

these initiatives, including the recent wholly unbalanced and inflammatory UNESCO resolution regarding Jerusalem. And we have made clear our strong opposition to Palestinian efforts against Israel at the ICC, which only sets back the prospects for peace.

And we all understand that the Palestinian Authority has a lot more to do to strengthen its institutions and improve governance.

Most troubling of all, Hamas continues to pursue an extremist agenda: they refuse to accept Israel's very right to exist. They have a one-state vision of their own: all of the land is Palestine. Hamas and other radical factions are responsible for the most explicit forms of incitement to violence, and many of the images that they use are truly appalling. And they are willing to kill innocents in Israel and put the people of Gaza at risk in order to advance that agenda.

Compounding this, the humanitarian situation in Gaza, exacerbated by the closings of the crossings, is dire. Gaza is home to one of the world's densest concentrations of people enduring extreme hardships with few opportunities. 1.3 million people out of Gaza's population of 1.8 million are in need of daily assistance—food and shelter. Most have electricity less than half the time and only 5 percent of the water is safe to drink. And yet despite the urgency of these needs, Hamas and other militant groups continue to rearm and divert reconstruction materials to build tunnels, threatening more attacks on Israeli civilians that no government can tolerate.

Now, at the same time, we have to be clear about what is happening in the West Bank. The Israeli prime minister publicly supports a two-state solution, but his current coalition is the most right wing in Israeli history, with an agenda driven by the most extreme elements. The result is that policies of this government, which the prime minister himself just described as "more committed to settlements than any in Israel's history," are leading in the opposite direction. They're leading towards one state. In fact, Israel has increasingly consolidated control over much of the West Bank for its own purposes, effectively reversing the transitions to greater Palestinian civil authority that were called for by the Oslo Accords.

I don't think most people in Israel, and certainly in the world, have any idea how broad and systematic the process has become. But the facts speak for themselves. The number of settlers in the roughly 130 Israeli settlements east of the 1967 lines has steadily grown. The settler population in the West Bank alone, not including East Jerusalem, has increased by nearly 270,000 since Oslo, including 100,000 just since 2009, when President Obama's term began.

There's no point in pretending that these are just in large settlement blocks. Nearly 90,000 settlers are living east of the separation barrier that was created by Israel itself in the middle of what, by any reasonable definition, would be the future Palestinian state. And the population of these distant settlements has grown by 20,000 just since 2009. In fact, just recently the government approved a significant new settlement well east of the barrier, closer to Jordan than to Israel. What does that say to Palestinians in particular—but also to the United States and the world—about Israel's intentions?

Let me emphasize, this is not to say that the settlements are the whole or even the primary cause of this conflict. Of course they are not. Nor can you say that if the settlements were suddenly removed, you'd have peace. Without a broader agreement, you would not. And we understand that in a final status agreement, certain settlements would become part of Israel to account for the changes that have taken place over the last

49 years—we understand that—including the new democratic demographic realities that exist on the ground. They would have to be factored in.

But if more and more settlers are moving into the middle of Palestinian areas, it's going to be just that much harder to separate, that much harder to imagine transferring sovereignty, and that is exactly the outcome that some are purposefully accelerating.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the complete text of the Secretary's speech, which, again, I urge all Senators to read in its entirety, can be found at the following Web site: <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/12/266119.htm>.

#### REMEMBERING STANLEY RUSS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to former Arkansas State Senator Stanley Russ of Conway, AR.

Stanley Russ was born in Conway in 1930. He graduated from Conway High School in 1948 and went on to attend Arkansas Tech University and Arkansas State Teachers College, now the University of Central Arkansas, before earning a bachelor of science in education from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

Russ also served his country in multiple ways, including in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1954, where he completed officer candidate school. Later, he served as a company commander in the Arkansas National Guard. Russ was inducted into the U.S. Field Artillery OCS Hall of Fame at Fort Sill in 1995.

Senator Russ served in the Arkansas Senate from 1975 to 2000. He was the president pro tempore from 1995 to 1997 and served as the majority leader in 1997. During his time in public office, he was known as an advocate for public, private, and higher education.

Russ was named one of the Ten Outstanding State Legislators in the United States by the Assembly of State Government Employees in 1981. Four years later, he was honored for Distinguished Service by the Municipal League of Arkansas. He was elected into the Arkansas Tech University Hall of Distinction in 1994 and the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2000.

Stanley Russ was a beloved public servant who devoted his life to Arkansas. He was a leader who worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle and didn't care who got the credit as long as the goal was accomplished. Stanley showed kindness and consideration to everyone who approached him. I sincerely appreciate his devotion to our State and its citizens.

