



## **Resolution Calling for America's Recommitment to the Principles and Values of the Geneva Conventions**

WHEREAS America has championed the development and worldwide spread of international humanitarian law for almost 150 years;

WHEREAS international humanitarian law, as exemplified by the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, protects both combatants and non-combatants during armed conflict;

WHEREAS our previous commanders-in-chief have led the men and women of the United States Armed Forces with the honor and dignity they deserve by upholding both the spirit and the letter of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law more generally;

WHEREAS our current commander-in-chief, President George W. Bush, has disgracefully turned his back on nearly 150 years of American leadership in international humanitarian law and ordered 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;

WHEREAS 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;

WHEREAS 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;

WHEREAS many current and retired military leaders 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;

WHEREAS it is not a sign of weakness but of great moral strength to treat our enemies better than we expect to be treated by them;

WHEREAS a shameful symbol of America's disregard for the Geneva Conventions is the detention center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba;

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad has publicly endorsed positions condemning torture and calling for the reinstatement of the Writ of Habeus Corpus;

WHEREAS Senator Dianne Feinstein has introduced S1249 and Representative Jane Harman has introduced HR2212, companion bills mandating the closure of the Guantánamo detention center.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad call on our Congressional leaders and the President to reverse past decisions and current policies to parse the Geneva Conventions for every conceivable loophole in order to excuse or encourage noncompliance with both the letter and spirit of the Conventions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad call on our Congressional leaders and the President to reverse past decisions 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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad call on our Congressional leaders and the President to publicly reaffirm America's commitment to the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Conventions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an important first step towards that goal would be for Congressional leaders to follow through on President Bush's expressed desire to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba by passing HR2212/S1249.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effort to attain compliance with the Geneva Conventions expand to include, among other things,

- ceasing the practice of “extraordinary renditions” and of holding detainees in incommunicado detention at so-called “black sites”; and
- permitting the International Red Cross to conduct visits of all detainees,

to symbolize the continuing American resolve to uphold our tradition of leadership in the field of international humanitarian law.

*Drafted by Randy Ackley and Sergiu Troie, with assistance from Adotei Akwei and Carolyn Sauvage-Mar, Democrats Abroad-India. Originally submitted for discussion at Heidelberg March 2007; reviewed by the Executive Committee of Democrats Abroad in May 2007 with requests for clarification; supported by ten country committees or forming committees at the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting in September 2007, and now submitted for formal consideration by Democrats Abroad at the global meeting in 2008.*