

I spoke with him earlier this week about another matter. I haven't been to Israel a lot of times, but I have been there a few times. Every time I go, I make sure to take my delegation to visit him. I always tell them this is my favorite. I think so much of this man. It is the least we can do for someone who has done so much for world peace and so much for our country.

I will be fairly quick. I was a Member of the House of Representatives and was on a delegation led by the late Tom Lantos, a Hungarian Jew who escaped the Holocaust because of Raoul Wallenberg. There have been a lot of Members of Congress there and a number of delegations, but Tom Lantos said to him in that beautiful speaking voice he had in that Hungarian accent: Here is our delegation, Mr. Prime Minister. We are so sorry to bother you. We know how busy you are, how many difficult situations you have in your country.

I will never forget this. He said: You don't understand. I am never too busy to meet with the delegation from the Congress of the United States. They have done so much for my country.

He said a few other things. I have said—and I want the RECORD to so reflect—this is something we need to do as quickly as possible.

AMENDMENT NO. 2851

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Bennet amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 2851) was agreed to, as follows:

On page 4, line 18, strike “in honor of” and insert “to”.

The bill (S. 1456) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1456

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Shimon Peres was born in Poland in 1923.

(2) The Peres family emigrated to Tel Aviv in 1934, and all of the family members of Shimon Peres who remained in Poland were murdered during the Holocaust.

(3) Before Israel gained independence, Shimon Peres earned the respect of senior leaders in the independence movement in Israel, most notably David Ben-Gurion.

(4) The founding generation of Israel was central to the development of Israel, and Shimon Peres is the only surviving member of that founding generation.

(5) Shimon Peres has served in numerous high-level cabinet positions and ministerial posts in Israel, including head of the Israeli Navy, Minister of Defense, Foreign Minister, Prime Minister, and President, among many others.

(6) Shimon Peres has honorably served Israel for over 70 years, during which he has significantly contributed to United States

interests and has played a pivotal role in forging the strong and unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel.

(7) By presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres, the first to be awarded to a sitting President of Israel, Congress proclaims its unbreakable bond with Israel and reaffirms its continual support for Israel as we commemorate the 65th anniversary of the independence of Israel and the 90th birthday of Shimon Peres, which are both significant milestones in Israeli history.

(8) Maintaining strong bilateral relations between the United States and Israel has been a priority of Shimon Peres since he began working with the United States in the days of John F. Kennedy. The strong bond is exemplified by the following:

(A) President Reagan said to Shimon Peres upon his visit to the United States, “Mr. Prime Minister, I thank you very much for your visit. It's been an occasion to renew a friendship and to review and enhance the strength of our unique bilateral relationship.”

(B) At another point President Reagan said of Shimon Peres, “His vision, his statesmanship and his tenacity are greatly appreciated here.”

(C) While visiting with Shimon Peres at the Residence of the President in Jerusalem, President Obama described Shimon Peres as “. . . a son of Israel who's devoted his life to keeping Israel strong and sustaining the bonds between our two nations”.

(D) On March 20, 2013, Shimon Peres reaffirmed his belief in the relationship between the United States and Israel, stating, “America stood by our side from the very beginning. You support us as we rebuild our ancient homeland and as we defend our land. From Holocaust to redemption.”

(E) On March 21, 2013, Shimon Peres stated, “. . . America is so great and we are so small. But I learned that you don't measure us by size, but by values. When it comes to values, we are you and you are us. . . . As I look back, I feel that the Israel of today has exceeded the vision we had 65 years ago. Reality has surpassed our dreams. The United States of America helped us to make this possible.”

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design to President Shimon Peres.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe, the Secretary may strike duplicate medals in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 and sell such duplicate medals at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF CHARGES.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant to this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

PROVIDING FOR THE DISPLAY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 2147, introduced earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2147) to amend Public Law 112-59 to provide for the display of the congressional gold medal awarded to the Montford Point Marines, United States Marine Corps, by the Smithsonian Institution and at other appropriate locations.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the bill be read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 2147) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 2147

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DISPLAY OF CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL BY THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

Section 2 of the Act entitled “An Act to grant the congressional gold medal to the Montford Point Marines”, approved November 23, 2011 (31 U.S.C. 5111 note), is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the Montford Point Marines, United States Marine Corps, under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

“(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the Montford Point Marines, United States Marine Corps.”.

HHEATT ACT OF 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to H.R. 4076, which was received from the House.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4076) to address shortages and interruptions in the availability of propane and other home heating fuels in the United States, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and

passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 4076) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time and passed.

ALLOWING LEASE OR TRANSFER OF CERTAIN LAND

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Indian Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2650 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2650) to allow the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in the State of Minnesota to lease or transfer certain land.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 2650) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CONCERNING CRISIS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 324, S. Res. 375.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 375) concerning the crisis in the Central African Republic and supporting United States and international efforts to end the violence, protect civilians, and address root causes of the conflict.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble, as follows:

(Insert the part printed in italic.)

(Strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic.)

