

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 240

Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the urgency of providing support for the “Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy of Liberia”, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 8, 2003

Mr. PAYNE (for himself, Ms. LEE, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. WATSON) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the urgency of providing support for the “Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy of Liberia”, and for other purposes.

Whereas on June 17, 2003, the Government of Liberia, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia reached an “Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Move-

ment for Democracy of Liberia” (hereinafter referred to as the “Ceasefire Agreement”), to halt Liberia’s brutal civil war and bring renewed hope for a peace agreement for the people of Liberia and progress toward ending the political destabilization, massive economic disruption, and humanitarian devastation of West Africa;

Whereas President Charles Taylor of Liberia has announced that, if he were an impediment to peace in Liberia and the region, he would step aside and allow the formation of a transitional national government to pursue peace and reconciliation in Liberia and the establishment of a transitional government that would organize elections leading to a new democratic government;

Whereas the Ceasefire Agreement states that immediately following the signing of the Agreement, the Government of Liberia , Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), with all other Liberian political parties and stakeholders will participate in a dialogue to seek, within a period of 30 days, a comprehensive peace agreement and the formation of a transitional government, which will not include the current President Charles Taylor;

Whereas the United States Government and Liberia have a long, historical relationship beginning in 1820 when free Black Americans from the United States founded the Republic of Liberia with a grant of \$100,000 from President James Monroe and in 1847 thousands of free Black Americans from the United States immigrated to Liberia and declared their independence;

Whereas in 1926 the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company opened a rubber plantation on 400,000 hectares (1,000,000 acres) of land granted by the Liberian Gov-

ernment allowing rubber production to become the mainstay of the Liberian economy and in 1936 the new government of former slaves succeeded in abolishing forced-labor practices on the Firestone plantations;

Whereas in spite of its troubled domestic political history and disappointing political leadership, Liberia has been a strong political ally of the United States, including by its declaration of war on Germany on August 14, 1917, which gave the Allies an additional base in West Africa during World War I, by allowing United States troops to be based in the country in 1942 during World War II, and by permitting the construction of a Voice of America transmitter to cover the entire African continent to expose Soviet propaganda during the Cold War;

Whereas Liberians have suffered from repressive political leadership, whether elected or installed by force, including Samuel Doe who led a coup that ousted President William Tolbert in 1980, who in 1985 won the presidency in a contested election and proceeded to form a government in Liberia that was brutal, violent, and highly corrupt;

Whereas in 1989, Charles Taylor, an accused embezzler and United States prison escapee, led an insurrection and fomented a devastating civil war that claimed more than 200,000 Liberian lives, resulted in innumerable and severe human rights abuses, and forced half of the Liberian population to flee as refugees to neighboring countries or to become internally displaced persons within Liberia;

Whereas as a result of mediation and the deployment of a peacekeeping mission by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the signing of a peace agreement in 1995 and an addendum thereof in 1996,

elections were held in 1997 in which Charles Taylor was elected President of Liberia;

Whereas President Charles Taylor and his government failed to effectively pursue postwar national political reconciliation, build institutions, or improve socio-economic postwar conditions, and continued to aid and abet an insurrection against the Government of Sierra Leone by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a brutal rebel group known for amputating the limbs of innocent children, which waged a war and prolonged the suffering of Sierra Leoneans until January 2002;

Whereas President Taylor and officials within his government profited openly from the illicit trade in “blood diamonds”, despoiled the tropical forests of Liberia by unsustainably and indiscriminately harvesting their timber for private gain, corrupted and provided military training, arms, and safe haven to RUF members, and employed them as members of one of his numerous violent security forces, most notably the Anti-Terrorist Unit;

Whereas the Taylor regime disrespected the rule of law, repressed the independent press, created an atmosphere of public intimidation, operated an administration with little or no accountability or transparency, harassed and imprisoned civil society leaders, and routinely violated human rights;

Whereas ongoing civil war and unrest in Liberia have devastated the country’s economy, social fabric, and the livelihoods of its people, leaving Liberians with a ruined economy and barely functioning physical infrastructure, few resources or the basic necessities to maintain life, and an insolvent government regarded as a pariah by many states;

