

Chicago-area members of the Syrian-American Medical Society who recently returned from a medical mission to treat Syrian patients in the north of Lebanon. They shared heartbreaking stories of the Syrian refugees they met and treated and appealed for continued international help for these millions of innocent victims. As a hearing I chaired in January on Syrian refugees illustrated, this humanitarian catastrophe has created grave challenges for neighboring countries that are hosting the vast majority of the refugees. Additionally, the fighting in Syria is inflaming sectarian violence in neighbors such as Iraq and Lebanon.

A staggering 9.3 million Syrians inside the country are estimated to be in need of assistance due to the conflict, and even more barbaric, starvation is being used as a weapon of war, with an estimated 220,000 people trapped in besieged areas in Syria. The Assad regime and, to a far lesser extent, some opposition groups have blocked humanitarian assistance in a deliberate effort to increase pressure on besieged civilians. If the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime wasn't horrific enough, it has also utilized so-called barrel bombs, mixes of explosives and shrapnel stuffed into barrels, that helicopter gunships drop in civilian areas controlled by the opposition such as Aleppo.

The Syrian conflict has devastated even the most innocent members of Syrian society. I was deeply moved by the plight of the children when last year I visited Kilis, a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey. Yet sadly their plight continues. In January the U.N. issued a report which estimated that more than 10,000 children have been killed. UNICEF said in March that the real number is likely to be even higher. The January U.N. report stated that children in Syria experienced suffering which was "unspeakable." Some of the reports of terrible abuses include sexual violence against children held in Syrian Government detention as well as minors being used in combat and as human shields. In addition, UNICEF released a report in March that estimated there are up to 1 million children who live under siege and in hard-to-reach areas that UNICEF and its humanitarian partners cannot access on a regular basis.

As my colleague Senator MCCAIN mentioned in his remarks in February on the Senate floor, respected former war crimes prosecutors issued a report in January based on evidence they obtained regarding torture and murder by the Syrian regime. The report stated that the evidence—largely provided by a Syrian defector and which includes 55,000 photographic images of approximately 11,000 detained persons who had been tortured and killed by the Syrian regime—was credible. Additionally, these war crimes prosecutors noted that such evidence could support findings of war crimes as well as crimes against humanity against the Assad regime.

In 2011, I was joined by Senators BOXER, CARDIN, and MENENDEZ on a letter to then-U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice urging that Assad be referred by the Security Council to the International Criminal Court. Now, 2½ years later, with so many further atrocities in Syria, the need for holding those accountable for war crimes is as strong as ever. We, and other concerned countries, have an interest in seeing justice served. Those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity must be put on notice that the international community will strive to hold them accountable for their unlawful acts.

Unfortunately, establishing a Syrian war crimes tribunal may face opposition from other members of the U.N. Security Council, most notably Russia. Particularly given the widespread condemnation of Russia illegally violating the territorial integrity of another state, it seems that Russian President Putin does not care about the laws or views of the international community. The hypocrisy of Putin stating that other countries should not intervene in Syria where there is an undisputed humanitarian catastrophe, while he illegally annexes the territory of another state, in part on false humanitarian ground, is staggering.

Nevertheless, if Putin wants to block establishing a Syrian war crimes tribunal, let us have Russia go on the record to say why it opposes justice for those who have suffered so much in Syria. Let them explain how Russia, having suffered its own horrific siege of Leningrad during which 800,000 people—one-third of the city's population—died of starvation during the almost 900-day siege by the Nazis, continues to support the same brutal starvation techniques of its client autocrat in Syria, Bashar al-Assad. With these types of brazen actions and statements, Putin will never earn the global respect and credibility he so desperately demands by invading neighboring countries, while at the same time continuing to support and arm butchers such as Assad.

In February the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution, which Russia finally supported, demanding greater humanitarian access as well as calling on all parties to immediately cease attacks against civilians and lift the siege of populated areas. Yet 1 month after the Security Council ordered all parties in Syria to allow aid workers into besieged areas and stop indiscriminate attacks on civilians, a soon-to-be-released U.N. report says that the Syrian Government has essentially ignored the Security Council. Food supplies have been held up at government checkpoints, medical supplies removed from aid convoys, visas stalled for U.N. officials, and key supply routes cynically kept closed. And Assad's forces persist in using brutal barrel bombs, causing horrific indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. The international community should not let this obstruc-

tion stand and must enforce the Security Council resolution.

