

in Iran has reported that intelligence officials in Iran are known to threaten Christian converts with arrest and apostasy charges if they do not return to Islam;

Whereas the Department of State's most recent report on International Religious Freedom, released on September 13, 2011, states that Iran's "laws and policies severely restrict freedom of religion," and notes "government imprisonment, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination based on religious beliefs" including "death sentences for apostasy or evangelism";

Whereas, in October 2009, Youcef Nadarkhani, an Iranian Christian, protested an Iranian law that would impose Islam on his Christian children;

Whereas, in September 2010, a court in Iran accused Youcef Nadarkhani of abandoning the Islamic faith of his ancestors and condemned him to death for apostasy;

Whereas the court sentenced Youcef Nadarkhani to death by hanging;

Whereas, on December 5, 2010, Youcef Nadarkhani appealed his conviction and sentence to the Supreme Revolutionary Court in Qom, Iran, and the court held that if it could be proven that he was a practicing Muslim in adulthood, his death sentence should be carried out unless he recants his Christian faith and adopts Islam;

Whereas, from September 25 to September 28, 2011, a court in Iran held hearings to determine if Youcef Nadarkhani was a practicing Muslim in adulthood and held that he had abandoned the faith of his ancestors and must be sentenced to death if he does not recant his faith;

Whereas, on numerous occasions, the judiciary of Iran offered to commute Youcef Nadarkhani's sentence if he would recant his faith;

Whereas numerous Government of Iran officials have attempted to coerce Youcef Nadarkhani to recant his Christian faith and accept Islam in exchange for his freedom;

Whereas Youcef Nadarkhani continues to refuse to recant his faith;

Whereas the Government of Iran continues to indefinitely imprison Youcef Nadarkhani for choosing to practice Christianity; and

Whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran has reported that, at the time of his report, on October 19, 2011, the Government of Iran had secretly executed 146 people during that calendar year, and in 2010, the Government of Iran secretly executed more than 300 people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for its ongoing and systemic violations of the human rights of the people of Iran, including the state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities in Iran, and its continued failure to uphold its international obligations, including with respect to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(2) calls for the Government of Iran to exonerate and immediately and unconditionally release Youcef Nadarkhani and all other individuals held or charged on account of their religious or political beliefs;

(3) calls on the President to designate additional Iranian officials, as appropriate, for human rights abuses pursuant to section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8514); and

(4) reaffirms that freedom of religious belief and practice is a universal human right and a fundamental individual freedom that every government must protect and must

never abridge.

SENATE RESOLUTION 386—CALLING FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN IRAN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COONS, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. COATS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COBURN, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HELLER, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KYL, Mr. LEE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. VITTER, Mr. BURR, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. KOHL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. CONRAD, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. ENZI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 386

Whereas democracy, human rights, and civil liberties are universal values and fundamental principles of United States foreign policy;

Whereas an essential element of democratic self-government is for leaders to be chosen and regularly held accountable through elections that are organized and conducted in a manner that is free, fair, inclusive, and consistent with international standards;

Whereas governments whose power does not derive from free and fair elections lack democratic legitimacy;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted December 16, 1966 (ICCPR), which states that every citizen has the right to vote "at genuine periodic elections" that reflect "the free expression of the will of the electors";

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regularly violates its obligations under the ICCPR, holding elections that are neither free nor fair nor consistent with international standards;

Whereas elections in Iran are marred by the disqualification of candidates based on their political views; the absence of credible international observers; severe restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, including censorship, surveillance, and disruptions in telecommunications, and the absence of a free media; widespread intimidation and repression of candidates, political parties, and citizens; and systemic electoral fraud and manipulation;

Whereas the last nationwide election held in Iran, on June 12, 2009, was widely condemned inside Iran and throughout the world as neither free nor fair and provoked large-scale peaceful protests throughout Iran;

Whereas, following the June 12, 2009, election, the Government of the Islamic Repub-

lic of Iran responded to peaceful protests with a large-scale campaign of politically motivated violence, intimidation, and repression, including acts of torture, cruel and degrading treatment in detention, rape, executions, extrajudicial killings, and indefinite detention;

Whereas, on December 26, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution denouncing the serious human rights abuses occurring in the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas authorities in Iran continue to hold several candidates from the 2009 election in indefinite detention;

