

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 148

Supporting efforts by the Government of Colombia to pursue peace and regional stability.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 9, 2019

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting efforts by the Government of Colombia to pursue peace and regional stability.

Whereas, in 2016, the Government of Colombia concluded a historic peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), aimed at addressing the root causes of the half-a-century conflict, including stark economic inequalities, the rural-urban divide, and the historical exclusion of Afro-Colombians, indigenous people, women, and poor farmers, and is currently working to implement these accords;

Whereas the Governments and people of the United States and Colombia have forged a resolute bond through a shared commitment to support peace, human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and security throughout the hemisphere and the world, which has been bolstered by

the support of hundreds of thousands of Colombian-Americans and their contributions to American life;

Whereas, in 2000, the Government of Colombia achieved an impressive national consensus to build state capacity, and the United States committed to combat organized crime, drugs, and violence through its foreign assistance package in support of Plan Colombia;

Whereas Plan Colombia and its successor, Peace Colombia, have received steadfast commitments from the administrations of Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump, and continuously has been strengthened by broad bipartisan support in the United States Congress;

Whereas, while the Government of Colombia contributed more than 95 percent of funds over the life of Plan Colombia, the political leadership, technical advice, military assistance, and intelligence-sharing role of the United States, along with the \$11,000,000,000 appropriated by the United States Congress through Plan Colombia and Peace Colombia to combat the illicit narcotics trade and transnational organized crime, advance democratic governance, promote economic growth, and defend human rights, played a key role in transforming a nation on the brink to an increasingly peaceful and prosperous democracy, while also safeguarding vital United States interests;

Whereas the Government of Colombia, throughout the administrations of Presidents Andres Pastrana, Alvaro Uribe, Juan Manuel Santos, and Ivan Duque, has made investments and shown remarkable courageous leadership, often at great cost and sacrifice, to consolidate domestic security, socioeconomic development, and the rule of law

that far exceed those contributions made by the United States in Colombia;

Whereas, over the past 20 years, levels of crime and violence have subsided sharply in Colombia, with annual per capita homicide rates declining from 62 per 100,000 people in 1999 to a record low of 23 per 100,000 people in 2017;

Whereas the alignment of improved security and sound economic policies has translated into steady growth in Colombia's Gross Domestic Product, which increased from \$86,000,000,000 in 1999 to more than \$309,000,000,000 in 2017, and led to greater Foreign Direct Investment, which grew from \$1,500,000,000 in 1999 to one of the highest in Latin America at an estimated \$14,000,000,000 in 2017;

Whereas the United States and Colombia enjoy a robust economic relationship with United States goods and services trade with Colombia totaling an estimated \$36,100,000,000 in 2016, supporting over 100,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas the Government of Colombia has made impressive strides in reducing poverty during the last 15 years, with the poverty rate decreasing from 64 percent in 1999 to 27 percent in 2017, according to the World Bank;

Whereas, since 1999, the Government of Colombia has expanded the presence of the state across all 32 territorial departments, has contributed to the professionalism of the Colombian judiciary, and has improved the capacity of the Colombian Army, Navy, Air Force, and National Police;

Whereas Colombia is one of the United States most consistent and strategic partners through its support of United States diplomatic objectives at the United Nations and critical efforts made in the fight against transnational organized crime and increased security and rule of law overseas, including in Central America's Northern Triangle, Afghanistan, and several countries in Africa;

Whereas Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NATO in 2017 and is the first NATO partner nation in Latin America;

Whereas these gains are challenged by an escalating crisis in Venezuela, which has seen an influx of more than 1,200,000 Venezuelans into Colombia and the need for continued financial support to implement the peace accord over the next 8 years;

Whereas the internal armed conflict has victimized all Colombians, including women, children, and Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, and has led to the repeated targeting of leading representatives of civil society, including trade unionists, journalists, human rights defenders, and other community activists who remain at grave risk from guerrilla groups, paramilitary successor organizations, organized criminal groups, and corrupt local officials;

Whereas efforts to achieve lasting peace in Colombia must address the hardships faced by victims of the armed conflict, as exemplified by the Government of Colombia's Law on Victims and Restitution of Land of 2011;

Whereas the prospects for national reconciliation and sustainable peace in Colombia rely on the effective delivery of justice for victims of the conflict and the ability to hold accountable and appropriately punish perpetrators of se-

rious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; and

Whereas the work of Special Jurisdiction for Peace—the transitional justice mechanism created with the purpose of ensuring accountability in the context of Colombia’s internal armed conflict—is fundamental to the implementation of the accords and the consolidation of peace in the country: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) reaffirms the unwavering support of the
3 Government and people of the United States for the
4 people of Colombia in their pursuit of peace and sta-
5 bilization of territories previously in conflict so they
6 can achieve their aspiration to live in a country free
7 of violence and organized crime;

8 (2) lauds efforts to bring an end to Colombia’s
9 enduring internal armed conflict;

10 (3) commends the work of the United Nations
11 Verification Mission in overseeing the implementa-
12 tion of the 2016 peace accord and the disarmament
13 and reintegration of combatants;

14 (4) maintains its commitment to the more than
15 7,000,000 victims of Colombia’s armed conflict and
16 urges the government and FARC to hold account-
17 able perpetrators of serious violations of human
18 rights and international humanitarian law and en-
19 sure that they are appropriately punished;

1 (5) encourages the Government of Colombia to
2 protect vulnerable populations who remain at risk in
3 that country, including defenders of human rights,
4 those facing threats due to crop substitution from
5 the illicit crop market, and Afro-descendant and in-
6 digenous communities;

7 (6) encourages the Secretary of State to develop
8 a comprehensive strategy to assist the Government
9 of Colombia in managing the effects of the Ven-
10 ezuela crisis without endangering or detracting from
11 the successful implementation and sustainability of
12 the peace accord and stabilization of territories pre-
13 viously in conflict in Colombia, and to further
14 strengthen the close bilateral partnership shared by
15 the Governments of the United States and Colombia;

16 (7) reaffirms its commitment to continued part-
17 nership between the Governments of the United
18 States and Colombia on issues of mutual interest,
19 including security, counternarcotics cooperation,
20 combating transnational organized crime, ensuring
21 justice for those who have caused indelible harm to
22 our populations, reintegration of FARC members,
23 economic growth and investment with a focus on dis-
24 advantaged communities, and educational and cul-
25 tural exchanges that strengthen diplomatic relations;

1 (8) supports the Special Jurisdiction for Peace
2 as an important transitional justice mechanism and
3 encourages the continuation of its work as an impor-
4 tant institution in charge of guaranteeing truth, jus-
5 tice, and victim's reparations in the aftermath of the
6 country's internal armed conflict; and

7 (9) commits to furthering the bilateral relation-
8 ship between the United States and Colombia by
9 working with leaders in the public and private sec-
10 tors, as well as civil society from both countries, to
11 ensure that the United States-Colombia relationship
12 remains at the forefront of United States foreign
13 policy.

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