Ultimately, as President Obama has stated, this conflict needs to be resolved politically. Last year, I did support the limited use of military force when Assad broke a long-established global taboo against the use of chemical weapons but also agree that a political solution must ultimately be pursued in Syria. But for a long-term and stable political solution to the war there must also be justice for those who have suffered so much, and a Syrian war crimes tribunal would play a vital role in such a process.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR OBJECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request at the present time relating to the nomination of Carolyn Hessler Radelet to be the Director of the Peace Corps.

I will object because I am inquiring into the circumstances related to the refusal of the Peace Corps to grant the Peace Corps inspector general full and timely access to records to which the inspector general is entitled under the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 and the Inspector General Act of 1978.

At a hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform convened on January 15, 2014, Peace Corps inspector general Kathy Buller detailed difficulties she has encountered in accessing records which she deemed were directly relevant to her review of Peace Corps' handling of reports from its volunteers who claim that they have been sexually assaulted.

According to Inspector General Buller's testimony, records were withheld based on reasoning that directly contravenes the Kate Puzey Act and the Inspector General Act.

In addition, Inspector General Buller testified that even when limited access to records was later granted, most of the relevant information was withheld under an overbroad interpretation of what constitutes "personally identifying information" under 22 U.S.C. §2507a(f)(1)–(2). Inspector General Buller did clarify that, following objections from Congress, Peace Corps narrowed its interpretation of "personally identifying information" which allowed her to access slightly more information relating to the subject sexual assaults but not everything to which the inspector general is entitled.

In order to exercise the oversight function envisioned by the Kate Puzey Act and the Inspector General Act, it is critical for the Peace Corps inspector general to have full and timely access to all Peace Corps records which she deems relevant to her review.

The Peace Corps apparently withheld records from the inspector general during the nominee's tenure as the Acting Director, and I would like the opportunity to understand the circumstances more fully.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SFC OLLEN HUNT

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to SFC retired Ollen Hunt for his exceptional dedication to duty and service to the U.S. Army and to the United States of America.

A native of McMoresville, TN, Sergeant Hunt was drafted into the U.S. Army in November of 1942. Sergeant Hunt was a part of the 92nd Infantry Division, which was also known as "The Buffalo Division." Sergeant Hunt and his unit boarded troop ships at Camp Henry, VA, and survived the sea journey to their destination in Italy. The 92nd fought with distinction and divisiveness, and contributed to the eventual defeat of the Axis Powers.

After returning from his deployment, Sergeant Hunt returned home for a short time before returning to assignments throughout Europe. He was responsible for the food and logistics operations at various military installations. He continued his military service until retiring as a Sergeant First Class in 1963. A year after retirement, Sergeant Hunt accepted a position as a flight kitchen chef in Anchorage, AK. Sergeant Hunt and his wife Hanna owned many small businesses, including the Hof Brau and Sandwich Deck. He also served on several downtown merchant and municipal committees and councils, receiving numerous awards for his contributions to the Anchorage community. After his "second retirement", Sergeant Hunt worked with the Veterans Administration's Oral History project writers to create an autobiography of his life. His work formed what would later become his book *Buffalo Soldier: What I Did for My Country, What My Country Did for Me*.

Sergeant Hunt's leadership throughout his career has positively influenced his peers and superiors, soldiers, and civilians alike. As a hardworking and friendly man, he will be greatly missed by his family and those fortunate enough to have known him.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending SFC Ollen Hunt for his service to his country in the United States Army. We wish his wife, Hannelore, and their two children, Katherine and Ollen, all the best as they celebrate the life of this great man.●

REMEMBERING CLAUS-M. NASKE

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President. Dr. Claus-M. Naske, a giant in the field of history in Alaska, passed away on March 5, 2014. I would like to honor him and his accomplishments as an educator, historian and family man.

Claus emigrated to Alaska in 1954 and moved to Fairbanks in 1957 to attend the University of Alaska Fairbanks, graduating with double majors in political science and history. He obtained his doctorate from Washington State University and joined the Uni-

versity of Alaska Fairbanks faculty in 1969, starting his long and illustrious career as a teacher, mentor, researcher, author and administrator.

