

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE (AVC) INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PLATFORM AND RESOLUTIONS

HON. ALBERT RUSSELL WYNN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the American Veterans Committee (AVC). The American Veterans Committee is an outstanding organization of American veterans with ongoing concerns and interest in our foreign policy and international affairs. I submit for the RECORD their International Affairs Platform and Resolutions, as prepared by the American Veterans Committee, International Affairs Commission and adopted by the American Veterans Committee (AVC) National Board at the National Board Meeting, Tuesday, August 26, 1997, with appropriate changes as of November 1999.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PLATFORM

We, the members of the American Veterans Committee (AVC), believe that in international affairs the objective of the United States of America is the maintenance of peace. All else aside, the world must avoid the holocaust of nuclear war. The end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the fall of the Berlin Wall brought much hope of the avoidance of nuclear war—at least among the major powers—in the foreseeable future. Many international problems remain, and the United States has been active—along with the United Nations—in dealing with hostilities in the Middle East and the Balkan States, Central and Southeast Asia, such African states as Somalia, Rwanda and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and in Central America and the Caribbean. The work of the United States has aided in establishing and restoring elective governments wherever possible.

Within that framework, our foreign policy, like our domestic policy, must seek always to enhance social justice for and the welfare of the individual, in all classes and without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, language, sex, sexual orientation, or age. Our policies should strive for realization of the world envisioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a world in which all might eat and sleep in safety, live under and vote in an elective government, with realistic hope and opportunity their reasonable aspirations.

I. THE UNITED NATIONS AND WORLD GOVERNANCE

The United Nations (UN), despite its weakness, continues to be the best hope for peace in the world. American support of the UN must be an essential part of our foreign policy. The authority of the UN must be strengthened in a process in which selected elements of national sovereignty will be progressively transferred, in a manner that will enhance the fundamental freedoms and the well-being of all the peoples of the world.

AVC supports the following principles, reforms and programs for a more effective United Nations:

1. International law governing disputes and conduct of UN member states, and other

states, with one another should be improved, clarified, codified, and obeyed. The U.S. and all member states should work within the UN for the development of clear, well understood and respected international law. All member states should accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to interpret and implement international law. Other steps of clarification of and respect for international law might include:

(a) a procedure whereby the Security Council would decide, in cases of continuing bilateral disputes that threaten world security, to require the UN member states involved (including Security Council members) either to present themselves to conciliation proceedings or to take the dispute to the ICJ;

(b) General Assembly authorization of the Secretary General, under Article 96 of the Charter, to turn to the ICJ for advisory opinions;

(c) the establishment of an International Criminal Court to try individuals accused of specific violations of international law; and

(d) provision for individuals or groups that believe their rights have not been respected to petition the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for reaction and then, if the issue is not resolved, to petition the General Assembly for a hearing.

2. The United States and other debtor states must pay their United Nations past and current dues and assessments in full to honor their treaty obligations. Consequences for continued non-payment must be instituted.

3. The effectiveness of the UN must be improved through better financing, including such mechanisms as—

(a) a treaty among member states to establish partial self-financing of UN peace-keeping and other programs through a worldwide tax on airline tickets, currency exchanges, and the value of ocean freight;

(b) a surcharge on international postage items;

(c) rent for the exclusive use of satellite positions;

(d) national legislation within member states to ease the way to voluntary individual contributions to UN programs through tax-deductibility of contributions; and

(e) sale of UN bonds to private individuals and of extra premium postage stamps.

4. The UN structures for dispute mediation and conflict prevention and resolution should be strengthened through the establishment of a UN Peace Observation Corps of 100 to 200 highly-trained professional observers and mediators to assist the Security Council and Secretary General—backed by a competent research and analysis unit—to track potential crisis situations and, further, to identify the most successful approaches to conflict prevention and resolution from past crises.