He will be greatly missed by all. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family during this difficult time.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO NELL PAYNE

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I wish to commend Nell Payne for her distinguished career in public service.

For the past 16 years, she has served as the director of government relations for the Smithsonian Institution, where she has been a tireless advocate for the Smithsonian. She has worked to advance the institution's mission of promoting the increase and diffusion of knowledge.

Her professionalism, expertise, and integrity have helped the Smithsonian improve on its reputation as the premier museum system in the world. Her leadership and vision have directly benefited the millions of Americans and international travelers who enjoy Smithsonian exhibits and programs each year.

She also served our country in the U.S. Senate on the staff of the Budget Committee and in the White House as a special assistant to the President.

I congratulate Nell Payne on her retirement and thank her for the important contributions she has made to the Smithsonian Institution and throughout her professional career.●

#### REMEMBERING TONY REYNA

• Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, for generations, Tony Reyna served his people in Taos Pueblo and northern New Mexico as a respected community leader and constant source of wisdom and kindness.

Last year, Mr. Reyna joined friends, family, and community members to celebrate his 100th birthday, which the New Mexico State Legislature officially proclaimed as Tony Reyna Day. After a full life of service and dedication to his community Mr. Reyna passed away last month surrounded by his family and loved ones.

Mr. Reyna was the last remaining survivor from Taos Pueblo of the Bataan death march. On April 9, 1942, Mr. Reyna and 1,800 other members of the New Mexico National Guard were among the more than 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers who were taken as prisoners of war by Japanese forces.

The Bataan death marchers were forced to endure 3 and a half years of brutal captivity. They were marched for days in the scorching heat through the Philippine jungles. Thousands died. Those who survived faced the hardships of a prisoner of war camp. Others were wounded or killed when unmarked enemy ships transporting prisoners of war to Japan were sunk by U.S. air and naval forces.

After returning to Taos after the war, Mr. Reyna opened Tony Reyna's Indian Shop in 1950, which has remained open to this day. He served two terms as governor of Taos Pueblo. He also served the Town of Taos as a police commissioner and as a museum board member. He was a lifetime member of the Taos Pueblo tribal council.

He leaves behind an enduring legacy thanks to his lifelong efforts to preserve the culture, resources, and traditions of Taos Pueblo. He played a vital role in the return of Blue Lake, the Pueblo's sacred headwaters in 1970. And

in 1992, when Mr. Reyna was serving his second term as governor, UNESCO designated Taos Pueblo as a World Heritage Site.

In 2015, at a Veterans Day ceremony at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, Mr. Reyna, then age 99, said, "I served my country. I served my people. I'm still serving. I'm available anytime they ask me!"

The people of Taos Pueblo and all of us in New Mexico owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Mr. Reyna for his full lifetime of service.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 58. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. PAUL):

S. 59. A bill to provide that silencers be treated the same as long guns; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. CORKER):

S. 60. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the "Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 61. A bill to remove the sunset provision of section 203 of Public Law 105-384 and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 62. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish the January 8th National Memorial in Tucson, Arizona, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 63. A bill to clarify the rights of Indians and Indian tribes on Indian lands under the

National Labor Relations Act; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 64. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the personal importation of safe and affordable drugs from approved pharmacies in Canada; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 65. A bill to address financial conflicts of interest of the President and Vice President; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 66. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 67. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a report on the designation of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 68. A bill to require the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress on the designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a foreign terrorist organization, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 69. A bill to codify and modify regulatory requirements of Federal agencies; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. BARASSO):

S. 70. A bill to designate the mountain at the Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming, as Devils Tower, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 71. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to temporarily allow expensing of certain costs of replanting citrus plants lost by reason of casualty; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 72. A bill to require that certain information relating to terrorism investigations be included in the NICS database, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 73. A bill to provide standards for physical condition and management of housing receiving assistance payments under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 74. A bill to improve the ability of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Coast Guard, and coastal States to sustain healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems by maintaining and sustaining their capabilities relating to oil spill preparedness, prevention, response, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 75. A bill to provide for the reconsideration of claims for disability compensation for veterans who were the subjects of experiments by the Department of Defense during World War II that were conducted to assess the effects of mustard gas or lewisite on people, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 16

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 16, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 23

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 23, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to adopt and implement a standard identification protocol for use in the tracking and procurement of biological implants by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 27

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 27, a bill to establish an independent commission to examine and report on the facts regarding the extent of Russian official and unofficial cyber operations and other attempts to interfere in the 2016 United States national election, and for other purposes.

S. 30

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 30, a bill to extend the civil statute of limitations for victims of Federal sex offenses.

S. 41

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 41, a bill to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate covered part D drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

S. 42

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota