

Although these members are from a U.S. territory, they are our fellow citizens and commit their lives to the diplomatic causes. They join for the love of their country and risk their safety in dangerous posts.

The bill before us today would eliminate this unequal and unfair treatment between Foreign Service members who reside in the territories and those that reside in the states. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 3658.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3658.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL STRATEGY IN CHAD AND DARFUR

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1011) calling on the United States Government and the international community to promptly develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive regional strategy to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace and good governance in Chad, as well as in the wider region that includes the northern region of the Central African Republic and the Darfur region of Sudan, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1011

Whereas since independence in 1960, Chad's political life has been afflicted by a series of internal conflicts and civil wars as well as conflicts with its neighbors;

Whereas Chad has held several legislative and presidential multiparty elections since 1996, although the Department of State reported that the elections were "orderly, but seriously flawed";

Whereas human rights groups and the most recent Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices stated that "the [Chadian] government's poor human rights record deteriorated further";

Whereas the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, continues to affect neighboring countries, especially Chad;

Whereas the United Nations estimates there are more than 240,000 refugees from Darfur and 52,000 refugees from the Central

African Republic in Chad, and more than 180,000 Chadians have been displaced from their homes;

Whereas more than 12,000 new refugees from Darfur arrived in Chad in February 2008 due to increasing attacks against civilians by Sudanese Government forces, even as 30,000 Chadians were forced to flee the N'Djamena area to seek refuge in Cameroon;

Whereas the Government of Chad has provided important support to the many refugees from Darfur and the Central African Republic in Chad, despite serious economic and political difficulties;

Whereas the United States considers the Government of Chad an important ally in the war against terrorism;

Whereas a December 2007 report by the United Nations Secretary General stated that "the security situation in eastern Chad has remained volatile and unpredictable [and] the renewed violence has put the civilian population living in the area at increased risk and will further impede the work of the humanitarian community";

Whereas an armed rebellion in Chad, supported by the Government of Sudan, has led to a serious humanitarian crisis and political instability in Chad;

Whereas on September 25, 2007, the United Nations Security Council passed Security Council Resolution 1778, authorizing a multidimensional presence intended to help create the security conditions conducive to a voluntary, secure, and sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees by contributing to their protection, both by facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance in eastern Chad and the northern region of the Central African Republic and by creating favorable conditions for the reconstruction and economic and social development of those areas;

Whereas on October 15 and 16, 2007, the Council of the European Union agreed to deploy the military component of the multidimensional presence in the Central African Republic and Chad for a period of 1 year from the date that its initial operational capability is declared;

Whereas in late 2007, the Government of Sudan reportedly gathered several Chadian armed groups in Khartoum in order to bring the armed factions under one coalition for the February 2008 offensive;

Whereas in early February 2008, Chadian rebels armed and supported by the Sudanese Government's armed forces launched a major offensive in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, to overthrow the government of President Idriss Deby Itno;

Whereas in late February, the United Nations reported that the European Union Force began deployment to Chad and that an estimated 400 personnel have been deployed as of late February 2008;

Whereas the United States, the European Union, and the African Union condemn the fighting in Chad and the foreign support for the rebellion; and

Whereas the Department of State issued a press release condemning "the attempt by armed rebels entering from outside the country to seize power extra-constitutionally in Chad"; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses concern about the safety and well-being of innocent civilians in Chad, Chadian refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and refugees from Darfur and the Central African Republic that have taken refuge in Chad;

(2) strongly condemns Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and the National Congress Party for their support of the armed rebellion and aggressive behavior in Chad and throughout the region;

(3) calls on parties to seek a negotiated settlement;

(4) urges the Government of Chad to—

(A) engage in an inclusive national dialogue with all stakeholders of the current conflict to reach a comprehensive agreement that would address the root causes of the Chadian crisis and strengthen democratic institutions;

(B) protect its civilians from violence and respect and enforce the rule of law in accordance with international norms and standards; and

(C) honor its May 9, 2007, agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund, ensuring its commitment to end all recruitment of persons under the age of 18 and demobilize all children under the age of 18 from its security forces;

(5) urges the Government of the Central African Republic to—

(A) fulfill its obligation under international law to protect civilians; and

(B) engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue with opposition and armed groups;