Whereas immediate emergency food assistance to the people of Liberia is urgently needed to meet the basic nutritional sustenance of its people, especially mothers and children, to relieve the extreme physical suffering of the people of Liberia, including their rapidly increasing susceptibility to diseases, including cholera, dysentery, HIV/AIDS, and high rates of maladies such as malaria, acute respiratory infection, fever, anaemia, and pneumonia, and to assist internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes and native countries;

Whereas there are 9 percent of Liberians living with HIV/AIDS in a country with a population of only 3,288,198 and 13,000 Liberians die annually from HIV/AIDS complications;

Whereas 157 out of every 1,000 infants die annually, the under 5 mortality rate is 235 per 1,000 births, and the life expectancy is only 51.4 years in Liberia;

Whereas the unemployment rate in Liberia is 80 percent in the formal sector and only 15 percent of Liberians are literate;

Whereas Liberia is among the countries most richly endowed with natural resources in Africa, with enormous tropical forests which, if preserved, may be directed toward building Liberia's economy through natural resource management and trade;

Whereas an end to the civil war, and enhanced stability in Liberia through improved security will lead to stability within the surrounding West African sub-region; and

Whereas United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has called on the United States to contribute to a multinational stabilization force, including ECOWAS troops,

to work toward bringing peace to Liberia: Now, therefore,
be it

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

3 (1) commends the Economic Community of
4 West African States (ECOWAS) for successfully ne-
5 gotiating and signing in Accra, Ghana, on June 17,
6 2003, the “Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of
7 Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic
8 of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation
9 and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy of
10 Liberia” (hereinafter referred to as the “Ceasefire
11 Agreement”), an accord that is critical to ending the
12 conflict in Liberia, bringing peace to the sur-
13 rounding countries, and establishing an environment
14 in West Africa conducive to the maintenance of re-
15 gional security, political stability, democracy and
16 governance, the observation of human rights, and
17 the pursuit of economic growth, development and
18 trade;

19 (2) commends the Parties to the Ceasefire
20 Agreement, including ECOWAS, the Republic of
21 Ghana, the United Nations Peace-Building Support
22 Office in Liberia, the African Union (AU), and the
23 members of the International Contact Group on Li-
24 beria (ICGL) for consistent and sustained efforts

1 during the course of the negotiations to bring the
2 parties to the final agreement;

3 (3) commends the Liberian civil society and Li-
4 berian communities in exile for continuing to strive
5 for peace and democracy in their country and for
6 sustaining families unable to survive economically
7 under President Taylor's corrupt regime with finan-
8 cial remittances and for steadfast advocacy for their
9 country;

10 (4) calls on all parties to the Ceasefire Agree-
11 ment to refrain from committing, aiding, abetting,
12 or permitting, any acts in violation of the Agree-
13 ment;

14 (5) forcefully calls on the parties to facilitate
15 and support the sustained delivery of humanitarian
16 relief supplies throughout the country, ensure the
17 safety and freedom of movement of all humanitarian
18 workers throughout the Liberian territory, abide by
19 the timetable set forth in the Ceasefire Agreement,
20 and to move swiftly toward inclusive, national, polit-
21 ical reconciliation by forming a transitional national
22 government;

23 (6) calls on President Charles Taylor to imple-
24 ment his June 4, 2003, statement that he would
25 seek "a national unity government immediately" and

1 be willing to remove himself from power in the inter-
2 est of transition to peace for the Liberian people;

3 (7) commends the Special Court for Sierra
4 Leone for its work to bring justice to the people of
5 Sierra Leone who suffered unspeakable harm as a
6 result of the vicious civil war sponsored by President
7 Charles Taylor and that was fueled by the trade in
8 “conflict diamonds”;

9 (8) calls upon the United States Government—

10 (A) to assume a leadership role in the
11 international community through its member-
12 ship in the International Contact Group for Li-
13 beria to help guide the Ceasefire Agreement
14 and subsequent peace agreement, political tran-
15 sition and establishment of a sustainable de-
16 mocracy with good governance, and economic
17 reconstruction processes;

18 (B) to play a strong and proactive role in
19 supporting the Ceasefire Agreement and peace
20 and reconciliation initiatives in furtherance of
21 an enduring solution to the on-going crisis in
22 Liberia through an all-inclusive process for
23 these purposes, including—

1 (i) the cantonment of militants, and
2 their disarmament, demobilization, and re-
3 integration (“DDR”) into society;