Whereas authorities in Iran have announced that nationwide parliamentary elections will be held on March 2, 2012;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has banned more than 2,200 candidates from participating in the March 2, 2012, elections, including current members of parliament;

Whereas no domestic or international election observers are scheduled to oversee the March 2, 2012, elections;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to hold leading opposition figures under house arrest;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to prevent the people of Iran from accessing news and information by incarcerating more journalists than any other country in the world, according to a 2011 report from the Committee to Protect Journalists; disrupting access to the Internet, including blocking e-mail and social networking sites and limiting access to foreign news and websites, developing a national Internet that will facilitate government censorship of news and information, and jamming international broadcasts such as the Voice of America's Persian News Network and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Radio Farda; and

Whereas opposition groups in Iran have announced they will boycott the March 2, 2012, election because they believe it will be neither free nor fair nor consistent with international standards: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to democracy, human rights, civil liberties, and rule of law, including the universal rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom of association;

(2) expresses support for freedom, human rights, civil liberties, and rule of law in Iran, and for elections that are free, fair, and meet international standards, including granting independent international and domestic electoral observers unrestricted access to polling and counting stations;

(3) expresses strong support for the people of Iran in their peaceful calls for a representative and responsive democratic government that respects human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law;

(4) reminds the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran of its obligations under the international covenants to which it is a signatory to hold elections that are free and fair;

(5) condemns the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran's widespread human rights violations;

(6) calls on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect freedom of expression and association in Iran by—

(A) ending arbitrary detention, torture, and other forms of harassment against media professionals, human rights defenders and activists, and opposition figures, and releasing all individuals detained for exercising universally recognized human rights;

(B) lifting legislative restrictions on freedoms of assembly, association, and expression; and

(C) allowing the Internet to remain free and open and allowing domestic and international media to operate freely;

(7) further calls on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to allow international election monitors to be present for the March 2, 2012, elections; and

(8) urges the President, the Secretary of State, and other world leaders—

(A) to express support for the universal rights and freedoms of the people of Iran, including to democratic self-government;

(B) to broaden engagement with the people of Iran and support efforts in the country to help promote human rights and democratic reform, including by providing appropriate funding to civil society organizations for democracy and governance activities; and

(C) to condemn elections that are not free and fair and that do not meet international standards.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to speak to the Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution, and also, in addition to requesting 10 minutes, I request that my cosponsor on the resolution, Senator BLUMENTHAL, be allowed to engage with me in this discussion.

We have submitted a resolution calling for free and fair elections in Iran. Those elections will be held tomorrow, March 2. It is the first time the Republic of Iran has had parliamentary elections since June 12, 2009. I thank Senator BLUMENTHAL for joining me in this resolution and also Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, and Senator KELLY AYOTTE. As I say, I think we have now over 60 sponsors on this resolution, working to see that it can pass the Senate here very quickly. It expresses a sense of the Senate clearly calling for open, free, and fair elections in the Republic of Iran. The problem is that the elections they will be holding tomorrow are neither free nor fair. They are certainly not consistent with international standards.

As I said, these will be the first nationwide parliamentary elections since June 12, 2009. Those elections were neither free nor fair, and they provoked widespread protests throughout Iran. Those protests were brutally repressed, put down by the regime, Ayatollah Khamenei and Prime Minister Ahmadinejad, trampling human rights and taking political prisoners who remain in prison to this very day.

Since the last elections, uprisings, popular movements for self-determination, have taken place throughout the Middle East—often referred to as the Arab spring—in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and other places as well. We want to support that right to self-determination in Iran for the people in Iran as well.

Right now the only people who can run for office in Iran are people who are approved to run by the regime itself. They have the Council of Guardians, and the Council of Guardians has to approve anyone who wants to run for office, so the reality is the government of the regime itself decides whether you can run for office. About over 5,000 individuals applied to run for government, and of those 5,000 about 3,000 were approved by the Iranian re-

gime to run. More than 2,000 were denied, so they cannot even run. Well, how can you have a free or a fair and or an open election that meets independent standards when the government decides who can run and who cannot run? It doesn't work. That is not the way elections should work.

America truly is a force for freedom and for democracy in the world, and that is why we are working to call the attention of the world to these elections. It is particularly important at this time that we stand with the Iranian people in calling for free and fair elections as we impose sanctions to try to prevent government from developing a nuclear weapon. We want to make very clear that while we need to impose strong, consistent sanctions that prevent the Iranian regime from obtaining a nuclear bomb, at the same time we support the Iranian people's right to self-determination.