(6) calls on armed opposition groups to—

(A) renounce violence and respect the rule of law;

(B) engage in political dialogue to resolve the current crisis in their respective countries; and

(C) immediately end cooperation with the Government of Sudan and others that encourage and support armed rebellion;

(7) urges the United Nations Security Council to remain focused on the crises in Chad and the Central African Republic, and to ensure the effective and impartial protection of civilians, including internally displaced persons and refugees, particularly local populations, by preempting, preventing, and deterring attacks on civilians; and

(8) calls on the President to—

(A) continue United States humanitarian assistance to the refugees and internally displaced persons in Chad and the Central African Republic;

(B) provide support to strengthen democratic institutions and respect for human rights and rule of law; and

(C) seek punitive measures against the Government of Sudan by the United Nations Security Council for its aggression and destructive activities in Chad and the region.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I would first like to thank Representative WOLF and Chairman PAYNE for recognizing the importance of developing and implementing a strategy to resolve the crisis in Chad.

Chad has been politically unstable for over 40 years, suffering from civil

wars as well as ethnic and religious tensions. Human rights conditions remain notably poor, and the government lacks transparency and accountability.

In the past 3 years, as fighting between the government and rebels increased, 180,000 Chadians have been displaced, adding to the inflow of 290,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and Sudan's Darfur region. Although the government developed a plan for reform, and signed a peace agreement with rebel groups in 2007, the conflict has not ceased.

In February 2008, rebel forces, supported by the neighboring Sudanese government, sought to remove President Idriss Déby from power, killing hundreds of civilians in the process.

The 16 U.N. refugee camps suffer from water and firewood shortages, as well as periodic attacks on aid workers. New controls imposed by the Chadian government on humanitarian organizations hinder the movement of assistance and personnel.

In September 2007 the U.N. Security Council, followed by the Council of the European Union, approved the presence of a multinational security force to facilitate assistance and create favorable conditions for reconstruction and development.

The United States has provided over \$338 million in humanitarian assistance since 2004 and also provides security assistance to the Chadian Army through the International Military Education and Training funds.

It is imperative that the U.S. work harder to develop and implement a sound strategy to protect and assist Chadians and other refugees and, together with the international community, condemn Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and the National Congress for their support of the armed rebellion. Further destabilization in Chad will lead to wider regional instability and hinder the United States' counterterrorism capabilities in a very sensitive region.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in support of H. Res. 1011, which calls on the United States and the international community to develop, fund, and implement a regional strategy which addresses the increasing intertwined security and humanitarian crisis in Chad, the Darfur region of the Sudan, and the northern region of the Central African Republic.

Borders in this region of the world are more of a concept than a reality. Ethnic groups straddle lines on a map, and conflict with each other or within one country inevitably spills over into the other countries. While this body has been seized by the horrific situation in Darfur, we have devoted far less attention to the broader regional crisis, particularly as it relates to Chad.

Chad has been plagued by intermittent conflict, both internally and with its neighbors since it gained independence in 1960. The current President of Chad, Idriss Déby, took power after launching a coup across the border in neighboring Darfur, Sudan, with the support of Libya and his fellow ethnic Zaghawas who straddle the border between Chad and Sudan. He has since faced at least five coup attempts, including one just this past February.

The Sudanese government's genocidal campaign in Darfur, which forced hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees across the border, has made the tensions within Chad, particularly among Déby's fellow Zaghawas, much worse. These tensions became further inflamed as the relationship between Chad and the Sudan deteriorated, with each government accusing the other of funding and supporting rebel movements within their respective borders, as well as in neighboring Central African Republic.

The spillover of conflict from Darfur into Chad and the Central African Republic, from Chad into Darfur, and from Central African Republic into Chad, has led to the displacement of more than 3.1 million people.

In Darfur, an upsurge in fighting among rebel groups, government forces, militias and armed ethnic groups has led to the displacement of more than 80,000 people since this past January.

In February of this year, 12,000 new refugees from Darfur arrived in Chad, bringing the total number of Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad to 250,000. Chad also is hosting an additional 152,000 refugees from Central African Republic.

