

to live in an independent, democratic, and sovereign country;

Whereas since achieving their independence, the people of Croatia have dedicated themselves to building a functioning democratic society, based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, and a free market economy;

Whereas Croatia has made progress in judicial reform and has adopted a judicial reform strategy;

Whereas Croatia has demonstrated a desire to protect minority rights and promote a viable multiethnic society;

Whereas, in 2002, Croatia adopted the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, ensuring the representation of minorities in the Parliament of Croatia and the establishment of the councils of national minorities;

Whereas the Government of Croatia has concluded specific bilateral agreements on the protection of minority rights with Hungary, Italy, and Serbia and Montenegro and has concluded an agreement on cooperation with representatives of the Independent Democratic Serb Party in the Parliament of Croatia;

Whereas three prominent members of the Parliament of Croatia, Ratko Gajica, Milorad Pupovac, and Vojislav Stanimirovic, who represent the Serb minority, sent a letter to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Stephen Hadley, expressing their support for the Prime Minister of Croatia, Ivo Sanader, and for Croatia's path toward membership in the European Union and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ("NATO");

Whereas Croatia has shown dedication to advancing the return, reconstruction, and restitution of property in Croatia;

Whereas Croatia has proven to be a reliable partner of the United States in seeking the stabilization of the region;

Whereas Croatia participated in the Iraq International Conference held in Brussels on June 22, 2005, and offered to train and educate nationals of Iraq at universities in Croatia;

Whereas Croatia is taking part in the training of Iraqi security forces at the International Training Center in Jordan and has offered to train additional security personnel for Iraq in Croatia;

Whereas Croatia has been a partner in the war against terrorism, sent troops to Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in support of the war against terrorism in 2002, and has provided civilians to staff the Provincial Reconstruction Team under the leadership of NATO in Fayzabad;

Whereas, during July 2005, Croatia adopted a decision to triple its military presence in the International Security Assistance Force;

Whereas Croatia has endorsed and is participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative with like-minded nations across the world to prevent the flow of weapons of mass destruction, missile systems, and related material;

Whereas, on June 1, 2005, Croatia was the fourth nation to sign the Proliferation Security Initiative Shipboarding Agreement with the United States to prevent the maritime transfer of dangerous shipments of weapons or other illicit materials to keep such weapons and materials out of the hands of dangerous actors and terrorists;

Whereas, since Croatia has become an independent country, the United States has shown support for Croatia in many ways, including by providing Croatia with economic

and military assistance that has contributed significantly to the progress and continued success occurring in Croatia;

Whereas the United States has encouraged Croatia's transformation and the future membership of Croatia in NATO;

Whereas a whole and free Europe cannot be fully achieved without the integration into NATO of all countries that share the common values of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights;

Whereas the Membership Action Plan developed for NATO, which was launched in April 1999, is a program of assistance that provides both goals and a roadmap for countries aspiring to membership in NATO;

Whereas Croatia was invited into the Membership Action Plan in May 2002 and has made substantial progress toward the achievement of the reforms required for receiving an invitation to start accession talks with NATO;

Whereas the United States, Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia are signatories to the United States-Adriatic Charter for Partnership, which promotes Euro-Atlantic integration and commits the signatory nations to the values and principles of NATO and to membership in NATO at the earliest possible time;

Whereas Croatia supports regional cooperation as a means of bringing stability to Europe, particularly Southeast Europe, and has cooperated with the countries that neighbor Croatia to promote such stability, including providing technical and other assistance to countries that seek membership in the European Union;

Whereas, on October 3, 2005, the European Union decided to open accession negotiations with Croatia based on the assessment of the European Union's Council of Ministers that Croatia met the political and economic criteria for candidacy in the European Union, including that Croatia was fully cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia;

Whereas the cooperation between the Government of Croatia and the Tribunal improved significantly under Prime Minister Ivo Sanader;

Whereas, since November 2003, Croatia has handed over to the Tribunal eleven individuals indicted for war crimes;

Whereas the cooperation of the Government of Croatia with the Tribunal assisted in the arrest of Ante Gotovina on December 8, 2005, in Spain and his transfer to the Tribunal on December 10, 2005;

Whereas the success of the Government of Croatia in bringing war criminals to justice demonstrates the commitment of the Government to move Croatia toward a brighter future of peace, stability, and prosperity for its people; and

Whereas Croatia shares the common interests and values of the free and democratic world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) since the Republic of Croatia became an independent country, the Government and people of Croatia have made significant progress in strengthening democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and the rule of law in Croatia;

(2) Croatia's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ("NATO") would contribute to stability in Southeast Europe;

