

the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011, at 9:30 a.m., in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the sessions of the Senate on March 17, 2011, at 10 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled "Popular Uprisings in the Middle East: The implications for U.S. Policy."

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled "Health Insurance Exchanges and Ongoing State Implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" on March 17, 2011, at 10 a.m., in 430 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011, 3:15 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Catastrophic Preparedness: How Ready Is FEMA for the Next Big Disaster?"

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 17, 2011, at 10 a.m., in SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

AT HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER RECOVERY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery and Intergovernmental Affairs of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Preventing Improperly Paid Federal Assistance in the Aftermath of Disasters."

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011 at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON GREEN JOBS AND THE NEW ECONOMY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety and the Subcommittee on Green Jobs and the New Economy of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011, at 10 a.m. in SD-406.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND SPACE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Science and Space of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2011, at 10:30 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jelena McWilliams, a detailee with the Small Business Committee, be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of this legislation.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 48; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Michael Vickers, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, March 28, at 4:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 40; that there be 1 hour for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote, without intervening action or debate, on Calendar No. 40; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that no further motions be in order; that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

RECOGNIZING THE 190TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 51 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 51) recognizing the 190th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 51) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 51

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States, many of whom read Greek political philosophy in the original Greek, drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that "it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you";

Whereas the Greek national anthem, the "Hymn to Liberty", includes the words, "Most heartily was gladdened George Washington's brave land";

Whereas the people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance to the Greek people during their struggle for independence;

Whereas Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through such bravery as was shown in the historic Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war with its first major setback, setting off a chain of events that significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Greek civilians were killed in Greece during World War II in defense of the values of the Allies; Whereas, throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of a few countries that allied with the United States in every major international conflict;

Whereas Greece is a strategic partner and ally of the United States in bringing political stability and economic development to the volatile Balkan region, having invested more than \$20,000,000,000 in the countries of the region, thereby helping to create more than 200,000 new jobs, and having contributed more than \$750,000,000 in development aid for the region;

Whereas Greece actively participates in peacekeeping and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations including the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe;

Whereas Greece received worldwide praise for its extraordinary handling during the 2004 Olympic Games of more than 14,000 athletes and more than 2,000,000 spectators and journalists, a feat Greece handled efficiently, securely, and with hospitality;

Whereas Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel;

Whereas the Government of Greece has taken important steps in recent years to further cross-cultural understanding and rapprochement with Turkey, as seen by Prime Minister of Greece George Papandreou's trip to Turkey, just days after being elected and the Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Greece in May 2010, during which Greece and Turkey established a Joint Ministerial Council, made up of 10 ministers from each country, to discuss tangible ways to enhance cooperation in various fields of interest;

Whereas Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights;

Whereas those and similar ideals have forged a close bond between Greece and the United States; and

Whereas it is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate March 25, 2011, Greek Independence Day, with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great nations were born: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Greece as they celebrate the 190th anniversary of the independence of Greece;

(2) expresses support for the principles of democratic governance to which the people of Greece are committed; and

(3) notes the important role that Greece has played in the wider European region and in the community of nations since gaining its independence 190 years ago.

CONDEMNING THE ELECTIONS IN BELARUS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 105.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 105) to condemn the December 19, 2010, elections in Belarus, and to call for the immediate release of all political prisoners and for new elections that meet international standards.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, much of the world's recent attention has understandably been on the Middle East—and of course this week on the terrible situation with one of America's closest allies—Japan. I understand that USAID has sent disaster relief teams to help in the earthquake and tsunami devastated cities and that the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan is off the coast to help with relief operations.

Events there are truly heartbreaking and we stand in solidarity with our Japanese friends during this time of continued crisis and rebuilding.

Amid these major global events I want to make sure we don't lose sight of the continuing political repression in the last dictatorship of Europe—Belarus.

You see, despite the transformations that swept through eastern and central Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus remains stuck in time under the tyranny of Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the country with an iron fist for most of the last two decades.

Lukashenko's security forces that help prop up his illegitimate regime are actually still called the KGB—and they have the same despicable tactics as the old Soviet KGB.

Under Lukashenko's regime, those who dare to speak up against the government or attempt to participate in any semblance of democratic activity find themselves arrested, beaten, or worse.

In December, six of the seven candidates who chose to run against Lukashenko were arrested on election day when protesting the sham electoral process. Some were beaten and one, Vladimir Nekliaev, was even yanked out of a hospital and taken for interrogation by Lukashenko's KGB henchmen.

Over 600 other protesters were also arrested.

I had the opportunity to visit Belarus some weeks after the election and meet with the family members of these brave candidates and activists and I must tell you, it was a very moving experience.

I want to tell you about Milana Mikhalevich a 34-year-old mother of two, whose husband Ales was a Presidential candidate.

She told me of her harassment by Belarusian officials since her husband's arrest; how they denied her access to see him or even exchange letters. Any attorneys brave enough to defend him faced disbarment or criminal charges.

As she described this Lukashenko nightmare, Milana's 14-month-old daughter Alena scrambled around her feet—her father held somewhere in a Lukashenko KGB nightmare.

Just a few weeks ago Ales was finally released from detention. He promptly issued a statement detailing the abuse and torture that he endured in his 2-month KGB detention, including being beaten, stripped naked, and hung by his hands.

He said that following his torture he was forced to sign a document in which he pledged to cooperate, noting "after my joints crunched I did all they wanted."

Madam President, can anyone believe this kind of barbarism is still happening in Europe?

At the end of January, following repeated condemnations of the December election and demands for the release of all political prisoners, the United States and the European Union imposed targeted travel and financial sanctions on Lukashenko and his group of enablers.

Tragically, since then, Lukashenko's KGB has continued daily raids on the homes and offices of those suspected of ties to the democratic opposition, human rights organizations, or independent media.

Lukashenko has ignored election monitor reports questioning the credibility of the election and international demands to release all political prisoners. He has pulled his country even further into isolation and made it the subject of international scorn.

Following the old Soviet playbook, his government has tried to blame outside forces and other countries—everyone but Lukashenko himself—for the shameful political mess he has created.

You may have read his very troubling interview recently in the Washington Post in which he brazenly claimed "We told you clearly that there is no less democracy in Belarus than there is in the United States" and that despite the international condemnation and sanctions, he would order the same arrests and repression on election night all over again given the chance.

Just last week his government formally sentenced a number of protesters to terms of between 3-4 years in a high security prison. Others still face trials and possible 15 year sentences.

That is why last week, Senators LIEBERMAN, MCCAIN, CARDIN, SHAHEEN, GRAHAM, KYL, BARRASSO, MARK UDALL, KIRK, LAUTENBERG and I submitted a Senate resolution on Belarus that, among other things:

Condemns the December election as illegitimate and fraudulent and calls for new elections that are genuinely democratic; calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners in