



**DPCA Meeting
April 11-13, 2008, Vancouver, Canada**

Resolutions adopted

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

proposed by Carolyn Sauvage-Mar (Chair, DA India)

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.

Resolution on Humanitarian and Development Foreign Assistance

proposed by Carolyn Sauvage-Mar (Chair, DA India)

WHEREAS the people of the United States are a generous and caring people who support international humanitarian and development assistance for the most vulnerable people of the world;

WHEREAS such programs have enhanced American power and influence around the world;

WHEREAS in 1970 the United States signed a United Nations Resolution in setting a target of 0.7 percent of GNP contribution to official development assistance that has not yet been met;

WHEREAS in 2000 the United States committed to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty embodied by the Millennium Development Goals;

WHEREAS in 2002 President George W. Bush refused to join European nations in agreeing to meet the 0.7 percent target by 2015;

WHEREAS as of 2003 at Stockholm, Sweden, the United States helped sponsor the development of and agreed to the identified “23 Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship,” which principles and good practices underscore the vital requisites that humanitarian aid be needs-based and provided in a neutral, impartial and independent manner and eschew political or religious biased, non-neutral humanitarian donations;

WHEREAS the United States contributes the least aid (0.22 percent in 2005) in terms of GNP percentage of all the industrialized nations in the world;

WHEREAS President George W. Bush has politicized foreign assistance programs to conform to a political agenda and religious preferences that have eroded our international standing, particularly in developing and emerging countries, where the vast majority of the world’s people live;

WHEREAS the policies and practices of President George W. Bush and his administration in directing foreign aid based on political and religious agendas directly conflict with the 23 Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship as agreed in 2003 in Stockholm, Sweden;

WHEREAS President George W. Bush has dramatically shifted the focus of US foreign assistance programs to be aligned with short term strategic interests of his administration;

WHEREAS the world’s most vulnerable people -- 2.7 billion people who struggle to survive on less than two dollars a day -- suffer from desperate poverty and withering needs for basic necessities, and are left without our help, which help could be provided in an appropriate, neutral, impartial manner;

WHEREAS America’s own security and safety depends on a world where poverty is eradicated and the innate dignity of individuals everywhere are protected, no matter how poor or voiceless;

WHEREAS America’s own security and safety is served by being perceived as assisting the world’s vulnerable according to their needs and as a principled agent of change to alleviate needless suffering and mortality, rather than being perceived as nation which provides aid to only those from whom we seek to curry favor or strategic, political or religious advantage or support; and

WHEREAS in September the House of Representatives passed HR 1302 Global Poverty Act of 2007 which requires the President to establish a unified, comprehensive foreign aid policy to promote the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme global poverty, and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than \$1 per day;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad calls upon the President and the Congress to enact policies that provide aid to the world's most vulnerable based on their needs, and which drive the nation's humanitarian efforts in a manner which is neutral, impartial and will serve to end bias in the provision of humanitarian and development aid;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad calls upon the President and the Congress to reaffirm the commitment of the United States and its foreign policies to the 23 Principles Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship as developed in 2003; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Democrats Abroad calls upon the President and the Congress to join the international community's support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by committing to achieve the 0.7 percent target by 2015.

Resolution on using technology to make Democrats Abroad meetings more open and available to all members regardless of location and ability to attend meetings

proposed by Lauren Shannon (Chair, DA Japan)

WHEREAS the DNC Charter Article 9 section 12 states that All meetings of the Democratic National Committee, Executive Committee, And all other official Party Committees, commissions, and bodies shall be open to the public.

WHEREAS members of Democrats abroad face challenges for meeting attendance due to our membership being spread over the entire planet.

AND WHEREAS new technologies exist to share information via voice over internet providers (VOIP), online video streaming, web casting, pod casting and other new techniques and free software options.

WHEREAS this resolution has already been adopted in the DPCA's country committee in Japan and discussed at the Asia Regional Meeting in 2006;

BE IT RESOLVED that the DPCA will make every effort to research and implement the use of these new technologies to make virtual participation at our regional meetings, Global meetings, and major events available to our membership online.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the spirit of the DNC charter and in reference to the above we country committees will also do our best to implement these efforts at the local committee and chapter levels.

