

I look forward to the next time I take the ferry boat across Lake Champlain and Daniel is piloting it. I think one of the happiest moments was with several friends at Easter Mass on Easter Sunday. I talked with the White House earlier that morning, and I knew that things may come to a conclusion. But I turned my cell phone off while I was at Mass. I came out and there was a message from the White House: "He is safe." At the top, "He is safe." Then they filled me in on what happened.

I was telling my friends, my wife, Marcelle, who was with me. We were standing there in the parking lot cheering, laughing, tears. People were kind of looking at us wondering just what was going on. I called Mrs. Phillips, and she had the same reaction. Later the President called her, as he called her husband. The reunions last week with the crew arriving at Andrews Air Force Base, Captain Phillips stepping off the plane at the Burlington, VT, airport were moments of joy and relief.

The country is so proud of these Americans who certainly did not want to be at the center of an international crisis. But when they were, they rose to the occasion with the strength and bravery that represent the best of our country.

With this resolution, we commend Captain Phillips and his family, the crew of the Maersk Alabama, the U.S. Armed Forces, and the Navy SEALs for their heroism. This resolution has one message above all others: Welcome home.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words on this resolution commending Captain Richard Phillips, the crew of the Maersk Alabama, and the U.S. Navy.

The resolution recognizes the growing problem of piracy in international waters off the coast of Somalia, a country that has been without a functioning central government since 1991.

The resulting lawlessness and the desperate humanitarian situation have turned the area into a base for pirate operations.

Earlier this month, Somali pirates used grappling hooks and weapons to board the cargo ship captained by Richard Phillips, who lives with his family in Underhill, VT. He led a crew of 19 on the vessel that was delivering food aid to starving people in eastern Africa.

Captain Phillips bravely led the crew in retaking control of the ship by offering himself as a hostage in exchange for the release of his crew.

Four pirates then took Captain Phillips into an 18-foot lifeboat, held him captive at gunpoint, and repeatedly threatened to kill him.

On Easter Sunday, Captain Phillips was rescued by Navy SEALs who determined that Captain Phillips was in imminent danger and took the lives of three of his pirate captors.

The people of Vermont are proud of the extraordinary courage of Captain

Phillips, the dignity of his family under great stress and the outstanding performance of the U.S. Navy and other governmental personnel in rescuing Richard and dispatching those who apprehended him.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Captain Phillips of Underhill, VT, held hostage by Somalians, where his own courage allowed the release of his crew, and the courage of the U.S. Navy and the courage of our military and the courage of our leadership, at the White House, the Department of Defense, and elsewhere brought about his release.

The Phillips family is a wonderful family. They live in a small and beautiful town in Vermont. There are few things that unite everybody. I can say as a lifelong Vermonter, I know my State is united in pride for Captain Phillips. All of us felt our prayers were answered on Easter Sunday when we received word that he was safe and was going back home. I know how much it meant to me to pick up the phone and call Mrs. Phillips, and the day before he arrived back home, to call her up and wish her a happy birthday and say: The best birthday present this Nation can give you is tomorrow afternoon at the Burlington Airport when your husband will arrive.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 108) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

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 Investigations 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.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA TAR HEELS

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 110, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 110) congratulating the University of North Carolina Tar Heels basketball team for winning the 2008-2009 NCAA men's basketball national championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 110) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

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;

Whereas the Tar Heels were the 2008-2009 ACC regular season conference champions;

Whereas the University of North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough became the ACC's all-time leading scorer;

Whereas the University of North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough and Ty Lawson were selected to the 2008-2009 All-Atlantic Coast Conference (All-ACC) first team;

Whereas Tyler Hansbrough became the first player in league history to be unanimously selected 4 times to the All-ACC first team;

Whereas the University of North Carolina's Danny Green was selected to the 2008-2009 All-ACC third team and the All-ACC defensive team;

Whereas the University of North Carolina's Ed Davis was selected to the All-ACC rookie team;

Whereas entering into the 2008-2009 NCAA College Basketball Championship, President Barack Obama picked the Tar Heels to win the championship title;

Whereas the University of North Carolina beat each of Radford University, Louisiana State University, Gonzaga University, and the University of Oklahoma by 12 points or more to win the South Division and reach the Final Four for the second straight year;