5. United Nations peace-keeping capability should be improved through such means as:

(a) predesignation of peace-keeping units in their own forces by member states with provision for joint training of such designated units to be financed either through voluntary contributions or regular peace-keeping expenditures;

(b) a task force established by the Security Council to study the practical detail of a small UN Readiness Force, to be placed at the disposal of the Security Council—10,000

troops composed of volunteers contributed by member states in small units (companies or battalions)—and with the purpose of intervention in the early stages of possible conflict before it expands to widespread fighting and, when not engaged in peace-keeping operations to train peace-keeping personnel of interested member states;

(c) a second task force established by the Security Council to investigate practical steps to use more effectively the Military Staff Committee (Article 47 of the UN Charter) with responsibility for enforcement, peace-keeping operation, and disarmament.

6. Further international cooperation for peace and sustainable development should be enhanced through the establishment of a UN Economic Security Council to take the place of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), its functions being to balance the interests of citizens, nations, and corporations in an increasingly globalized economy and, in particular, to improve coordination on economic and social programs within the UN system.

7. Movement should be made toward a genuine career UN civil service, with training of UN staff on all levels to include the recognition of diversity of cultures. And, further, with the elimination of political appointments, level-by-level over a period of years, with all positions in the UN Secretariat except those of the Secretary General and his immediate staff being held only by those who have passed the UN entry examination or met other well-established professional criteria including maintenance of a high-level of performance.

8. The influence of civil society at the UN should be strengthened through measures such as a biennial Citizens' Assembly at the UN representing all NGOs. The Citizens' Assembly would develop concepts and proposals for transmittal to and discussion by the General Assembly, especially as regards widest possible participation of NGOs at all UN conferences.

9. The integrity and independence of the Office of the Secretary General, as expressed in the UN Charter, are crucial to the strength and effectiveness of the United Nations. The U.S. should oppose any attempt to weaken the powers of this office. AVC commends the leadership of the present Secretary General Kofi Annan, in making the organization work more effectively.

10. The formation of supra-national authorities of a regional nature consistent with the UN Charter and treaty arrangements which limit the sovereignty of the participating nations in order to secure mutual advantages, such as the European Union, Euratom, and others. The United States should further encourage initiatives through the Council of Europe or otherwise to create, consolidate, and strengthen institutions which may lead to a politically stable and prosperous European entity.

11. In pursuit of the goals of the United Nations and the dream of a world free from exploitation as well as the scourge of war, the establishment of democratic governments throughout the world should be encouraged and persistently supported.

II. WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION (WVF)

The American Veterans Committee points with pride to and pledges continuing support for the World Veterans Federation, a worldwide organization of former combatants

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

whose activities are a remarkable example of the kind of private international cooperation on which lasting world peace and justice can be built.

III. NUCLEAR TESTING AND DISARMAMENT

Complete elimination of nuclear weapons testing and the establishment of international controls on this most dangerous weapons technology must be the goal of American foreign policy. Our world finds itself in the unique and unenviable position where one generation can make life on Earth unlivable for later generations.

The adoption by the United Nations of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in September 1996 is a significant advance with all five Permanent Security Council states among the signatories. Complete and total disarmament is the ultimate *summum bonum*, but this is an objective remote in time; immediate achievement is not feasible. Efforts toward that goal should be made by the United States nonetheless and should be encouraged in other nations. Mankind can never reach its true destiny if it must continue to allocate so high a percentage of its resources to forge the weapons of war.

IV. CHEMICAL WEAPONS—UN TREATY BANNING SUCH WEAPONRY

The American Veterans Committee (AVC) without reservation supports the adoption by the United Nations of a treaty that bans in the world the use of chemical weapons. And at the time of the development of this AVC/IAC Platform, AVC urges the United States Senate to support ratification of the UN treaty on chemical weapons.

AVC believes that the world-wide ban on testing nuclear weapons on the total elimination of the anti-personnel landmines, and the ban on the use of chemical weapons have a major role in ensuring the continuation of civilization on this Earth.

V. UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES

Inevitably differences will arise between the United States and its allies, but these are differences which can be and must be resolved around the conference table. In its negotiations the US should seek no more than the rights and privileges of a willing partner.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in a world considerably different from the world of today. The American Veterans Committee (AVC) supports the reassessment by the NATO nations of their membership and role. Its continued organization and operation should reflect the changing purpose. AVC recognizes the appropriateness of NATO extending its membership to the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Further, AVC recognizes the importance of the continuing discussion of NATO and Russia with respect to a broader membership, while at the same time being aware of the concern of Russia with respect to broad membership that may also include former Soviet republics.