Mr. President, I thank the good Senator from Connecticut for working with me on this resolution and recognizing the right of the Iranian people. I also want to thank our colleagues, as I say, now more than 60—who have joined us on this resolution and also look forward to quick passage.

With that, I wish to turn the floor over to my colleague, the good Senator from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from North Dakota for his leadership on this very important issue. I want to thank him for his perseverance and his vision in seeing the importance—along with Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRAHAM, and Senator SESSIONS—of this kind of effort, which had its genesis in the trip that we took to Afghanistan, Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, and Libya.

What impressed us so much is how democracy is growing and starting there, and in that part of the world how the dictatorship and tyranny of Iran are such contrasts with the hopeful, burgeoning democracies that are growing there. That is the reason so many of our colleagues—I believe that over 60—have joined.

I want to ask unanimous consent that Senator KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota be added as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored today to speak in support of the Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution calling for free and fair elections in Iran and condemning the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its ongoing violations of human rights. These violations are brutal, tangible, and real in their impact on individual lives in that country, and our hearts go out to the people of Iran, particularly the individuals there fighting for freedom and democracy.

The world has watched the Arab spring bring down dictators in Tunisia and Tripoli, and the people of Iran con-

tinue to be denied those basic human rights that we hold dear and which should be universal.

I also want to thank Secretary Clinton for her tireless work in this region. She arrived in Tunisia shortly after we left to consult with all nations interested in aiding the Syrian people and she showed, again, her dedication to this same cause of human rights through her leadership there.

I saw in our meetings with a new generation of leaders that is emerging in the Middle East how dramatic the statements we make here and the actions that we take impress them in their fight for basic human rights. How we are speaking out here for universal suffrage and freedom has an impact on what they do, and perhaps many in our own country need to be reminded about the importance of what we say and do here.

The parliamentary elections that will occur on Friday in Iran will be neither free nor fair. They have already taken actions to assure that it will be, as one observer said, the fakest one yet. But the brutal oppression in human rights going on there is too real for those who suffer at that government's and that regime's hands. As the resolution makes clear, Iran has already disqualified 2,200 candidates from actually running for office simply based on their political views.

It maintains severe restrictions on the press, strangling a free press, preventing even the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe from reaching the people of Iran, having created a sham election, a travesty, and a tragedy. The Iranian regime now will force Iranians to vote at the polls in an effort to show popular support, and force them to vote simply to show this sham support. The truth is it has no such support. Allowing international monitors to bear witness, as we demand in our resolution, would reveal these acts of oppression for what they are and for the world to see.

The last nationwide election held in Iran, on June 12, 2009, was widely condemned throughout the world. Following the election, there was brutal repression documented all too dramatically by the videos and other evidence that, in effect, was smuggled out of Iran, although in real time. That large campaign of politically motivated violence, intimidation, repression, torture, cruel and degrading treatment, including rape, executions, and extrajudicial killings, and indefinite detention is all well documented.

On December 26, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution denouncing the serious human rights abuses occurring in Iran. The Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution lets the people of Iran know we are with them, they are not alone; that we side with them, and we stand and speak out on their behalf because they are not forgotten in their effort for democracy.

The future of the Middle East will be determined first and foremost by the

people of the Middle East themselves, but American strength, vision, and leadership are absolutely essential. So in that regard I am very proud and grateful for the 62 cosponsors of this resolution—now 63 with Senator KLOBUCHAR—and I again thank the Senator from North Dakota.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I, too, wish to express my appreciation to Senator BLUMENTHAL and to all our cosponsors, and I look forward to the Senate agreeing to this important resolution.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I thank the two Senators for their good work on this very important resolution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 387—CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. LEVIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 387

Whereas in 1776, the United States of America was imagined, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, as a new country dedicated to the proposition that “. . . all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness . . .”;

Whereas the first Africans were brought involuntarily to the shores of America as early as the 17th century;

Whereas African-Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and denial of the basic and fundamental rights of citizenship;

Whereas inequalities and injustices in our society still exist today;

Whereas in the face of injustices, people of the United States of good will and of all races distinguished themselves with a commitment to the noble ideals on which the United States was founded and courageously fought for the rights and freedom of African-Americans;

Whereas many African-American men and women worked against racism to achieve success and have made significant contributions to the economic, educational, political, artistic, literary, scientific, and technological advancements of the United States;

