

Draft Plank on Human Rights: Geneva Conventions

Submitted by DA-India

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Note: This is based on a full resolution that will be voted on in April at the Global Caucus.

The rule of Law At Home and Abroad

The United States has championed the development and worldwide spread of international humanitarian law for almost 150 years. Previous commanders-in-chief have led the United States Armed Forces with the honor and dignity they deserve by upholding both the spirit and letter of international humanitarian law through the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which protect both combatants and non-combatants during armed conflict. Democrats Abroad has publicly endorsed positions condemning torture and calling for the reinstatement of the Writ of Habeus Corpus. With such resolutions and the United States' continuing involvement in the Afghan and Iraq conflicts as background, we:

DEPLORE the disgraceful Bush Administration policy of ordering our military and intelligence services to treat the Geneva Conventions as a technicality to be evaded rather than an expression of our deepest convictions of justice and fair play both on and off the battlefield.

DEPLORE the fact that the integrity of our nation and the professionalism of our military have been severely and perhaps irretrievably damaged by President Bush's policy of contempt towards the Geneva Conventions.

DEPLORE the fact that the President has needlessly and recklessly provoked unnecessary risk to the safety of our own soldiers and sailors held captive by the enemy by undercutting any argument we can make that those imprisoned should be accorded the protections guaranteed by the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law as a matter of reciprocity.

SUPPORT the many current and retired military leaders who have called upon the President to respect the tradition of non-partisan American global leadership, and recommit the United States to the letter and spirit of the Geneva Conventions, especially as our troops are deployed in conflict zones in Afghanistan and Iraq.

OPPOSE past decisions and current policy that prisoners captured in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world and accused of committing or plotting terrorist or military attacks against America and its allies are not entitled to the protections of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law more generally.

SUPPORT closing the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

OPPOSE the practice of “extraordinary renditions” and of holding detainees in incommunicado detention at so-called “black sites”.

SUPPORT permitting the International Red Cross to conduct visits of all detainees.

CALL UPON our Congressional leaders and our next President to publicly reaffirm America's commitment to the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Conventions.