In Latin America we must bend every effort to erase the image of the United States as a prosperous, patronizing, and paternalistic benefactor or intervenor. It should be the objective of the US foreign policy to create instead an image of a US that wants to be a good partner as well as a good neighbor—in helping the peoples of Latin America work out their own destiny.

The US should, at every turn, encourage the UN or the Organization of American States (OAS) to be the forum in which to resolve differences and disagreements among or with our Latin American neighbors. We must show by word and deed that we have no desire to impose our own form of government or way of life upon any country of Latin America. The United States nevertheless continues to believe in the effectiveness of a democratic form of government.

Relations with Cuba continue to be difficult, but we believe that the US should resume humanitarian aid to the Cuban people, an aid cut off as a result of the downing of two US civilian planes by the Cubans in the Cuban waters. The policy of penalizing other countries which trade with US firms—firms that have been nationalized by the Cuban government—has seriously strained relations with some of our closest allies and, therefore, should be abandoned as soon as possible.

VI. THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

At the end of the twentieth century and the second millennium, the US must continue to be willing to help the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to direct their own destinies. The UN forum must be held open to the developing nations. And the services of the UN specialized agencies, for example, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the many non-governmental organizations (the NGOs) must appropriately be focused on the needs of the developing nations.

The gap between the social and economic bases of the developed countries and those of the developing countries continues to widen. The decline in relative socio-economic position of developing nations, accompanied as it is by a population explosion (now being recently addressed), has led to dangerous tension and the outbreak of violence and disorder in many areas of the world. Africa faces particularly difficult problems, and African institutions seeking to solve these problems, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), deserve our continuing support.

Acknowledged that the ability of the United States to underwrite services in assistance of all foreign countries is limited, its efforts to aid developing countries should be utilized at points of greatest potential for success. Priority should be given to those countries which can make the most rational and productive use of such aid, humanitarian considerations aside under conditions of famine and natural disasters. In evaluating the effectiveness of United States' aid, due weight should be given not only to economic and environmental considerations but also to the strengthening of democratic institutions and the consolidation of efforts on a regional basis.

Only when asked and only when it is clear that armed force is necessary to thwart a take-over by powers inimical to the survival of a weak and developing nation should the United States furnish military assistance. Even then, it should be with the approval and cooperative assistance of the United Nations and regional organizations.

VII. RUSSIA AND CHINA

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union into Russia and the several independent states—plus the freeing of Eastern Europe and the separation of the three Baltic States—has caused a monumental improvement in the international relations of the United States and Russia and the Eastern European states as well. With many problems remaining, all have moved toward democratic governments and free market systems.

China also does not seem as threatening as it has in the past—as the “free market economy” has penetrated even this nation state. At the same time, quarrels between the United States and China—both with respect to the independence of Taiwan and “human rights”—are expected to continue. Trade between the U.S. and China will surely expand despite the disapproval in the US of the latter China policy. The US should use its trading relationship to continue to press for relaxation of China's stern measures against

dissent, especially as China prepares to take over during this year Hong Kong—once the market capital of Southeast Asia.

VIII. ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES

The American Veterans Committee strongly supports the efforts of the United States to continue the peace process begun at Camp David in 1979, continued at Madrid in 1991, further affirmed at Oslo in 1993, and today reflected in the Wye Memorandum agreements of the Prime Minister of Israel and the Head of the Palestinian Movement. Although no rigid deadline should be set, the ultimate goal should be the fulfillment of the UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), which requires that Israel evacuate the territory occupied in that year in return for recognition by Arab countries of Israel's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political integrity, and peace. Exception must be made for areas absolutely necessary for Israel's existence as a state.