At the same time, more than 180,000 people from Chad have been displaced by internal conflict, and in February, 30,000 people from Chad were forced to seek refuge in neighboring Cameroon after rebels, backed by the Sudanese government, attacked the capital.

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As the wars in Chad, Sudan and Central African Republic become increasingly intertwined, and as the massive displacements take on a regional dimension, the United States and the international community must resist the urge to deal with each crisis in a vacuum. This resolution recognizes that reality and calls for a comprehensive strategy to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace and good governance throughout the region with all nations. This is not only a moral imperative, but also a significant strategy requirement.

I thank the sponsor of this resolution, Mr. WOLF, for introducing this important resolution, and I urge Members to support it.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1011, a resolution I sponsored expressing the concern of the House regarding the crisis in Chad.

I want to acknowledge the support of my colleague and Africa subcommittee Chairman DONALD PAYNE in working together to introduce this resolution, and also thank Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and ranking member Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN as well as Africa subcommittee ranking member Congressman CHRIS SMITH for their support in this effort.

Since its independence in 1960, Chad has struggled through civil war and political unrest. Recent fighting in Chad has demonstrated beyond doubt the fragile conditions in the region and the continuing destructive behavior of the Government of Sudan in Chad and Darfur. While Chadian rebel groups and their Sudanese allies who laid siege to the capital in early February have since fled toward the east and Darfur, the fighting claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians and forced tens of thousands more out of the capital city and into neighboring Cameroon.

This resolution calls on the United States government and the international community to promptly develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive regional strategy to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace and good governance in Chad.

It also calls for a strategy for the wider region that includes northern Central African Republic and the Darfur region of Sudan, as recent developments in Chad illustrate the terrible threat facing civilians and the risk of another major humanitarian disaster in that region.

The resolution acknowledges the concern about the safety and well being of innocent civilians in Chad, Chadian refugees and internally displaced persons, and refugees from Darfur and the Central African Republic that have taken refuge in Chad and strongly condemns Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and the National Congress Party for their support of the armed rebellion and aggressive behavior in Chad and throughout the region.

It also urges the Government of Chad to engage in an inclusive national dialogue with all stakeholders of the current conflict to reach a comprehensive agreement that would address the root causes of the Chadian crisis and strengthen democratic institutions. The resolution also urges the government to work to protect its civilians from violence and to honor its May 9, 2007, agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund, ensuring its commitment to end all recruitment of persons under the age of 18 and demobilize all children under the age of 18 from its security forces.

The resolution further urges the Government of the Central African Republic to fulfill its obligation under international law to protect civilians and engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue with opposition and armed groups.

The resolution also calls on armed opposition groups to renounce violence and respect the rule of law, engage in political dialogue to resolve the current crisis in their respective countries, and immediately end cooperation with the Government of Sudan and others that encourage and support armed rebellion.

Recognizing the importance of the United Nations Security Council in ending this crisis, the resolution urges the Security Council to remain focused on the crises in Chad and the

Central African Republic, and to ensure the effective and impartial protection of civilians, including internally displaced persons and refugees, particularly local populations, by preempting, preventing, and deterring attacks on civilians.

The United States also has an important role to play in resolving the situation in Chad, and the resolution calls on the president to continue United States humanitarian assistance to the refugees and internally displaced persons in Chad and the Central African Republic, provide support to strengthen democratic institutions and respect for human rights and rule of law, and seek punitive measures against the Government of Sudan by the United Nations Security Council for its aggression and destructive activities in Chad and the region.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for this House to express its concern about the crisis in Chad and how the political instability and humanitarian crisis there is impacting the entire region. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H. Res. 1011, calling on the United States Government and the international community to promptly develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive regional strategy to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace and good governance in Chad, as well as in the wider region that includes the northern region of the Central African Republic and the Darfur region of Sudan, introduced by my distinguished colleague from Virginia, Representative WOLF. This timely and important legislation, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor, not only calls on the governments of Chad and the Central African Republic to fulfill their obligations under international law to protect civilians, but also calls upon the President of the United States to continue humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons in the region.