Whereas Ty Lawson was named the South Division most valuable player;

Whereas with their victory over the University of Oklahoma, the Tar Heels became the first team in NCAA Tournament history to reach 100 tournament wins;

Whereas several media outlets, including ESPN and CBS, reported that more than 60,000 fans in attendance at the final tournament game would be cheering for Michigan State University;

Whereas the 55 points the University of North Carolina scored in the first half of the championship game broke the all-time first half scoring record for any team in the history of the NCAA tournament;

Whereas the University of North Carolina's Wayne Ellington and Deon Thompson played exceptionally well in the first half of the championship game to push the lead to 21 points;

Whereas the University of North Carolina withstood Michigan State University's late surge and pushed the lead back to 19 points with less than 3 minutes remaining in the game;

Whereas the University of North Carolina's Wayne Ellington was named the Final Four most valuable player;

Whereas Ty Lawson's 8 steals set the record for the most steals in a NCAA championship game;

Whereas the 2008-2009 championship was the University of North Carolina's fifth national championship in school history;

Whereas the 2008-2009 championship was Coach Roy Williams' second national championship since taking over as head coach of the University of North Carolina men's basketball team; and

Whereas with the victory over Michigan State University, the University of North Carolina tied the University of Kentucky for the all-time winningest program in NCAA Division 1 men's basketball history: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of North Carolina for winning the 2008-2009 National Collegiate Athletic Association men's basketball national championship;

(2) recognizes the achievement of the players, coaches, students, and staff of the University of North Carolina whose perseverance and dedication to excellence helped propel the men's basketball team to win the championship; and

(3) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the chancellor of the University of North Carolina, H. Holden Thorp;

(B) the athletic director of the University of North Carolina, Dick Baddour; and

(C) the head coach of the University of North Carolina men's basketball team, Roy Williams.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF WORLD MALARIA DAY

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 18, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 18) supporting the goals and ideals of World Malaria Day, and reaffirming United States leadership and support for efforts to combat malaria.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, this Saturday, I will join individuals and organizations around the world in marking World Malaria Day. This day is an opportunity to celebrate the progress that has been made by the

international community in raising awareness of an invisible killer and the need to significantly reduce malaria deaths. Over the last decade, there has been a remarkable scaling up of efforts to prevent and treat this disease. In some places, such as the island of Zanzibar or the country of Rwanda, malaria prevalence has dropped significantly in just a few years. These success stories are a testament to the kind of positive difference we can make with robust and targeted health assistance.

I am especially proud of the leadership of the United States in this regard, particularly through the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). Since its launch in 2005, PMI has purchased almost 13 million artemisinin-based combination therapies, protected over 17 million people through spraying campaigns, and distributed over 6 million insecticide-treated bed nets. In addition, the United States has worked multilaterally with international partners to fight this disease, through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund has provided roughly 74 million malaria patients with artemisinin-based combination therapies and distributed almost 70 million bed nets.

In addition to commemorating how far we have come, World Malaria Day is also an opportunity to recognize how far we still need to go. This disease is completely preventable and treatable, and yet more than 40 percent of the world's population is still at risk of contracting malaria and nearly 1 million people, the majority of them children, die from malaria each year. According to the World Health Organization, a child still dies every 30 seconds from malaria. Nearly 90 percent of those deaths occur in Africa. Moreover, malaria often coexists with HIV and neglected tropical diseases, and it causes great risks to efforts to promote child and maternal health.

In light of those realities, we must recommit to sustained international, national, and local leadership to end malaria deaths. I am pleased that Congress last year committed over the next 5 years to combat malaria in the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde U.S. Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria Act. We must now deliver on that commitment, including maintaining our support for multilateral efforts of the Global Fund. At the same time, we cannot afford to address malaria in isolation; our efforts must be part of a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable approach to global health. In particular, I believe we need to invest more in strengthening local health systems that can deliver effective, safe, high-quality interventions when and where they are needed and ensure access to reliable health information and effective disease surveillance.

I commend the thousands of Americans and the many organizations that have taken up this cause and continue to work to fight malaria and save lives.