal status, whose mission is to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, without discrimination;

Whereas the Magen David Adom (Red Shield of David) Society is the national humanitarian society in Israel and has performed heroically, aiding all in need of assistance, on a purely humanitarian basis, without bias, even those responsible for acts of horrific violence against Israeli civilians;

Whereas since 1949, the Magen David Adom Society has been refused admission into the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and has been relegated to observer status without a vote because it has used the Red Shield of David, the only such national organization denied membership in the Movement;

Whereas the red cross symbol was intended as the visible expression of the neutral status enjoyed by the medical

services of the armed forces and the protection thus conferred, and there is not, and has never been, any implicit religious connection in the cross;

Whereas since its establishment in 1930, the Magen David Adom Society has worked under its own symbol, the Red Star of David, as an expression of the humanitarian values the Magen David Adom Society shares with the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies;

Whereas Israel acceded to the Geneva Conventions in 1951 with a reservation specifying their intent to continue to use the Magen David Adom;

Whereas international consultations among nations and national Red Cross Societies ensued until 1999, when the International Committee of the Red Cross formally called for adoption of a protocol to the Geneva Conventions creating a third neutral symbol, allowing the use of either the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, or the third neutral symbol, and allowing for the third neutral symbol to be used in combination with other national Red Cross Society symbols, including the Magen David Adom;

Whereas a diplomatic conference to adopt this proposal into the Geneva Conventions was scheduled for October 2000, but was prevented by the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada;

Whereas the United States, the American Red Cross, and the American Friends of Magen David Adom have worked ceaselessly to resolve the issue of the third neutral symbol and achieve full membership in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for the Magen David Adom Society;

Whereas Congress has insisted that funds made available to the International Committee of the Red Cross be contingent on a certification by the Secretary of State confirming that the Magen David Adom Society is a full participant in the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;

Whereas the American Red Cross has stood alone among all the national humanitarian aid societies, and has withheld over \$45,000,000 in dues to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to protest the exclusion of the Magen David Adom;

Whereas the Government of Switzerland, the depositary state for the Geneva Conventions, convened a Diplomatic Conference of the states party to the Geneva Conventions in December 2005 for the purpose of adopting a Third Additional Protocol and rightly resisted efforts to block the broad international consensus in favor of resolving the third neutral symbol question;

Whereas the efforts by the United States and the American Red Cross at the Diplomatic Conference in December 2005 were critical to achieving both an overwhelming positive vote in favor of adopting the Third Additional Protocol, as well as an extremely important memorandum of understanding between the Magen David Adom and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society;

Whereas sustaining international support for the adoption of the third neutral symbol against efforts to divert the conference into unrelated political matters required extraordinary diplomatic efforts by the United States and the American Red Cross;

Whereas the Third Additional Protocol adopted in Geneva in December 2005 established the new third neutral symbol, the “red crystal” that can be used in conjunction with the Red Shield of David and cleared the way for Israeli membership in the international movement;

Whereas in June 2006, the states party to the Geneva Conventions, the national humanitarian aid societies, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross met in Geneva to adopt rules implementing the Third Additional Protocol; and

Whereas at the June 2006 meeting in Geneva, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement accepted the Magen David Adom Society as a full member: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) commends the Magen David Adom Society
4 for its long and distinguished record of providing hu-
5 manitarian assistance to all those in need of aid,
6 even those responsible for heinous atrocities against
7 Israeli civilians;

8 (2) congratulates the Magen David Adom Soci-
9 ety, and the Government and people of Israel, for se-
10 curing full membership in the International Red
11 Cross and Red Crescent Movement, 57 years past
12 due;

1 (3) thanks the President, the Secretary of
2 State, and United States diplomatic representatives
3 for their tireless pursuit and maintenance of the
4 international consensus that culminated in the re-
5 cent acceptance of the Magen David Adom Society
6 as a full member in the International Red Cross and
7 Red Crescent Movement;

8 (4) thanks the American Red Cross for its un-
9 wavering and unyielding insistence within the Inter-
10 national Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
11 that the principles of international humanitarian law
12 could not be reconciled with continued exclusion of
13 the Magen David Adom Society;

14 (5) thanks the Government of Switzerland and
15 officials of the International Committee of the Red
16 Cross for helping to prepare the necessary consensus
17 and carrying to completion the adoption of the Third
18 Additional Protocol by the states party to the Gene-
19 va Conventions and the rules for its implementation;
20 and

21 (6) commends the President for—

22 (A) submitting the Third Additional Pro-
23 tocol to the Senate for its advice and consent;
24 and

1 (B) pending approval by the Senate, pre-
2 paring for congressional consideration and en-
3 actment of legislation necessary to carry into ef-
4 fect the Third Additional Protocol.

Passed the Senate August 1, 2006.

Attest:

Secretary.

109TH CONGRESS
2D Session

S. CON. RES. 113

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Congratulating the Magen David Adom Society in
Israel for achieving full membership in the Inter-
national Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,
and for other purposes.