

President Trump has praised Egypt's President el-Sisi and Turkey's President Erdogan, both of whom are responsible for brutal crackdowns on dissent and for subverting the institutions of democracy, and after the White House lifted human rights restrictions on the sale of military equipment to Bahrain and Secretary of State Tillerson did not participate in the public release of the Department's Annual Report on Human Rights Practices, Ambassador Haley's op-ed is welcome.

In it, she made several statements that I think bear repeating. For example, she said: "[W]idespread human rights violations are a warning sign—a loud, blaring siren—that a breakdown in peace and security is coming."

"[T]here is hardly an issue on the agenda of the Security Council that does not in some way involve human rights."

"The next international crisis could very well come from places in which human rights are widely disregarded . . . we know from history that it will happen. And when it does, the United Nations will be called upon to act. We are much better off acting before abuse turns to conflict."

I strongly agree with all of that and commend her for saying it.

Ambassador Haley singled out several countries, including Syria, North Korea, Iran, and Cuba, where violations of human rights—although of different types and on vastly different scales—are common.

A few days later, Secretary Tillerson rightly criticized the government of Venezuelan President Maduro, who has locked up his political opponents and sought to decapitate what remains of the institutions of democracy in that country.

It is not sufficient, however, as some in this administration have been doing, to defend human rights only in countries whose governments are regarded as adversaries of the United States. That is the politically safe approach, and it weakens the credibility of those who seek to defend human rights.

It is important to note that the governments of a number of U.S. allies, such as Egypt, the Philippines, Turkey, Ethiopia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam, also routinely violate human rights by arresting and imprisoning dissidents, independent journalists, and members of organizations who peacefully protest against government policies.

In the Philippines, anyone suspected of using or selling drugs is in danger of summary execution by the police. Thousands have been killed with impunity in the past 9 months. In Honduras, scores of journalists and environmental activists have been assassinated, and rarely is anyone arrested or punished. In Colombia, thousands of social activists and human rights defenders have been killed, many of them victims of the security forces and rightwing armed groups, and few people have

been held accountable. There are many other examples.

I hope Ambassador Haley's statement is a sign that human rights will become a visible and consistent focus of the Trump administration's foreign policy. Freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and due process—these are all rights and ideals that Americans cherish. They are also enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As the world's oldest democracy, we have a responsibility, and it is in our interest to defend them wherever they are violated because protecting fundamental rights is necessary, not only for justice and the rule of law, but, as Ambassador Haley points out, for global peace and security, including America's security.

I ask unanimous consent that Ambassador Haley's guest column be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From CNN, Apr. 19, 2017]

AN UNPRECEDENTED STEP ON HUMAN RIGHTS
(By Nikki Haley)

Imagine you are the parent of a boy—a teenager. Policemen come to your home in the middle of the night and take your boy away. He is held without explanation for weeks. And when he finally comes home, your boy has all the marks of having been tortured. Bruises from being beaten. Red, open wounds from being burned. Then you look at his hands and the worst is confirmed. Where his fingernails once were, there are only raw, bloody, exposed nerves. Grown men with pliers, he tells you, ripped his fingernails off in prison.

For a group of parents in Syria in 2011, this was not an exercise in imagination but a horrifying reality. Their boys were arrested and tortured for the crime of writing anti-government graffiti on the wall of a school. When the parents marched in protest to demand their children's release, security services opened fire on them. When more people came out to protest the killings, the government fired on them again. Soon, the point of no return was reached.

"We were asking in a peaceful way to release the children but their reply was bullets," a relative of one of the boys told a reporter. "Now we can have no compromise with any security branches."

The Syrian war is just one example of how human rights violations can become a vicious cycle of violence and instability that quickly spirals into all-out war. What began as an act of free expression of the kind Americans take for granted has become a conflict responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of desperate refugees. Nations thousands of miles away have been impacted.

As the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, I've looked at how we can do more to respond to human rights violations before they reach the level of conflict. Traditionally, the United Nations Security Council has been considered the place where peace and security are debated, not human rights. But Tuesday, at the insistence of the United States, for the first time the Security Council took up the connection between human rights and conflict. We debated how widespread human rights violations are a warning sign—a loud, blaring siren—that a breakdown in peace and security is coming.