IX. WORLD TRADE

Unlimited global economic growth through global free trade in a global free market. That has long been an American dream; for some, almost a religion. In 1945, two great international financial institutions (IFIs) were erected, and a third envisaged, to make the dream real. In collaboration with other World War II winners—all great capitalist powers—and some developing world possessors of great natural resources, the U.S. hosted and led the Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, meetings that launched the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the “World Bank”) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A third institution, to promote and regulate global trade, was postponed. In 1995, however, it opened for business as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Two assumptions that undergirded the Bretton Woods institutions' establishment are deeply flawed. The first is that growth and enhanced world trade will benefit everyone. The second is that growth will not be constrained by the inherent limits of a finite planet.

The first fallacious assumption was summarized and popularized by President Kennedy's famous dictum, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” The trouble with that is, of course, many more people don't have boats than do. For the have-nots, the rising tide means run for the hills or drown on the beach.

At Bretton Woods, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau advocated rapid “material progress on an earth infinitely blessed with natural riches.” He asked participants to embrace the “elementary economic axiom . . . that prosperity has no fixed limits. It is not a finite substance to be diminished by division.”

That perception is now widely controverted, most importantly in the “Earth Summit” deliberations and agreements at Rio in 1992. But, as economist David C. Korten points out, the World Bank and IMF, in their “structural adjustment programs,” are still holding faithfully to Morgenthau's half-century-old mandate. They “have pressured countries of the South to open their borders and convert their economies from diverse production for local self-sufficiency to export production for the global market.”

Under the regime of the Bretton Woods institutions and the new World Trade Organization (WTO), the planet's far from infinite resources are being divided in ways that are, first, wasteful and environmentally unsustainable; and, second, so uneven, unjust and cruel as to incite armed revolutions—some now underway.

The brave new world of IFIs, trans-national corporations (TNCs), and free trade has enormously benefitted the fortunate few

and as enormously dispossessed the unfortunate many. The winners win big; the number of billionaires on our planet increased from 145 in 1987 to over 400 now. The combined wealth of these individuals equals the combined incomes of the poorest 45% of the world's people. But the losers lose even bigger: Korten tells us that World Bank programs alone have created millions of refugees, many in their own countries.

The WTO and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are creating new jobs, often by displacing others. They are eroding labor and environmental standards. The American Veterans Committee favors renewed and thorough public discussion of both these treaties, followed by their renegotiation and extensive revision or replacement with others more friendly to people.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS RESOLUTIONS

1. THE BALKAN STATES

Having goals of peace, security, and development in the Balkans and well aware that what was once Yugoslavia is now Yugoslavia/Serbia, Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Slovenia;

Noting with appreciation that the World Veterans Federation (WVF) brought together its member organizations (International Conference, Luxembourg, 5-7 May 1996) to arrive at "principles to be followed and measures to be taken" for attainment of those goals . . . and that the Luxembourg International Conference carefully took into account the position adopted in Dayton (Ohio/USA) with respect to Bosnia-Herzegovina;

Aware that peoples of different ethnic, religious, and historical background do have differences, sometimes substantial almost insurmountable differences;

Supporting the elections of a democratic state and urging the peoples to support the results of the elections wherever in the Balkan States;

Also supporting the position that individuals accused of "war crimes or crimes against humanity" must be brought before the appropriate court;

Believing with respect to the totality of the Balkan States that "recognition by every State in the region of all the other States in the region and renunciation of all forms of nationalism leading to the notion of 'greater State,' ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and intolerance toward minorities";

Continuing to respect the final act of Helsinki, which emphasizes the security and cooperation in Europe;

The American Veterans Committee continues to adopt the position that mediation and discussion, together with (a) peace-keeping, economic, and infrastructural support from NATO and the UN, including in both instances the United States of America, and (b) vital governing provisions Bosnia-Herzegovina and other Balkan States will lead to a state of multi-ethnic, multi-culture, and multi-denomination with full respect for the rights of all the people concerned.

2. BAN ON "ANTI-PERSONNEL" MINES

Recognizing that the President of the United States has himself used the phrase "global humanitarian tragedy caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines";

Reviewing the long-standing position of the American Veterans Committee (AVC) in support of the total ban of land mines, or anti-personnel mines;

Recalling also that the statement to the President of the United States of generals of the United States Armed Forces established that land mines hurt the United States more than they helped our Armed Forces;

Continuing to observe that around the world children and women and other civil-

ians have sustained injuries and even death from land mines.

