

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 14

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 9, 1996

Referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Urging the President to negotiate a new base rights agreement with the Government of Panama to permit United States Armed Forces to remain in Panama beyond December 31, 1999.

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

Whereas the Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal signed on September 7, 1977, provides that Panama and the United States have the responsibility to assure that the Panama Canal will remain open and secure;

Whereas such Treaty also provides that each of the two countries shall, in accordance with their respective constitutional processes, defend the Canal against any threat to the regime of neutrality, and consequently shall have the right to act against any aggression or threat directed against the Canal or against the peaceful transit of vessels through the Canal;

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Whereas the United States instrument of ratification of such Treaty includes specific language that the two countries should consider negotiating future arrangements or agreements to maintain military forces necessary to fulfill the responsibility of the two countries of maintaining the neutrality of the Canal after 1999;

Whereas the Government of Panama, in the bilateral Protocol of Exchange of instruments of ratification, expressly “agreed upon” such arrangements or agreements;

Whereas the Navy depends upon the Panama Canal for rapid transit in times of emergency, as demonstrated during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Persian Gulf conflict;

Whereas drug trafficking and money laundering has proliferated in the Western Hemisphere since the Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal was signed on September 7, 1977, and such trafficking and laundering poses a grave threat to peace and security in the region;

Whereas certain facilities now utilized by the United States Armed Forces in Panama are critical to combat the trade in illegal drugs;

Whereas the United States and Panama share common policy goals such as strengthening democracy, expanding economic trade, and combating illegal narcotics throughout Latin America;

Whereas the Government of Panama has dissolved its military forces and has maintained only a civilian police organization to defend the Panama Canal against aggression; and

Whereas certain public opinion polls in Panama suggest that many Panamanians desire a continued United States military presence in Panama: Now, therefore, be it

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

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

5 (A) taking into account the foregoing find-
6 ings; and

7 (B) consulting with the Congress regarding
8 any bilateral negotiations that take place.

9 SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit
10 a copy of this concurrent resolution to the President.

Passed the Senate September 5, 1996.

Attest: KELLY D. JOHNSTON,
Secretary.