Whereas the greatness of the United States is reflected in the contributions of African-Americans in all walks of life throughout the history of the United States;

Whereas Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth, Muhammad Ali, Constance Baker Motley, James Baldwin, James

Beckwourth, Clara Brown, Ralph Bunche, Shirley Chisholm, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, Alex Haley, Dorothy Height, Lena Horne, Charles Hamilton Houston, Mahalia Jackson, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Tuskegee Airmen, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Bill Pickett, Jackie Robinson, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman each lived a life of incandescent greatness, while many African-Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved and yet paved the way for future generations to succeed;

Whereas, pioneers such as Maya Angelou, Arthur Ashe, Jr., Carol Moseley Braun, Ronald Brown, Ursula Burns, Kenneth Chenault, David Dinkins, Alexis Herman, Mae Jemison, Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Sheila Johnson, James Earl Jones, David Paterson, Marian Wright Edelman, Alice Walker, and Oprah Winfrey have all benefitted from their forefathers and have served as great role models and leaders for future generations to come;

Whereas on November 4, 2008, the people of the United States elected an African-American man, Barack Obama, as President of the United States;

Whereas African-Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of government and military;

Whereas on February 22, 2012, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, along with former First Lady Laura Bush, celebrated the groundbreaking of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington, DC;

Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month;

Whereas Negro History Week represented the culmination of the efforts of Dr. Carter G. Woodson to enhance knowledge of black history through the *Journal of Negro History*, published by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, which was founded by Dr. Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland;

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, dates back to 1926 when Dr. Woodson set aside a special period of time in February to recognize the heritage and achievement of black Americans;

Whereas Dr. Woodson, the “Father of Black History”, stated, “We have a wonderful history behind us. . . . If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world will say to you, ‘You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.’”;

Whereas since the founding, the United States has been an imperfect work in making progress towards noble goals; and

Whereas the history of the United States is the story of a people regularly affirming high ideals, striving to reach those ideals but often failing, and then struggling to come to terms with the disappointment of that failure before committing to trying again: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that all of the people of the United States are the recipients of the wealth of history given to us by black culture;

(2) recognizes the importance of Black History Month as an opportunity to reflect on the complex history of the United States, while remaining hopeful and confident about the path that lies ahead;

(3) acknowledges the significance of Black History Month as an important opportunity to recognize the tremendous contributions of African-Americans to the history of the United States;

(4) encourages the celebration of Black History Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all people in the United States to learn from the past and to understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and

(5) agrees that while the United States began in division, the United States must now move forward with purpose, united tirelessly as one Nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, and to honor the contribution of all pioneers in this country who help ensure the legacy of these great United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 388—COMMEMORATING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR OF 1812 AND “THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER”, AND RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, HEROIC HUMAN ENDEAVOR, AND SACRIFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND REVENUE MARINE SERVICE, AND STATE MILITIAS, DURING THE WAR OF 1812

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. KERRY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. SESSIONS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 388

Whereas the period beginning in 2012 and ending in 2015 marks the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 and “The Star Spangled Banner”;

Whereas the War of 1812, which has been referred to as the “Second War of Independence”, confirmed the independence of the United States from Great Britain in the eyes of the world and shaped the expansion and growth of the United States in later decades;

Whereas the United States declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812, to redress wrongs including—

(1) the impressment of United States sailors;

(2) the violation of the neutrality rights of the United States; and

(3) the violation of the territorial waters of the United States;

Whereas, despite the vastly superior size of the military of Great Britain, the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Revenue Marine Service (a predecessor of the United States Coast Guard), and State militias (the predecessors of the National Guard), won a number of significant victories, ensuring that the liberties won by the United States during the Revolutionary War were not lost;

Whereas major battles of the War of 1812 that were fought on the water, including the battle between U.S.S. *Constitution* and H.M.S. *Guerriere*, the Battle of Lake Champlain, and victories on the Great Lakes, showcased the might, bravery, and war-fighting tactics of the United States maritime forces;

Whereas the decisive victory of Oliver Hazard Perry over a British fleet near Put-In-Bay, Ohio in the Battle of Lake Erie ensured that—

(1) the United States gained control of the Great Lakes; and

(2) portions of the Old Northwest Territory, such as Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, remained part of the United States;

Whereas State militias, the oldest component of the Armed Forces of the United