The American Veterans Committee continues respectfully to urge the President of the United States to adopt a strong position with the goal of eliminating land mines, or anti-personnel mines, from our global life, a position by the President that includes the end of use by our Armed Forces of such mines.

3. CUBA

Observing Fidel Castro has been in power in Cuba for more than forty years and that all efforts to remove him and change his regime have been and continue to be futile;

Believing that the Helms-Burton Act has not been and will not be effective in achieving its stated goal(s), and judging further that this Act of Congress has only created conflict between us and our close allies;

The American Veterans Committee believes that the Helms-Burton Act should be repealed; further, that the United States should establish diplomatic ties or permit commercial relationships with Cuba . . . the U.S. acting thus in its own self-interest.

4. ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Applauding in the early days of the American Veterans Committee (AVC) the establishment of the nation of Israel;

Supporting the leadership of President Jimmy Carter in bringing together Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel and Egypt's leader Anwar Sadat and further supporting the agreement developing from the meeting of Begin and Sadat;

Noting with satisfaction the further movement toward conciliation, reconciliation, and peace formulated by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and the present and immediate past Prime Ministers of Israel;

Urging the leaders of Israel and Palestine today to continue using mediation in arriving at agreements, including an agreement with respect to East Jerusalem;

AVC continues to support the right of Israel to peace and economic and socio-cultural development and the use of the instrument of discussion and mediation in the consideration of all elements and aspects of difference and conflict between Israel and the neighboring peoples and nations—whether they be Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, or any other nation state; AVC in supporting the above stated developments in Israel in no way implies that it does not support similar development of Palestine as well as all and other nations as they too seek peace and improvement of the quality of life for their peoples.

5. THE UNITED NATIONS—SUPPORT WITH REFORM

Recognizing that the American Veterans Committee (AVC) has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations since its inception in 1945 and has taken a very active role in the World Veterans Federation, a role that has enabled AVC to serve in the capacity of an NGO;

Recognizing nevertheless that time has brought the need for reform of a number of the systems and activities of the UN and those of some of its member states;

Observing further that some member states and even our own nation, the United States, have failed to meet their financial obligations as dues-paying members in the UN;

Resolved by the American Veterans Committee:

1. THAT the United States and other debtor states must pay their United Nations dues in full to fulfill their treaty obligations; that consequences for continued non-payment must be instituted.

2. THAT the effectiveness of the UN must be improved through better financing, in-

cluding such mechanisms as (a) a treaty among member states to establish partial self-financing of UN peace-keeping and other programs through a worldwide tax on airline tickets and the value of ocean freight; (b) a surcharge on international postage items; (c) rent for the exclusive use of satellite positions; (d) national legislation within member states to ease the way to voluntary individual contributions to UN programs through tax-deductibility of contributions; and (e) sale of UN bonds to private individuals and of extra premium postage stamps;

3. THAT the UN structures for dispute mediation and conflict prevention and resolution be strengthened through the establishment of a UN Peace Observation Corps of 100-200 highly-trained professional observers and mediators to assist the Security Council and Secretary General—backed by a competent research and analysis unit—to track potential crisis situations and, further, to identify the most successful approaches to conflict prevention and resolution from past crises;

4. THAT United Nations peace-keeping capability be improved through such means as (a) predesignation of peace-keeping units in their own forces by member states with provision for joint training of such designated units to be financed either through voluntary contributions or regular peace-keeping expenditures; (b) a task force established by the Security Council to study the practical detail of a small UN Readiness Force, to be placed at the disposal of the Security Council—10,000 troops composed of volunteers contributed by member states in small units (companies or battalions) . . . and with the purpose of intervention in the early stages of the possible conflict before it expands to widespread fighting and, when not engaged in peace-keeping operations to train peace-keeping personnel of interested member states; (c) a second task force established by the Security Council to investigate practical steps to revive the Military Staff Committee (foreseen in the UN Charter) with responsibility for enforcement, peace-keeping operation, and disarmament;

