

Zapatistas to support negotiations that address the underlying causes of the conflict, to achieve lasting peace.

Mr. President, this resolution is not meant to embarrass or interfere. It is to convey our concern about the people of Chiapas, and the urgent need for concrete progress to resolve a conflict that has cost many innocent lives and which threatens the economic and political development of our southern neighbor.

Many Senators may not know the history of the Chiapas conflict. After the 1994 uprising, the Zapatistas and the government tried to resolve the conflict peacefully. Those negotiations collapsed in 1996 when the Mexican Government walked away from a partial agreement which would have given the inhabitants of Chiapas greater rights.

Since then the situation has gotten worse. Last December, Mexican paramilitary forces killed 45 unarmed civilians in the village of Acteal. In June, two police officers and eight villagers died when Mexican soldiers and police clashed with Zapatista supporters. There are now tens of thousands of Mexican soldiers who patrol the roads in and out of Chiapas in armored vehicles. They patrol the skies in low flying helicopters. They surround the impoverished communities of Zapatista supporters, who, not surprisingly, see the government as their enemy. On top of that, there are armed paramilitary groups who have been responsible for some of the worst atrocities.

The dissolution of the National Mediation Commission after the resignation of its President, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, has further impeded efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully.

I regularly receive reports of violence or harassment directed against human rights monitors, including American citizens, who have been summarily expelled from Mexico for activities that amount to nothing more than criticizing the policies of the Mexican Government.

One case I have followed closely involves an American priest who lived in Chiapas for some 19 years. He was arrested, driven to the airport, accused of engaging in illegal political activity on the basis of anonymous, unsubstantiated allegations, and summarily expelled. Efforts by myself, the American Ambassador, and the Department of State to correct this injustice have been entirely unsuccessful. The Mexican Government has consistently misrepresented the facts in his case.

Despite President Zedillo's repeated calls for renewed dialogue with the Zapatistas and their supporters, and despite the fact that the Zapatistas do not pose a credible threat to the Mexican Government, the Mexican Government's actions have not improved the situation. The government seems to believe that it can solve the problem by simultaneously threatening and holding out promises to Zapatista supporters, even though they live in the same

miserable conditions as their parents, their parents' parents, and their grandparents' grandparents, and they deeply distrust the government.

Mr. President, the United States and Mexico share many interests. We have worked together to address concerns on both sides of the border. I have no doubt that the government and the Zapatistas can solve this problem, if they want to. But we must also recognize that violence and instability in Mexico directly affect United States economic and security interests, and human rights abuses, wherever and however they occur, deserve our attention.

This Resolution reflects a balanced approach. Neither side in the conflict is blameless. To resolve it peacefully, both must want peace and be willing to take steps to create the conditions that make it possible for good faith negotiations to succeed, and then sit down at the table together.

The Resolution urges the Secretary of State to ensure that the United States is not contributing to the political violence, by reaffirming current law which limits assistance and exports of equipment only to Mexican security forces who are primarily involved in counter-narcotics activities and who do not commit human rights abuses.

It calls on the Mexican Government to respect the rights of American citizens and human rights monitors in Mexico.

Mr. President, some may ask why we are submitting this Resolution today, when this conflict has been simmering for years. One reason is that after all this time the problem is no closer to being solved. It has gotten worse, not better. The recent flooding has caused an urgent, humanitarian crisis among displaced people in Chiapas who are struggling to survive. And last week's elections showed, not surprisingly, that fully half the people in Chiapas have no faith in the political process.

In short, the status quo is unacceptable. The violence is unacceptable. The lack of any meaningful peace process is unacceptable. There is no reason why so many civilians have died. There is no reason why the causes of the conflict cannot be openly discussed and effectively addressed.

This Resolution sends a message to the Mexican Government, the Zapatistas, our own administration and the international community that an intensified effort is needed urgently to resolve the conflict peacefully.

Mr. President, I want to thank the other Senators who have cosponsored this resolution

SENATE RESOLUTION 294 EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE WITH RESPECT TO DEVELOPMENTS IN MALAYSIA AND THE ARREST OF DATO SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

Mr. THOMAS (for himself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr.

LIEBERMAN, and Mr. GRAMS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 294

Whereas on September 2, 1998, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad dismissed Deputy Prim Minister Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim;

Whereas over the past year, Dato Seri Anwar has advocated adopting meaningful economic structural reforms to combat an increasingly deteriorating economy—a view which runs counter to those of Dr. Mahathir;

Whereas after being dismissed, Dato Seri Anwar began touring the country and publicly criticizing Dr. Mahathir and the policies of the ruling United Malays Organization Baru (UMNO) party;

Whereas in apparent reaction to this criticism Dato Seri Anwar was arrested on September 20, 1998, and held under the provisions of the Malaysian Internal Security Act (ISA);

Whereas the ISA removes arrested individuals from the protections afforded criminal defendants under Malaysia's constitution and statutes, and consequently Dato Seri Anwar was held in an undisclosed location without any formal charges being lodged against him;

Whereas on September 29, 1998, Dato Seri Anwar was formally charged with nine counts of corruption and sexual misconduct, including four sodomy counts, to which another count was later added;

Whereas the vague nature of the charges, as well as the fact that two of the government's "witnesses" have already recanted, could reasonably lead to a conclusion that the charges were manufactured by the government for maximum shock value to discredit Dato Seri Anwar and silence him;

Whereas when Dato Seri Anwar appeared at his arraignment, he had been beaten by police while in custody; and told the judge that on his first night of detention, while handcuffed and blindfolded, that he was "boxed very hard on my head and lower jaw and left eye . . . I was then slapped very hard, left and right, until blood came out from my nose and my lips cracked. Because of this I could not walk or see properly";

Whereas to substantiate his claims, Dato Seri Anwar showed the court a large bruise on his arm; his swollen black eye was evident to everyone in the courtroom;

Whereas Dr. Mahathir suggested that Dato Seri Anwar inflicted the injuries to himself in order to gain public sympathy;

Whereas since its independence Malaysia has been transformed from a divided multi-racial developing nation into a modern, cosmopolitan, economically sophisticated country; and

Whereas the government's actions in case of Dato Seri Anwar seriously damage the reputation of Malaysia in the eyes of the rest of the world; Now therefore be it

*Resolved by the Senate*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the Malaysian government should take every step to safeguard the rights of Dato Seri Anwar, ensure that any charges brought against him are not spurious, afford him a fair and open trial, and fully investigate and prosecute those responsible for his mistreatment while in detention; and that

(2) all Malaysians should be permitted to express their political views in a peaceful and orderly fashion without fear of arrest or intimidation.