Syria is not alone. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo today, it is no coinci-

dence that reports of government soldiers and armed groups committing extrajudicial executions of civilians in the Kasais region are occurring at the same time that the security situation appears to be quickly spiraling out of control.

These sorts of allegations demand answers from independent investigations. And when violations are found to occur, the United Nations cannot turn a blind eye. We must engage these violators early and often, in the statements we make and the measures we impose. Human rights violations and abuses suffered by civilians rarely have a happy ending. At best, they drive desperate people from their homes and from their countries. At worst, they radicalize them to take up arms themselves.

In other cases, human rights violations and abuses don't lead to violence down the road, they exist side-by-side with threats to peace and security. In fact, the world's most brutal regimes are also the most ruthless violators of human rights.

In the case of North Korea, human rights abuses literally finance the government's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Political prisoners work themselves to death in coal mines to finance the regime's military. Starvation, sexual violence and slave labor in the prison camps help supply the North Korean nuclear program.

In Burundi, the government is using human rights violations to stifle dissent. The Burundian government services use torture to crack down on protestors. This has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighboring countries and caused massive regional disruption. A U.N. report detailed 17 types of torture used by the government, including driving sharpened steel rods into the legs of victims and dripping melted plastic on them.

In fact, there is hardly an issue on the agenda of the Security Council that does not in some way involve human rights. As president of the Council, I've had great support from U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres in driving home the connection between threats to human dignity and threats to peace. I'm grateful as well to my colleagues on the Security Council, who agreed to take this unprecedented step.

The next international crisis could very well come from places in which human rights are widely disregarded. Perhaps it will be in North Korea or Iran or Cuba. We don't know when the next group of desperate people will rise up or when the next gang of violent extremists will exploit human suffering to further their cause. But we know from history that it will happen. And when it does, the United Nations will be called upon to act. We are much better off acting before abuse turns to conflict.

Imagine if we had acted six years ago in Syria. If we learn nothing else from the torture of children, let it be this: Evil is an inescapable fact of life, but the violence that results from human rights violations and abuses is not inevitable. We can choose to learn from history, not doom ourselves to repeat it.

OPENS ALASKA ACT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, Senator SULLIVAN and I introduced a bill, S. 883, the Offshore Production and Energizing National Security Alaska Act of 2017, to lift a damaging Federal moratorium, reopen Alaska's energy-rich Arctic waters to responsible production, and ensure our home State receives a fair share of the revenues from development off our coasts.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the Arctic contains 22 percent of the world's undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and gas resources. The Federal Government projects that the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas alone contain an estimated 23.6 billion barrels of oil and 104.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Yet, despite that prolific potential, the Obama administration spent much of the past 8 years systematically putting the region off limits.

It began with the cancellation of lease sales scheduled for our Arctic Outer Continental Shelf. It continued with critical habitat designations, the imposition of burdensome new rules, and a constantly shifting administrative approach that seemed designed to make commercial operations impossible. We saw new withdrawals in our Arctic OCS in early 2015, followed by a decision by President Obama, just days before he left office, to withdraw nearly all of the region from future leasing. Those decisions ran directly contrary to the views of the vast majority of Alaskans, who overwhelmingly support the responsible development of our Arctic OCS. Those decisions ran contrary to the promises made to Alaskans, at statehood and repeatedly in the years since then, that we would be allowed to access our resources to help build our State. Those decisions have already cost Alaskans jobs and revenues and today continue to deprive us of a golden opportunity to provide for our families, end our economic recession, and refill our Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

Our bill, the OPENS Alaska Act, recognizes our needs and opportunities in Alaska, it rejects the heavy-handed decisions made against our State in recent years, and it puts our policies for the Arctic OCS on a better track.

First, it repeals President Obama's so-called 12(a) withdrawal of nearly all of the offshore Arctic. This is a simple necessity, before leasing can occur. It is not a statement about the President's current legal authority to amend, modify, or revoke a withdrawal made under section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. I believe our new President has all the authority he needs to revoke the Alaska withdrawals, and I hope he will do just that. If he does, precedent will be on his side. In the meantime, our legislation makes clear the position of Alaska, which is that we do not support the withdrawal and want it gone by any possible legal means.