5. THAT the Security Council become more responsive to the concerns of the General Assembly through arranging for regular presentation of the Assembly to the Council and discussion by the latter of the views of the General Assembly, as reflected in the Assembly Resolutions, with the President of the Assembly given ex-officio membership on the Council, and through continued study of the representative qualities of the UNSC membership;

6. THAT the rule of law among nations be strengthened through (a) a movement toward universal acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice by introducing a procedure where the Security Council would decide, in cases where continuing bilateral disputes threaten world security, to require the UN member states involved (including Security Council members) either to present themselves to conciliation proceedings or to take the dispute to the International Court of Justice; (b) General Assembly authorization of the Secretary General to turn to the International Court of Justice for advisory opinions; (c) the establishment of an International Criminal Court to try individuals accused of specific violations of international law; and (d) provisions that individuals or groups who consider that their rights have not been respected may petition the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for reaction and then, if the issue is not resolved, to petition the General Assembly for a hearing;

7. THAT further international cooperation for peace and substantial development be enhanced through the establishment of a UN

Economic Security Council to take the place of ECOSOC, its functions being to balance the interests of citizens, nations, and corporations in an increasingly globalized economy and, in particular, to improve coordination on economic and social programs within the UN system;

8. THAT movement be made toward a genuine career UN civil service, with training of UN staff on all levels to include the recognition of diversity of cultures. And, further, with the elimination of political appointments, level-by-level over a period of years, with all positions in the UN Secretariat except those of the Secretary General and his immediate staff being held only by those who have passed the UN entry examination or met other well-established professional criteria including maintenance of a high-level of performance;

9. THAT the influence of civil society at the UN be strengthened through enhancing the role and access of citizen organizations with regard to their participation in proceedings of the General Assembly and all UN conferences through a biennial Citizens' Assembly at the UN representing all NGOs to develop concepts and proposals for transmittal to and discussion by the UN General Assembly;

10. THAT isolationism within the United States be fought in all its forms, as the US with about five percent of the world's population needs the UN to serve as a necessary and vital bridge to the rest of the world; and

11. THAT funding of the UN Trusteeship Council should end inasmuch as there are no longer any Trust Territories, thereby eliminating a stark example of bureaucratic waste within the UN itself and setting a precedent for other comparable action as warranted.

6. US RATIFICATION OF RELEVANT CONVENTIONS, PROTOCOLS, AND TREATIES ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Recognizing the importance of the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other international conventions and treaties which promote the human rights of women and their desire for full equality with men in all pursuits of life;

The American Veterans Committee (AVC) calls for the United States Senate (a) to endorse the CEDAW which would make the United States a signatory to the CEDAW, and (b) to support other international conventions and treaties promoting the rights and interests of women;

AVC affirms the proposition spelled out in The Platform For Action that human rights are universal and equally applicable to women; the inherent and indivisible rights of women must be affirmed by the international community, and support the Mission Statement from Beijing that "equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development, and peace." [N.B. The previous statement flows from the United Nations 4th International Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, September 1995.]

7. US RATIFICATION OF UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COVENANTS

Supporting since the adoption by the United Nations nearly a half-century ago of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" the philosophy and concept of human rights for all people all over the globe;

Supporting further the United Nations Human Rights Covenants on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights—as well as the United Nations Human Rights Covenants on Civil and Political Rights;

Noting that more than 175 nations of the world have ratified the UN Human Rights Covenants;

Noting further that the United States of America became a signatory, during the administration of President Jimmy Carter to the UN HR Covenants;

The American Veterans Committee (AVC) respectfully urges the President of the United States to take all immediate and reasonable steps to move the United States not only as a signatory but also as a nation ratifying both United Nations Human Rights Covenants (a) Economic, Social, and Cultural as well as (b) Civil and Political Rights.