While regional conflicts have proven substantive and continuous, the internal politics of Chad are by no means a beacon of stability and democracy. Since reaching independence in 1960, Chad has been consistently riddled with internal conflicts and civil wars. Unfortunately, despite American assistance to the government, the State Department reported that the last elections were, "orderly, but seriously flawed," as well as stating in the most recent Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices that, "the [Chadian] government's poor human rights record deteriorated further." The situation within Chad is even more precarious when one considers that the United Nations estimates that Chad is home to some 240,000 refugees from Darfur, 52,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, and more than 180,000 internally displaced people. In February 2008 alone, over 12,000 new refugees from Darfur entered the country.

Mr. Speaker, in the past three years, as fighting between the government and rebels increased, 180,000 Chadians have been displaced, adding to the inflow of 290,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan's Darfur region. Although the government developed a plan for reform, and signed a peace agreement with rebel groups

in 2007, the conflict has not ceased. In February 2008, rebel forces, supported by the neighboring Sudanese government, sought to remove President Idriss Déby from power, killing hundreds of civilians in the process. Despite the United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1778, authorizing a multidimensional presence intended to help create the security conditions necessary for reconstruction and social and economic development, this has not been the case. While the United States has provided over \$338 million in humanitarian assistance since 2004 and also provides security assistance to the Chadian army through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds, there is still much more that needs to be done.

This resolution is both timely and imperative because it calls on the United States to work harder to develop and implement a sound strategy to protect and assist Chadians and other refugees, and, together with the international community, condemn Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and the National Congress for their support of the armed rebellion. A further destabilization in Chad will lead to wider regional instability and hinder the United States' counter-terrorism capabilities in a very sensitive region.

By calling on the President of the United States to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in the Chad and the Central African Republic and provide support to strengthen the rule of law, democratic institutions, and respect for human rights, this legislation works to not only alleviate suffering in the short term, but also prevent them from occurring in the long term. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H. Res. 1011, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1166) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding provocative and dangerous statements and actions taken by the Government of the Russian Federation that undermine the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1166

Whereas, since 1993, the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia has been reaffirmed by the international community, international law, and 32 United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas the Government of the Republic of Georgia has pursued in good faith a peaceful resolution of territorial conflicts in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia since the end of hostilities in 1993;

Whereas, on March 28, 2008, and on April 12, 2008, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili introduced new and far-reaching peace proposals to resolve the territorial conflict in Abkhazia, including international guarantees of Abkhaz autonomy, broad political representation for the Abkhaz, the right to veto legislation related to the constitutional status of Abkhazia as well as its language and culture, the establishment of a joint Free Economic Zone in the Gali region, and an offer for more active involvement by the international community and Russian Federation to help forge a peaceful resolution to the conflict;

Whereas, for several years, the Government of the Russian Federation has carried out policies that seek to undermine the sovereignty of the Republic of Georgia in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by awarding individuals in these regions with Russian citizenship, Russian passports, economic subsidies, and the right to vote in Russian elections;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has also detailed Russian officials to take up positions in the separatist governments, provided military equipment and support to separatists in the regions, and encouraged Russian volunteers to serve in militias in Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

Whereas the announcement from the Government of the Russian Federation on April 16, 2008, that it will establish "official ties" with the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, recognize their official documents and legal entities, and further involve itself in aspects of their governments appears to be a thinly veiled attempt at annexation;

Whereas, on April 20, 2008, tensions between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia further escalated when an unarmed and unmanned Georgian reconnaissance aircraft was shot down over Georgian territory, reportedly by a Russian MIG-29 fighter jet;

Whereas Russian officials have denied any involvement in the downing of the reconnaissance plane, claiming that Abkhazian rebels were responsible for the incident, although neither Georgia nor Abkhazian defense forces have MIG-29 fighter jets;

Whereas the statements and counter-productive actions of the Government of the Russian Federation in these regions has undermined the peace and security in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Republic of Georgia, and the Caucasus region as a whole;

Whereas the consistent effort to undermine the sovereignty of a neighbor is incompatible with the role of the Russian Federation as one of the world's leading powers and with its commitments to international peacekeeping made to the United Nations Security Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and

Whereas, on April 23, 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that "the United States is firmly committed to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia, that we support Georgia's efforts to make certain that the people of Abkhazia