(3) it is the sense of the Senate that—

(A) the Government and people of Croatia should be commended for their progress on protecting minority rights in Croatia, progress toward achieving the political, economic, military, and other requirements of

NATO's Membership Action Plan, contribution to the International Security Assistance Force and the war against terrorism, and for their constructive participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative and in the United States-Adriatic Charter;

(B) the Government of Croatia should be commended for its cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia which led to the apprehension and transfer of several individuals indicted for war crimes, including Ante Gotovina, to the Tribunal;

(C) the Government of Croatia should continue its cooperation with the Tribunal;

(D) the Government of Croatia should continue and strengthen its role as a partner on nonproliferation and its support in the war against terrorism and in Iraq;

(E) the Government of Croatia should continue its efforts to implement defense reforms; and

(F) the Government of the United States should continue and increase its defense and security cooperation with the Government of Croatia, including through education, training, and technical cooperation, to assist Croatia in the reform process and in fulfilling its requirements for membership in NATO; and

(4) upon complete satisfaction of the criteria for NATO membership, in accordance with NATO's guidelines, Croatia should be invited to be a full member of NATO at the earliest possible date.

SENATE RESOLUTION 343—EX-
PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE
SENATE THAT THE WEEK OF DE-
CEMBER 19, 2005 SHOULD BE DES-
IGNATED "THANK OUR DEFEND-
ERS WEEK"

Mr. SESSIONS submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 343

Whereas, ever since our Nation was founded, the members of our military, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guard personnel, active duty, Guard, and reserve, have played a critical role protecting America's vital interests and spreading peace throughout the world;

Whereas, more than 193,000 troops in the Persian Gulf region are courageously fighting insurgents and helping to establish democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas, 19,000 servicemen and service-women are stationed in Afghanistan, fighting Al-Qaeda and providing security for the people of that fledgling nation;

Whereas, over 30,000 troops are protecting American interests and maintaining peace on the Korean peninsula;

Whereas, in total, nearly 300,000 brave men and women are actively serving on the soil of 120 foreign countries and on the High Seas, fighting terrorists and making sacrifices for American citizens and families; and

Whereas, thanks to their tireless efforts, a brutal dictatorship in Iraq and an oppressive regime in Afghanistan have given way to emerging democratic societies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That with gratitude it is the sense of the Senate that the week of December 19, 2005 should be designated "Thank Our Defenders Week."

SENATE RESOLUTION 344—EX-PRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA'S SOUTH OSSETIAN PEACE PLAN AND THE SUCCESSFUL AND PEACEFUL REINTEGRATION OF THE REGION INTO GEORGIA

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. BROWNBACK, and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 344

Whereas during December 1991, Georgia was internationally recognized as an independent and sovereign country following the formal dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

Whereas the United States supports the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and ongoing democratic reform process in Georgia;

Whereas the United States reaffirms its support for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Adjara and the restoration of democracy and political stability in that region of Georgia;

Whereas as a result of a conflict from 1991 to 1992, a separatist regime has enforced its rule in the Georgia territory of South Ossetia, impoverishing the people living in South Ossetia, militarizing the area, allowing organized crime to flourish, and posing a threat to the peace and security in the region;

Whereas the Government of Georgia has announced a peace plan to reach a full political settlement to the South Ossetian conflict;

Whereas the Government of Georgia has acknowledged that mistakes were made in its past efforts in dealing with the region of South Ossetia;

Whereas at the 59th meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili outlined specific components of a peace initiative that includes demilitarization, confidence building measures, and economic, social, cultural, and political steps to protect the South Ossetian people and their rights while reintegrating the region, with significant autonomy, into Georgia;

Whereas President Saakashvili reaffirmed the main principles of the peace agreement at the Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe in January, 2005, held in Strasbourg, France;

Whereas a formal comprehensive peace proposal based on the Strasbourg principles was formally proposed on October 27, 2005, at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; and

Whereas on December 6, 2005, at their 13th Ministerial Council Meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe endorsed the Government of Georgia's peace plan, stating, "We welcome the steps taken by the Georgian side to address the peaceful resolution of the conflict and believe that the recent proposals, in particular the Peace Plan built upon the initiatives of the President of Georgia presented at the 59th United Nations General Assembly and supported by the sides, will serve as a basis for the peaceful settlement of the conflict": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the Government of Georgia for its vision and determination in its efforts to resolve peacefully the conflict in South Ossetia;

(2) supports the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the democratic Government of Georgia;