8. US SUPPORT FOR THE REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

Noting with satisfaction the release of the important study of the "Impact Of Armed Conflict On Children" (Grace Machel Study);

Reaffirming the American Veterans Committee's traditional support for strict adherence to international humanitarian laws and human rights standards in situations of armed conflict;

Reaffirming further our support for the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child;

The American Veterans Committee (a) calls upon the international community to offer special care and protection of refugee and internally placed children and (b) further calls international support for the findings of the of the Report, including calling upon governments to prevent the recruitment of children under the age of 18 and to demobilize any children under that age.

9. THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION/US AND THE WORLD FEDERALIST ASSOCIATION

Recognizing for decades that the World Federalist Association (WFA) in the United States and World Federalism elsewhere in the world have appropriately emphasized the global nature of the Earth and our life thereon;

Recognizing further that the work of the United Nations Associations/US in its support of the United Nations itself has similarly reflected an understanding of the global nature of the world;

Observing that both of these organizations have emphasized the great need of peoples to work together for a better world at the same time their governments work together in the United Nations for peace and security;

Having members of the American Veterans Committee (AVC) also in positions of leadership and membership in the WFA and likewise in positions of leadership in the United Nations Association/US;

Believing today that the WFA position is still sound and that its annual and regional and assembly meetings are productive . . . likewise noting the effectiveness and value of the National Assembly of the UNA/US;

Believing today that the WFA position is still sound and that its national and regional meetings are productive, having produced recent leadership in advancing the international criminal court, the Hague Appeal for Peace and adequate UN funding . . . likewise noting the effectiveness and value of the results achieved by the national and regional assemblies of the UNA/US;

American Veterans Committee finds that both the work of the United Nations Association/US and the World Federalist Association have goals and programs that lead to a stronger and more productive relationship of the peoples in the nations of the world; and, therefore, AVC supports both of these organizations.

10. WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION—A HALF CENTURY OF AVC SUPPORT

Reviewing with gratification the nearly half century history of the World Veterans Federation (WVF) and the funding membership of the American Veterans Committee

(AVC) in WVF in 1950 as well as the continuing AVC membership now in 1997;

Reviewing also the long and consistent programs and work of WVF in behalf of veterans as well as those who have suffered on account of war—the WVF program always including support of the United Nations;

Recalling the guidance of WVF by the CREDO created by the late United Nations Under-secretary General Ralph J. Bunche . . . the Credo having the celebrated phrase "None can speak more eloquently for peace than those who have fought in war";

Noting that WVF has consistently brought veterans from all over the world to its General Assemblies, Council meetings, and such special meetings as the 1990 Conference on the Mediterranean held in Malta, and observing that WVF now looks forward this year to its 23rd General Assembly to be held in Seoul, Korea;

Taking pride in the fifty-year leadership of WVF Presidents and Secretaries General, including the present leader General Bjorn Egge and Secretary General Serge Wourgaft;

Observing also that contributing to WVF over many, many years have been and are such AVCers as the late United States District Court Judge Hubert Will (WVF US Council Member for the three terms and WVF International Vice President), Executive Director June A. Willenz (who heads the WVF Standing Committee on Women), Stanley Allen (who has served the WVF US Council for more than four decades as its Executive Secretary), and Dr. Paul P. Cooke (who serves the WVF US Council at this time as its Alternate Council Member);

The Americans Veterans Committee continues to support without reservation the World Veterans Federation and looks forward to continuing membership and contribution to WVF programs.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF NELSON B. GRAY V ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, today I pay special tribute to an outstanding young man from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am happy to announce that Nelson B. Gray V, of Norwalk, Ohio, has been offered an appointment to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

Mr. Speaker, Nelson's offer of appointment poses him to attend the United States Military Academy this fall with the incoming cadet class of 2004. Attending one of our nation's military academies is an invaluable experience that offers a world-class education and demands the very best that these young men and women have to offer. Truly, it is one of the most challenging and rewarding undertakings of their lives.

Nelson brings a special blend of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming class of West Point cadets. While attending Edison High School in Milan, Nelson has attained a grade point average of 4.047, which places him seventh in his class of one hundred forty-three students. Nelson is a member of the National Honor Society, French National Honor Society, Honor Roll, Varsity Scholarship Team, and has placed highly on the American Legion Americanism and Government test and