Next, our bill would create a new nearshore Beaufort Planning Area. The State of Alaska currently conducts annual lease sales in the area from zero to 3 miles offshore. The establishment of a separate planning area in the adjacent nearshore zone will provide a real, near-term opportunity to provide vital throughput into the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, known as TAPS, because of its proximity to existing infrastructure. Projects in this area are easier, faster, and less expensive.

Our bill would also provide for additional lease sales in the Nearshore Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet Planning Areas. By lifting the withdrawals in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, those areas would be eligible for leasing in the next Five-Year OCS Leasing Program or a supplement to our current program. Frequent and predictable lease sales are needed to create stability and certainty for investors, Alaska, and the United States.

It is also important that Alaska and Alaskans receive fair compensation for any exploration, development, and production that occurs in the Arctic OCS. Under current law, no matter how much energy we provide for the rest of the Nation, Alaska will receive none of the revenues. That arrangement is widely recognized as unfair, and so my bill devotes a reasonable share of the revenues that will only be generated as a result of this bill, and as a result of the waters that are only part of the United States by virtue of Alaska, with our State.

We have divided revenue sharing into two time periods, from 2017 to 2027 and from 2027 onwards, to reflect our differing needs during the exploration, development, and production phases. During the initial 10-year period, our bill proposes that 7.5 percent of the revenues be shared with the State and 7.5 percent of revenues be divided between coastal political subdivisions. The division between coastal political subdivisions is based on distance from the lease tracts, with 90 percent of the funds going to areas within 200 miles and 10 percent reserved for coastal political subdivisions that are beyond 200 miles but determined by the State of Alaska to be staging areas.

In addition, our bill would allocate 2.5 percent of the revenues it generates to fund competitive grants for workforce development in support of OCS development, 2.5 percent to fund the North Slope Science Initiative, 2.5 percent to the Secretary of the Interior to support offshore development and the establishment of pipeline rights-of-way on Federal land associated with Beaufort and Chukchi development, and 2.5 percent to the Tribal Resilience Program established by the act. The remaining 75 percent would go to the U.S. Treasury, to help pay down our national debt.

Following the initial 10-year period, we propose to divide the revenues slightly differently, with 50 percent going to the Treasury, 30 percent to the State, 7.5 percent to coastal political subdivisions, and 12.5 percent to the Tribal Resilience Program established by the act. These divisions do not apply to what is known as the 8(g) zone, such as the Nearshore Beaufort, where Alaska currently receives 27 percent of revenues.

The Tribal Resilience Program established by our bill, which is national in scope, would provide grants for a number of critical purposes. These funds could be used to relocate villages or

communities experiencing or susceptible to coastal or river erosion, to construct infrastructure to support emergency evacuations, to restore or repair infrastructure damaged by melting permafrost or coastal or river erosion, to install and manage energy systems that reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, and to construct and maintain social or cultural infrastructure that supports resilient communities.

The OPENS Alaska Act will allow our home State to produce more of its vast offshore energy resources, which is a priority for the vast majority of Alaskans. It will help us create good jobs, generate billions of dollars in new revenues, and ensure a stable footing for our State for generations to come. I urge the Senate to recognize the improvements this bill makes to our current policies and to join Senator SULLIVAN and I in supporting its passage in this Congress.

102ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, last Thursday I had the honor of joining my friends from the Armenian National Committee of Rhode Island in my hometown of Cranston, RI, to raise the flag of Armenia in remembrance of the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Over a century ago, the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire summoned and executed over 200 Armenian community leaders and intellectuals, beginning an 8-year campaign of oppression and massacre.

By 1923, an estimated 1 and a half million Armenians were killed, and over a half a million survivors were exiled. These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, throughout the world.

The survivors of the Armenian genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve and went on to greatly contribute to the lands in which they found new homes and communities, including the United States.

This genocide has been denied for far too long. That is why I have joined with several of my colleagues on resolutions over the years to encourage the U.S. to officially recognize the Armenian genocide.

But as we remember our history, we must also look to the present and to our future.

Recent efforts to bring Azerbaijan to the negotiating table have injected new momentum into the push for a lasting agreement in Nagorno Karabakh. It is critical that the United States, along with our regional partners, continue to press for a peaceful resolution to the conflict that respects the rights of all stakeholders and allows for a more stable and prosperous future for Armenia.

As ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I remain