4 (ii) the establishment as a matter of
5 priority in the DDR process, of programs
6 to meet the special needs of former child
7 soldiers, including girls, paying particular
8 attention to their psychological, social, and
9 educational needs, and consult with all or-
10 ganizations available to determine the best
11 methods for achieving this result;

12 (iii) to support civil society reconcili-
13 ation initiatives that seek to improve ca-
14 pacity of grassroots and nongovernmental
15 organizations in Liberia to promote con-
16 flict resolution and restore civil order; and

17 (iv) to support the role of civil society
18 in the peace process, particularly women
19 and the most vulnerable citizens, and in
20 the reconstruction and future of Liberia;

21 (9) calls upon the Secretary of State—

22 (A) to take a lead role in collaboration
23 with ECOWAS in negotiating the establishment
24 of the Joint Verification Team established by
25 the Ceasefire Agreement;

1 (B) to provide leadership and participate
2 in negotiations to establish the Joint Moni-
3 toring Committee to supervise the ceasefire
4 along with representatives from the parties, as
5 well as representatives from the United Na-
6 tions, the AU, and the ICGL, to which the
7 United States is party; and

8 (C) together with the United Nations,
9 ECOWAS, and the AU, to establish and deploy
10 an International Stabilization Force that will
11 initially monitor the peace agreement between
12 the parties and provide security for humani-
13 tarian relief efforts, and subsequently, through
14 protocols and a mode of operations to be deter-
15 mined, monitor Liberia's borders, to prevent the
16 trans-border passage of arms and unauthorized
17 persons;

18 (10) calls upon the Secretary of Defense to—

19 (A) provide military experts, personnel,
20 logistical support, equipment and funds as nec-
21 essary to support the Joint Verification Team;

22 (B) provide financial, logistical, personnel,
23 and technical support, and to participate in, as
24 necessary, the Joint Monitoring Committee; and

1 (C) play a lead role in creating and deploy-
2 ing an international stabilization force to Libe-
3 ria.

4 (11) calls on the United States Agency for
5 International Development (USAID) to—

6 (A) commit to providing humanitarian as-
7 sistance to the people of Liberia to save lives,
8 alleviate suffering, and mitigate the impact of
9 the emergency situations emerging from the
10 war, including providing emergency food, sup-
11 plies, and commodities;

12 (B) focus on the most vulnerable popu-
13 lations, including internally displaced persons
14 and war-affected persons in Monrovia; and

15 (C) coordinate relief efforts with national
16 and international nongovernmental organiza-
17 tions and other donors;

18 (12) calls on the international community to—

19 (A) support humanitarian efforts to meet
20 the urgent and dire needs of the Liberian peo-
21 ple, and to consult and cooperate closely with
22 the appropriate Liberian leaders and civil soci-
23 ety representatives as well as other governments
24 and international organizations participating in
25 rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts and

1 significantly incorporate their views into the
2 policymaking process;

3 (B) to support efforts that advance the de-
4 velopment of democratic civil institutions in Li-
5 beria and support the establishment of a broad-
6 based and fully representative government, in
7 which all Liberians, without regard to their eth-
8 nicity, race, religion, or gender, can participate;
9 and

10 (C) to assist in the establishment of a gov-
11 ernment that respects the sovereignty, terri-
12 torial integrity, and political independence of its
13 neighbors;

14 (13) calls upon Liberian indigenous private and
15 voluntary organizations active in local grassroots re-
16 habilitation, reconstruction, and development efforts
17 and Liberians living overseas to engage fully in the
18 international efforts to help restore Liberia as a via-
19 ble country in which present and future generations
20 can live peacefully;

21 (14) calls upon the United Nations—

22 (A) to provide peacekeeping troops for
23 such time as necessary to enforce the Ceasefire
24 Agreement, protect humanitarian efforts, and
25 maintain a stable transitional environment; and

1 (B) to provide adequate repatriation pack-
2 ages for refugees and resettlement packages for
3 internally displaced persons that include food
4 sufficient to meet international nutritional
5 standards, household items, materials for tem-
6 porary shelter, inputs for farming for household
7 consumption and income, and grants to pay the
8 cost of transportation for relocation; and
9 (15) urges the President to report regularly to
10 Congress on progress being made by all parties to-
11 ward the full implementation of the Ceasefire Agree-
12 ment.

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