S. RES. 375

Whereas, for more than 50 years, successive governments in the Central African Republic have struggled to build a durable system of democratic institutions, to effectively secure and control the country's territory and borders, and to ensure a basic level of socio-economic development for the country's people;

Whereas, despite its natural resource wealth, the Central African Republic remains one of the

poorest countries in the world and one of the lowest ranking countries in terms of human development according to the United Nations Development Program;

Whereas, in January 2013, regional leaders brokered the Libreville Agreements between the government of then-President Francois Bozizé and the loosely allied rebel militia known as Séléka, which resulted in the formation of a government of national unity;

Whereas, despite the Libreville Agreements, President Bozizé was ousted in March 2013 by the Séléka coalition, and the Séléka leader, Michel Djotodia, declared himself president;

Whereas, in April 2013, regional leaders issued the N'djamena Declaration in an effort to pursue a return to constitutional order based on the Libreville Agreements;

Whereas an influx of foreign fighters, especially from Chad and Sudan, has been a major factor in the increased number of Séléka fighters, from approximately 5,000 in March 2013, to an estimated 20,000 as of December 2013;

Whereas both Séléka forces and armed militia groups known as "anti-balakas", some of which formed initially as a means of protecting communities against Séléka, have been implicated in ethnically-motivated violence and grave and systemic human rights abuses against civilians;

Whereas, over the course of the crisis, Séléka and anti-balaka groups have displayed weak control and command structures, and committed crimes against humanity with impunity;

Whereas, according to UNICEF, thousands of child soldiers are involved in armed groups in the Central African Republic, amid the near-total collapse of the country's primary education system;

Whereas interethnic, intercommunal, and interreligious tensions and violence have risen to alarming levels and led to systematic human rights abuses in the Central African Republic, including targeted killings, rapes, acts of torture, looting, and arbitrary detention;

Whereas the United States Embassy in Bangui suspended operations on December 28, 2012, and the ordered departure of country team staff has temporarily suspended the diplomatic presence and consular services of the United States in the Central African Republic;

Whereas more than 700,000 civilians have been internally displaced; another 290,000 have sought refuge in neighboring countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Cameroon, and South Sudan; 2,600,000 people, or over half of the population of the Central African Republic, are in need of humanitarian assistance; and 60 percent of households have no available food stocks;

Whereas a failure of the international community to appropriately respond to and address the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic could result in further atrocities, mass displacement, and protracted instability with significant repercussions for regional and international security;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013) called for urgent and increased international assistance to the African Union International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) to ensure that the force can fulfill its mandate to restore security and protect civilians, and placed an arms embargo on the Central African Republic;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 2127 requested the Secretary-General to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate reports of human rights abuses in the Central African Republic in order to ensure accountability for perpetrators of violence;

Whereas the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic has been hindered by a lack of resources and constrained by insecurity;

Whereas, consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2127, the Government of France launched a stabilization operation,

Operation Sangaris, in the Central African Republic to assist MISCA in fulfilling its mandate;

Whereas, on March 3, 2014, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recommended to the United Nations Security Council a transition to a United Nations peacekeeping mission with a primary mandate to protect civilians; and

Whereas the United States Government has provided crisis and humanitarian assistance commitments totaling \$182,500,000 in response to instability in the Central African Republic, including support for conflict resolution efforts, humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons, and assistance to troop contributing countries to MISCA such as airlift, non-lethal equipment, military logistics, and training, as well as logistical support for French forces: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the violence, atrocities, abuses, and human rights violations committed by all parties to the conflict in the Central African Republic;

(2) commends the efforts of religious and community leaders in the Central African Republic condemning violence and engaging in conflict prevention and conflict resolution activities;

(3) welcomes the mobilization of international peacekeeping, conflict mitigation, humanitarian, and diplomatic resources, and encourages continued efforts to help address humanitarian needs, bring an end to the violence, and develop sustainable democratic institutions in the Central African Republic;

(4) welcomes the January 2014 decision of the Transitional National Council on the election of Catherine Samba-Panza as the Central African Republic's new transitional president;

(5) commends the African Union and its troop and police contributing countries for their work establishing and supporting MISCA;

(6) recognizes the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAS) for its leadership in the political transition process;

(7) commends France for its swift intervention under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2127, and for its contributions to stabilization efforts and other forms of assistance;

(8) welcomes the United Nations Security Council support for MISCA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operation's ongoing contingency planning for a possible transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation;

(9) affirms support for multilateral peacekeeping and policing capacities and recognizes the important contributions these efforts have made in protecting civilians in the Central African Republic and promoting international peace and stability;

(10) calls on the President to work with international partners to develop a short-term strategy to support a full and immediate cessation of armed conflict in the Central African Republic, including attacks targeting civilians and the recruitment of child soldiers;

(11) calls on the President to develop a long-term United States strategy, in support of international and domestic efforts, to establish a durable peace and greater security for the Central African Republic and to enhance regional stability, including—

(A) engagement and coordination with the international community, including the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the United Nations, and other partners;

(B) appropriate assistance to help provide emergency relief and support reconciliation for the people of the Central African Republic;