

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 233

Urging the President to negotiate a new base rights agreement with the Government of Panama in order for United States Armed Forces to be stationed in Panama after December 31, 1999.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 17, 1999

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 Panama in order for United States Armed Forces to be stationed in Panama after December 31, 1999.

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 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 public opinion surveys in Panama consistently demonstrate that an estimated 70 percent of the people of Panama support a continued United States military presence in Panama;

Whereas Panama and the United States are both confronting growing problems with illegal drug trafficking, money laundering, and narcoterrorism in the Western Hemi-

sphere, and those problems threaten peace and security in the region;

Whereas facilities now utilized by the United States Armed Forces in Panama are essential to the coordination of any counter-narcotic efforts in the region; and

Whereas the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a narco-trafficking terrorist organization, is operating from Panamanian territory and poses a risk to the security of Panama and to the stability of Latin America: 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 newly inaugurated Gov-
5 ernment of Panama—

6 (A) to permit stationing of United States
7 Armed Forces in Panama beyond December 31,
8 1999; and

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

15 (2) the President should ensure that United
16 States military facilities which could be utilized for
17 stationing of United States Armed Forces shall be

1 fully maintained and secured if the Government of
2 Panama is willing to enter into good faith negotia-
3 tions for a continued United States military pres-
4 ence; and

5 (3) the President should consult with Congress
6 throughout the negotiations described in paragraph
7 (1).

8 SEC. 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives
9 shall transmit a copy of this concurrent resolution to the
10 President.

○