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H. CON. RES. 180

Expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to the South Pacific region.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 15, 1993

Mr. ACKERMAN (for himself, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and Mr. LEACH) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to the South Pacific region.

Whereas the United States has strong and enduring economic, political, and strategic ties with the South Pacific region, which are integral to the achievement of a New Pacific Community;

Whereas the countries of the region play a constructive international role, were supportive of the United States throughout the Cold War and continue to support its role in ensuring regional stability and security, and share a commitment to democratic values, free-markets, and human rights;

Whereas the United States is geographically and historically a member of the Pacific community and has unique rela-

tionships with, and responsibilities to, its Pacific Island territories, freely associated states, and former territories;

Whereas the United States has significant and expanding commercial interests in the South Pacific and enjoys a substantial trade surplus with countries of the region, and the promotion of commercial links between the United States and countries of the region is welcomed as providing a necessary foundation for future economic well-being;

Whereas the region's fisheries resources are of vital importance to the economic well-being of Pacific Island countries and have provided lucrative commercial opportunities for the United States fishing industry, and the effective management of these resources and the continued functioning of the South Pacific Fisheries Treaty are essential;

Whereas the United States has been welcomed as a member of South Pacific regional organizations, including the South Pacific Commission and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program, and as a dialogue partner of the South Pacific Forum;

Whereas environmental issues can bear directly on the economic and physical security of countries in the South Pacific region, have the potential to effect the well-being of United States citizens in the Pacific region, and can only be dealt with effectively at the regional and global level;

Whereas peoples of the South Pacific have actively contributed to the development of a peaceful international community through their constructive participation in international forums, including the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations, and through support for the

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas United States leadership in extending its nuclear testing moratorium is warmly welcomed by countries of the South Pacific, and countries of the South Pacific have shown understanding for United States efforts to dispose of its chemical weapons stockpile while emphasizing the importance of the United States commitment to close the Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Destruction System when the current program of chemical weapons and agent destruction is completed;

Whereas there has been only one Heads-of-Government summit involving the President of the United States and Pacific Island leaders, and there is considerable value in dialogue at a senior political level with all countries of the region;

Whereas the United States has reduced its diplomatic presence in the South Pacific to a minimum, and there are reports that the Agency for International Development is considering closing posts in the region and concerns that the current very modest program of United States foreign assistance to Pacific Island countries may be reduced; and

Whereas the United States has an opportunity to bolster its links with the Pacific Island countries through the negotiation of a Joint Declaration of Cooperation: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
- 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

1 (1) it is in the national interest for the United
2 States to remain actively engaged in the South Pa-
3 cific region as a means of supporting the important
4 United States commercial and strategic interests,
5 and to encourage the consolidation of democratic
6 values;

7 (2) the United States should encourage eco-
8 nomic, trade, and investment relationships with the
9 countries of the South Pacific, in particular through
10 the Joint Commercial Commission and its working
11 group, and through other Asia/Pacific regional
12 forums;

13 (3) the United States should seek to maintain
14 its diplomatic presence, and its Agency for Inter-
15 national Development missions, in the South Pacific
16 region;

17 (4) notwithstanding current fiscal constraints,
18 the executive branch, particularly the Department of
19 State, should work actively with the Congress to at
20 least maintain, and if possible increase, the very
21 modest levels of foreign assistance provided to the
22 region and to encourage the active participation in
23 the region of other international donors;

24 (5) the United States has interests in preserv-
25 ing the natural resources and biodiversity of the

1 South Pacific region, and is uniquely positioned to
2 promote sustainable development through active par-
3 ticipation in the South Pacific Regional Environ-
4 mental Program and the United Nations Global
5 Conference for the Sustainable Development of
6 Small Island States and through implementation of
7 the Biodiversity and Climate Conventions;

8 (6) the United States should cooperate closely
9 with regional governments to strengthen sustainable
10 management principles and practices as they apply
11 to the region's fisheries resources;

12 (7) the United States should avail itself of the
13 opportunity for contact with leaders of all South Pa-
14 cific countries through regular Ministerial/Cabinet
15 level meetings, including at the South Pacific Forum
16 dialogue, to ensure that the views of regional govern-
17 ments are given consideration in policy deliberations;
18 and

19 (8) the United States should take an active in-
20 terest in the proposed Joint Declaration of Coopera-
21 tion between the United States and certain Pacific
22 Island governments as an opportunity for the United
23 States to renew its commitment to the region.

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