

**EIGHTY-SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE  
August 31, September 1, 2, 2004**

**Resolution No. 160: United States Military Forces In Peacekeeping Operations  
Origin: Maryland  
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The stated purpose of the War Powers Act (P.L. 93-148) was to “...fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution to insure that the collective judgment of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of the United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent hostilities were clearly indicated”; and

WHEREAS, During the Cold War, former Secretary of Defense Weinberger in 1985 set forth specified conditions that had to be met before American military forces were committed to combat, namely, that the United States Government had to determine that our vital national interests were at stake; that we were prepared to commit sufficient forces to win; that political and military objectives were clearly defined; that there was reasonable assurance of support from the American people; that U.S. forces should be committed as a last resort; and that the United States had a clear exit strategy; and

WHEREAS, The successes of United States military operations in Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf demonstrated what our Armed Forces could achieve with well-defined goals and objectives and the unquestioned support of the American people; and the tragedies of Lebanon and Somalia have shown what can happen when they had neither; and

WHEREAS, Peacekeeping operations have increased by 300 percent since 1993 and members of the armed forces have been deployed to as many as 143 countries which has been wearing out military personnel and equipment; and

WHEREAS, According to current Department of Defense policy, United States military personnel captured during such peacekeeping, peacemaking, humanitarian, or nation-building operations are not designated as prisoners of war but as hostages or detainees with no defined legal rights under the Geneva Convention; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Nashville, Tennessee on August 31, September 1, 2, 2004, That The American Legion believes that the following principles should be an integral part of the United States national security and foreign policy decision-making process when considering the commitment of United States military forces: America needs a clear definition of its vital national interests as they relate to all military operations to include peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that Congress should approve any commitment of United States troops to any further peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that United States military forces should not be placed under foreign or United Nations operational control except in exceptional circumstances where Congress grants specific approval; and that American service**

**men and women captured during these types of operations should be granted full POW status and afforded all the protections of the Geneva Conventions; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, The American Legion voices its grave concerns about the continued commitment of the U.S. armed forces to peacekeeping operation unless four conditions have been fulfilled; That there will be a clear statement by the President of why it is in our vital national interests to be engaged in a particular operation; guidelines will be established for the mission, including a clear exit strategy; that there be support of the mission by the U.S. Congress and the American people; and that it be made clear U.S. forces will be commanded only by U.S. officers which we acknowledge are superior military leaders.**