

105TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 285

Expressing the sense of the Senate that all necessary steps should be taken to ensure the elections to be held in Gabon in December of 1998 are free and fair.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 5 (legislative day, OCTOBER 2), 1998

Mr. LUGAR submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that all necessary steps should be taken to ensure the elections to be held in Gabon in December of 1998 are free and fair.

Whereas Gabon is a heavily forested and oil-rich country on central Africa's west coast;

Whereas Gabon gained independence from France in 1960;

Whereas Gabon is scheduled to hold national elections in December 1998 for the purpose of electing a President;

Whereas the Government of Gabon has been subject to single-party rule for a significant period of its recent history and only 1 person has held the office of the President since 1967;

Whereas the Freedom House Survey of World Freedom, 1997–1998, determined that “Gabon’s citizens have never been able to exercise their constitutional right to change their government democratically”;

Whereas the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) served as observers during the organization of the 1993 Presidential and legislative elections in Garbon and found widespread electoral irregularities;

Whereas the Government of Gabon is a signatory to the “Paris Accords” of 1994, approved by national referendum in July 1995, which were to have provided for a State of law guaranteeing basic individual freedoms and the organization of free and fair elections under a new independent national election commission;

Whereas the people of Gabon have demonstrated their support for the democratic process through the formation of numerous political parties since 1990 and their strong participation in prior elections; and

Whereas it is in the interest of the United States to promote political and economic freedom in Africa and throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes and commends those Gabonese
3 who have demonstrated their love for free and fair
4 elections;

5 (2) commends the Gabonese Government for in-
6 viting the International Foundation for Election
7 Systems to perform a pre-election assessment study;

1 (3) calls on the Gabonese Government—

2 (A) to take measures to help ensure a
3 credible election and to ensure that the election
4 commission remains independent and impartial;
5 and

6 (B) to invite the International Foundation
7 for Election Systems, the National Democratic
8 Institute, the International Republic Institute,
9 and other appropriate international non-govern-
10 mental organizations to aid the organization of,
11 and supervise the December 1998 Presidential
12 election in Gabon, in an effort to ensure that
13 these elections in Gabon are free and fair;

14 (4) urges the Government of Gabon to take all
15 necessary and lawful steps toward conducting free
16 and fair elections;

17 (5) calls on the international community to join
18 the United States in offering their assistance toward
19 free and fair elections;

20 (6) urges the United States Government to pro-
21 vide support directly and through appropriate non-
22 governmental organizations to aid the organization
23 of free and fair elections in Gabon;

24 (7) calls on the United States Government to
25 work with the international community in urging the

1 Government of Gabon to create the conditions nec-
2 essary to guarantee free and fair elections; and

3 (8) urges the United States Government and
4 the international community to continue to encour-
5 age the Government of Gabon to ensure a lasting
6 and committed transition to democracy.

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