Claus was a professor of history at the University of Alaska Fairbanks until 2001. He not only taught, researched and wrote, he was the director of the University of Alaska Press until 2004. Managing the university's press office added to Dr. Naske's workload, but it was evidence of his love for scholarly work.

Claus authored and co-authored over a dozen books, including ones on two prominent political Alaskan political figures, Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening and several on Alaska's history. His book *Alaska: A History*, in its third edition, is considered the pre-eminent record of our great State. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Claus for his dedication and persistence as a historian, one who will long be remembered.

Claus received many well-deserved awards throughout his life, including the 2012 Distinguished Alumnus Award, the 2001 Usibelli Award for Research, the 1997 Alumni Award for Professional Excellence, and the 1995 Award of Merit by the Western History Association—to name a few.

Claus married Dinah in 1960 and had two children: Natalia-Michelle Nangeak and Nathaniel-Michael Noah. He and his wife have been generous to UAF, establishing a history scholarship and making regular donations to the campus public radio station.

Claus-M. Naske will go down in history with a sterling reputation as a scholar, teacher and father.●

TRIBUTE TO SAMUEL B. OLDEN

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to advise the Senate of the accomplishments of a fellow Mississippian, Mr. Samuel B. Olden of Yazoo City, on the occasion of his 95th birthday.

Mr. Olden is from Yazoo City, the "Gateway to the Mississippi Delta," where he was born in 1919, to a family of Mississippi planters. Throughout his youth, he read widely in the B.S. Ricks Memorial Library—the oldest privately-funded public library in the State—which greatly contributed to his personal development and admission into the University of Mississippi in Oxford. There, he received a B.A. and M.A., reportedly conversed with Nobel Prize-winning author William Faulkner, and was ultimately recruited to Washington, DC, to serve at the Department of State. Prior to American involvement in World War II, Mr. Olden was sent abroad as the Vice Consul at our embassy in Quito, Ecuador, from 1941 to 1943. Upon his return, Mr. Olden enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving from 1943 to 1946 at posts ranging from Shanghai, China, to Paris, France.

After the war Mr. Olden transited the North Atlantic on a Liberty ship. A fellow naval officer noted Mr. Olden's fortitude during this stormy passage. While tending to his ailing father back

in Mississippi, he received a letter from Washington asking him to consider defending our Nation's freedom, in a third essential way. Mr. Olden returned to the District of Columbia, where he was invited to join the newly formed Central Intelligence Group. Commencing in 1947, Mr. Olden spent 2 years in the group's Washington office, followed by 3 years in Vienna, Austria, where he defended freedom and democracy against Communist aggression.

Following a decade in public service, Mr. Olden entered the private sector, where he employed his experience abroad for a predecessor of Exxon Mobil. From 1952-1957, he was posted in East and West Nigeria, British and French Cameroon, the Congo, Chad, and Gabon. He joined Mobil's government relations department in 1957 and returned to New York. There, he attained observer status at the United Nations and strode the halls with Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt. Later, he went abroad once more to serve as general manager of Mobil's affiliates in Tunisia, Algeria, Peru, and Spain.

By 1974, Mr. Olden was fluent in English, French, German, and Spanish. He had connections around the world. And where did he go? He chose to retire to the finest place he had ever lived: Yazoo City. There, he owned and operated a cattle ranch for 15 years, while continuing to pursue his passion for the study of history. He was twice a board member and was elected president of the Mississippi Historical Society, served 15 years on the State committee for the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, and founded the Yazoo Historical Society's remarkable museum—housed in the same Triangle Center building where he had attended elementary school. Even in his nineties, he established and helped to fund the Yazoo Memorial Literary Walkway, which stretches between the Triangle Center and the B.S. Ricks Library. The walkway memorializes more than 100 Yazooan authors to include former House Minority Leader and Senator John Sharp Williams, literary critic and editor Henry Herschel Brickell, Gov. Haley Reeves Barbour, beloved writers Willie Morris, Teresa Nicholas, and Ruth Williams, and educator Henry Mitchell Brickell. His large collection of pre-Columbian ceramics is now on display in the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson.

This remarkable man has served his Nation as a diplomat, military officer, and emissary, during wars hot and cold. He served the world in the energy industry as a global businessman of distinction. He returned to his hometown and has continued to serve his State, his university, and his community as a historian, educator and philanthropist even into the 10th decade of his life. His friends across the Nation and around the world celebrate with him today.●