Resolution regarding Medicare

proposed by Howard Feldstein (Chair, DA Mexico)

WHEREAS, millions of Americans who live abroad and who have paid into the Medicare system are unable to utilize the benefits of the system unless they travel to the US to receive medical care.

WHEREAS, Americans abroad, particularly elderly Americans, consistently identify health care and the related problem of health insurance as their major concern, and

WHEREAS, because medical care in almost all other countries is known to cost less than in the United States, medical benefits delivered abroad to eligible Americans would entail a lighter financial burden on the Medicare system than the same benefits awarded in the United States, and

WHEREAS, the so-called administrative difficulties of extending Medicare abroad, such as determining reimbursement rates for foreign medical services and ensuring compliance with Medicare standards by foreign medical personnel and facilities, have long been overcome by major American insurance companies, who have been able to provide worldwide health care coverage for Americans traveling and living in other countries, thus indicating that the administration of multi-country health care benefits would not be an insurmountable problem for the U.S. government, and

WHEREAS, the Medicare system itself is known to disregard these "administrative difficulties" in certain cases, such as the Medicare regulations that permit payment of services in a Canadian hospital if the beneficiary has been traveling between Alaska and the other 48 continental states, and

in a qualified Canadian or Mexican hospital if such a facility is closer or substantially more accessible to his residence in the United States than the nearest U.S. hospital that can provide the needed care, regardless of whether or not an emergency exists, thus proving that Medicare currently has the ability to evaluate and accept a Canadian or Mexican medical facility as meeting Medicare standards for residents of the United States, and further indicating that Medicare currently has the ability to determine reimbursement rates and ensure compliance with Medicare standards in Canada, Mexico, and, by extension, any other foreign country in which Americans happen to reside, and

WHEREAS, the CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services) program, operated by the Department of Defense, already successfully provides civilian health and medical services and benefits not only to the spouses and eligible children of members of the uniformed services who are serving, or who have died, on active duty, but also to retired members of the uniformed services, including those who reside abroad, offering medical care benefits that are in many cases even more comprehensive than those of Medicare and making use of qualified foreign civilian medical personnel facilities that competently determine reimbursement rates and ensure compliance with U.S. standards, demonstrates that the Department of Health and Human Services, which operates Medicare, could do the same to deliver Medicare abroad, possibly even by simply using the civilian infrastructure abroad that is already in place for the CHAMPUS program, thus reducing costs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad urge the 2008 Platform Committee of the Democratic National Convention to include planks that advocate that Medicare legislation be amended to extend Medicare services and benefits abroad and give all Americans, regardless of their residence, the benefits for which they have paid and to take into account special health care needs of American citizens residing abroad in any health care reform legislation proposed by the next Administration or adopted by Congress.

Resolution on repeal of the Hague Invasion Act

proposed by Bob Bragar (Chair) and Claire Taylor (Vice Chair, DA Netherlands)

WHEREAS government-sponsored crimes ranging from the Holocaust during World War II to the genocides in Rwanda in 1994 and Darfur in 2007 require judgment and punishment by the international community,

WHEREAS the Netherlands is the oldest and one of the closest allies of the United States,

WHEREAS the International Criminal Court (“ICC”), located in The Hague, the Netherlands, is a major force for international human rights, being the first court in history specially formed to try cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes,

WHEREAS 146 nations have joined the court or signed the treaty pertaining to the court,

WHEREAS In 2002, the US Congress passed the “American Service Members Protection Act”, commonly known as The Hague Invasion Act,

WHEREAS the Hague Invasion Act authorizes the use of military force to liberate any American held by the court, in effect being an unprecedented pre-authorized declaration of war by the United States in case an American citizen is taken under the ICC’s jurisdiction,

WHEREAS the Hague Invasion Act authorizes the United States to penalize any nation that is a member of the International Criminal Court,

WHEREAS the Hague Invasion Act has raised significant tensions among America’s allies, not least of which in the Netherlands.

RESOLVED: Democrats Abroad calls for the repeal of The Hague Invasion Act, except for those portions of the Act that require the United States to ensure, through diplomatic and judicial means, that a charged service member receives due process and the best possible legal defense.