(3) urges all Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe participating States to respect fully the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of Georgia, refraining from any acts constituting a threat of or use of force, direct or indirect, and abiding by the principle of the inviolability of frontiers;

(4) expresses its support for the Government of Georgia's plan to control peacefully and reestablish authority in the region of South Ossetia, viewing it as an opportunity to restore the territorial integrity of the country and to protect the individual rights and democratic liberties of those living in South Ossetia;

(5) urges the United States to increase its efforts in support of the peaceful reincorporation of South Ossetia to Georgia, including efforts to support the greater involvement of the international community, including the Russian Federation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and international organizations in the peaceful settlement of the South Ossetian conflict; and

(6) supports the ongoing democratic transformation in Georgia and will continue to monitor closely the peace process in South Ossetia, including the implementation by all sides of their obligations under the peace plan if it is accepted.

SENATE RESOLUTION 345—RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FENTON ART GLASS, A BELOVED INSTITUTION IN WEST VIRGINIA, THAT CONTINUES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE STATE THROUGH ITS PRODUCTION OF WORLD RENOWNED, HAND-BLOWN GLASS

Mr. BYRD (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 345

Whereas Fenton Art Glass rose from its humble beginnings as a glass decorating company in 1905, and came to settle in Williamstown, West Virginia, by opening a factory to create their own glass when they were unable to obtain the glass that they needed;

Whereas, with the vision of brothers Frank and John Fenton, Fenton Art Glass began to create innovative new colors and established the company in the forefront of the hand-blown glass industry;

Whereas in 1907, Fenton introduced its highly colorful Iridescent, or "Carnival" Glass, which became instantly successful throughout the country and is now highly prized by collectors around the world;

Whereas during the 1930s and 1940s, Fenton addressed the shortages felt by families in the United States by producing mixing bowls and tableware that were often unavailable during the World War II and Depression shortages;

Whereas Fenton Art Glass is not only a family tradition, with the third generation of the Fenton family now carrying on the legacy, but also a West Virginia institution, employing generations of workers; and

Whereas Fenton Glass, known for its beauty and precision in craftsmanship, is a symbol of the dedication and care of the Fenton family, as well as the pride in craftsmanship so characteristic of the West Virginia people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates Fenton Art Glass on its centennial mile-

stone, for creating beautiful, hand-blown glass in West Virginia for 100 years, a for 100 years.

SENATE RESOLUTION 346—COMMENDING THE APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2005 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I-AA FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mrs. DOLE) submitted the following resolution; which was submitted and read:

S. RES. 346

Whereas on December 16, 2005, the Appalachian State Mountaineers defeated the Northern Iowa Panthers in the Championship game of the National Collegiate Athletic Association ("NCAA") Division I-AA Football Tournament in Chattanooga, Tennessee;

Whereas the Mountaineers are the first team from Appalachian State to win a NCAA Championship in school history;

Whereas Appalachian State is the first university in the State of North Carolina to win a NCAA football championship;

Whereas head coach Jerry Moore, the all-time winningest coach in Southern Conference history, won his first NCAA title in his seventeenth year as head coach of the Mountaineers, improving to 140-67 his record as head coach at Appalachian State;

Whereas defensive ends Marques Murrell and Jason Hunter, as well as safety Corey Lynch, were named to the I-AA All America team;

Whereas junior defensive end Marques Murrell, who finished the game with 9 tackles and forced a fumble with 9 minutes, 14 seconds remaining in the game, and senior Jason Hunter, who finished the game with ten tackles, returned it for the winning touchdown;

Whereas injured senior quarterback and Southern Conference Offensive Player of the Year Richie Williams courageously led the Mountaineers in the second half while playing with an injured ankle tendon;

Whereas the Mountaineer defense held the Panthers scoreless in the second half;

Whereas backup quarterback Trey Elder led Appalachian State to a 29-23 victory over Furman University to earn a spot in the final contest;

Whereas the Mountaineers defeated Lehigh University and Southern Illinois to advance to the I-AA "Final Four";

Whereas the Mountaineer team members are excellent representatives of a fine university that is a leader in higher education, producing many fine student-athletes and other leaders;

Whereas each player, coach, trainer, manager, and staff member dedicated this season and their efforts to ensure the Appalachian State University Mountaineers reached the summit of college football;

Whereas the Mountaineers showed tremendous dedication to each other, appreciation to their fans, sportsmanship to their opponents, and respect for the game of football throughout the 2005 season; and

Whereas residents of the Old North State and Appalachian fans worldwide are to be commended for their long-standing support, perseverance, and pride in the team: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the champion Appalachian State University Mountaineers for their historic win in the 2005 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I-AA Football Championship;