

## S. RES. 108

Whereas Somalia has been without a functioning central government since 1991, resulting in lawlessness and an increasingly desperate humanitarian situation;

Whereas according to a Somali human rights group, violence during the period from 2007 to 2009 has killed an estimated 16,000 people, wounded more than 28,000 people, and displaced more than 1,000,000 people;

Whereas these grim conditions and the absence of a functioning government have made Somalia an ideal base for piracy operations and a fertile ground for terrorist organizations, including the group al-Shabaab, whose leaders have ties to al-Qaeda;

Whereas acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia have been on the rise for more than a year, with the International Maritime Bureau reporting an estimated 111 attacks in 2008;

Whereas on Wednesday, April 8, 2009, Somali pirates used grappling hooks and weapons to board the Norfolk, Virginia-based container ship Maersk Alabama, which was captained by Richard Phillips, a resident of Underhill, Vermont, and crewed by 19 other citizens of the United States, and which was delivering food aid from the World Food Programme to hungry people in east Africa;

Whereas Captain Phillips, a native of Winchester, Massachusetts and a 1979 graduate of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, bravely led the Maersk Alabama crew in successfully retaking control of the ship by offering himself as a hostage in exchange for the release of the crew;

Whereas 4 pirates took Captain Phillips into an 18-foot lifeboat, held him captive at gunpoint, and repeatedly threatened to kill him;

Whereas the United States Central Command dispatched to the scene the destroyer U.S.S. Bainbridge, which was joined in subsequent days by the U.S.S. Halyburton and the U.S.S. Boxer, along with Navy SEAL teams, Marine Corps helicopters, and other joint assets of the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas hostage recovery experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation gave guidance to the crew of the U.S.S. Bainbridge, while the Department of State stayed in contact with Captain Phillips' family, including Phillips' wife Andrea and their 2 children, Daniel and Mariah, in Underhill, Vermont;

Whereas Maersk Limited, based in Norfolk, Virginia, worked diligently with the United States Armed Forces to try to obtain the release of Captain Phillips and the Maersk Alabama crew and to move the ship safely to port in Kenya, while sending personal representatives to Vermont to keep the Phillips family informed;

Whereas in the late evening of April 9, 2009, Captain Phillips made an escape attempt, jumping into the water of the Indian Ocean to swim for safety, only to be pursued by the pirates and quickly recaptured;

Whereas the President received regular briefings on the hostage crisis and provided the authority necessary for the United States Armed Forces to resolve it;

Whereas on April 12, 2009, Easter Sunday, Captain Phillips was rescued after the United States Armed Forces, which throughout the crisis spared no effort to defuse the situation and peacefully rescue Phillips, took the lives of 3 of the pirate captors when Phillips was seen to be in imminent danger; and

Whereas international commerce remains under threat while Somali pirates continue to hold for ransom more than 200 crew members of many nationalities: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) Captain Phillips deserves the respect and admiration of all people of the United States for his brave conduct under life-threatening circumstances;

(2) The Senate shares the sense of relief and gratitude felt by the family and shipmates of Captain Phillips;

(3) all members of the United States Armed Forces involved in the rescue operation, in particular members of the Navy and Navy SEAL teams who rescued Captain Phillips, the officials of other Federal Government departments and agencies who contributed, and the crew of the Maersk Alabama, are to be commended for their exceptional efforts and devotion to duty; and

(4) the President should work with the international community and the transitional government of Somalia to develop a comprehensive strategy to address both the burgeoning problem of piracy and its root causes.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 109—COMMENDING THE BRAVERY OF THE GIRLS WHO ATTEND THE MIRWAIS SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IN KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, and Mr. RISCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

## S. RES. 109

Whereas, on November 12, 2008, 15 girls who attend the Mirwais School for Girls in Kandahar, Afghanistan, were attacked by militants and sprayed with acid, causing them varying degrees of disfigurement;

Whereas the militants committed the egregious attack to intimidate the girls and their families and to discourage the girls from continuing to attend school;

Whereas, less than one week after the attacks, Headmaster Mahmood Qadari asked parents to return the girls to school;

Whereas, by January 14, 2009, nearly 1,300 girls, almost all the students, had returned to the 40-room Mirwais School for Girls;

Whereas the families of the girls from the Mirwais School for Girls defy threats of personal harm and staunchly assert the right to educate their daughters;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, educating girls and women reduces the incidence of domestic and community violence and raises the standard of living in a country;

Whereas, according to a study published by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, it is a "fact that child marriage takes place in a frequent and pervasive fashion" in Afghanistan;

Whereas, according to that study, of women surveyed for the study, 43.6 percent stated that they married to solve their economic problems, 7.1 percent referred to the resolution of conflicts as the reason for their early marriage, 37 percent said that "badal", or the exchange of girls between 2 families, was the reason for their marriage, and 12.3 percent cited other reasons for their marriage, such as local traditional practices and parental interference;

Whereas, according to 2007 information from the World Health Organization, the health of women and children in Afghanistan is among the worst in the world;

Whereas, according to estimates from the Department of State for 2008, the literacy rate for women in Afghanistan is 12 percent;

Whereas it is a continuing priority of the United States government to advance the rights of women in Afghanistan by facilitating women's participation in social, polit-

ical, and economic affairs and by ensuring women's safety and well-being;

Whereas the United States Government looks to the government of Afghanistan to proactively support the rights of women and girls, and recognizes that the recently-passed personal security law would severely diminish such rights;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has integrated women-focused activities into most of its programs by strategic design, with the goal of increasing women's political participation and access to education, health care, economic opportunities, and roles in civil society;

Whereas USAID has noted that, despite women's nearly non-existent access to health, education, and political participation in 2001, there has been a 25 percent decrease in maternal mortality since 2001, due in great part to women's significantly improved access to health and hospital services;

Whereas, since 2001, Afghanistan has experienced a surge in school attendance to more than 6,000,000 children enrolled, of which 35 percent are girls, and has greatly increased participation of women in civil society, with women representing 26 percent of the civil service and holding 27 percent of the seats in the national assembly and 29 percent of provincial council seats; and

Whereas, despite significant gains made through assistance programs in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, there remains a great deal more work to be done toward achieving reasonable development in still one of the poorest countries in the world, and such development can be achieved only by empowering the 50 percent of the population that is women: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the extraordinary bravery shown by the girls and families of the Mirwais School for Girls in Kandahar, Afghanistan, especially the girls injured in the November 2008 attack, in the decision to return to school in the face of threats of bodily injury, or worse; and

(2) continues to support efforts to decrease illiteracy and gender-based violence in Afghanistan.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 110—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA TAR HEELS BASKETBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2008-2009 NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mrs. HAGAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

## S. RES. 110

Whereas on April 6, 2009, the University of North Carolina defeated Michigan State University 89-72 to win the 2008-2009 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) men's basketball national championship;

Whereas the University of North Carolina was the consensus preseason number 1 basketball team in the Nation;

Whereas the University of North Carolina Tar Heels were saddled with a tremendous amount of pressure to get to the NCAA Final Four and win the national championship in 2009;

Whereas after the Tar Heels' 0-2 record to start the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) regular season, the team finished with a record of 13-3 and won 13 out of their last 14 games in conference;