

Volker Turk, issued a report that noted, “The 2022 economic crisis is a demonstration of the indivisibility of human rights and how impunity, corruption and the weakening of democratic and rule of law institutions ultimately impacted the economic situation. In order to achieve a path to recovery and sustainable development Sri Lanka will need to address the longer-term serious governance and accountability deficits, as well as the continuing legacy of the armed conflict.” Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the peaceful, democratic, and economic aspirations of the people of Sri Lanka;

(2) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to hold free and fair local and provincial elections without further delay;

(3) urges the Government and security forces of Sri Lanka to respect the rights of all Sri Lankans, including the right to protest peacefully, associate freely, and commemorate their dead;

(4) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to institute meaningful security sector reform, including by reducing the deployment of security forces across the North and East to appropriate peacetime levels, and ensure those credibly implicated in human rights abuses are removed from positions of authority;

(5) calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to promote an inclusive, pluralistic Sri Lanka through structural reforms and confidence-building measures to address corruption, nepotism, outsized expenditures on the military, minority disenfranchisement, impunity, and other issues that hamper the long-term potential growth of Sri Lanka;

(6) welcomes Sri Lanka’s newly passed anticorruption legislation and calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that investigations and prosecutions of corrupt officials can move forward independently and impartially;

(7) calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to strengthen the rule of law, including by respecting and reinforcing the independence of the judiciary and independent institutions;

(8) welcomes the October 2022 passage of the 21st Amendment package by the Parliament of Sri Lanka as an initial step toward reducing centralized power and encourages further measures to alleviate a lack of meaningful checks and balances;

(9) welcomes the initial agreement by the International Monetary Fund to loan Sri Lanka \$3,000,000,000 to help address the ongoing economic crisis and urges the Government of Sri Lanka to address the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund’s September 30, 2023 staff report, which notes that the “absence of visible progress on addressing corruption and holding officials to account for past behaviour raises popular concerns that officials will continue to enjoy impunity for their misconduct”;

(10) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to immediately repeal or amend the Prevention of Terrorism Act and ensure that the Act or any counterterrorism laws passed to replace it are aligned with international norms and reflect inclusive consultation with Sri Lankan civil society;

(11) calls for an immediate moratorium on the appropriation of land facilitated by the Government of Sri Lanka in the North and East and restitution of appropriated lands in a way that guarantees effective access and productive use;

(12) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to fully implement the Constitution of Sri Lanka, including the 13th Amendment’s commitments to devolve specified powers over land, the police, education, health, agri-

culture, housing, and finances to the provinces;

(13) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to reach a consensus with opposition parties on behalf of all Sri Lankans, including Tamils, Indian-origin Tamils, Muslims, and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups, to address longstanding issues, including those relating to human rights violations and abuses, disenfranchisement, justice, and accountability, and work toward a sustainable political solution that promotes reconciliation;

(14) calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to accept and use Sri Lanka’s own Consultation Task Force report as the basis for taking action in support of justice, accountability, and reconciliation, and further calls on the government to design and implement all justice measures, including a potential truth commission, with input from, the participation of, and support from victims and survivors; and

(15) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to engage positively and cooperatively with the United Nations’ Human Rights Council, agencies, and special procedure mandate holders and facilitate the implementation of their recommendations on good governance, rule of law, corruption, justice, accountability, and human rights.

SENATE RESOLUTION 494—EXPRESSING THE NEED FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

S. RES. 494

Whereas the planet is facing an unprecedented biodiversity crisis, largely driven by human activity;

Whereas recent scientific studies have confirmed human-driven activities are significantly damaging the ecosystems of the planet by—

(1) altering 75 percent of the area of terrestrial environments and 66 percent of marine environments;

(2) directly exploiting wildlife and plant species;

(3) accelerating climate change, directly harming nature and exacerbating other threats;

(4) polluting air, land, and water; and

(5) introducing invasive species;

Whereas recent scientific studies have shown that human-driven threats have harmed biodiversity by—

(1) threatening approximately 1,000,000 species with imminent or near extinction, including—

(A) more than 40 percent of amphibians;

(B) 33 percent of corals, sharks, shark relatives, and marine mammals;

(C) more than 60 percent of cycads and more than 30 percent of conifer trees; and

(D) approximately 10 percent of the more than 5,000,000 insect species on the planet; and

(2) causing population sizes of wild species to decline by—

(A) an average of 68 percent for species of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles;

(B) approximately 3,000,000 birds in North America since 1970;

(C) approximately 50 percent for species of live corals; and

(D) an average of more than 20 percent overall;

Whereas human activity is accelerating the decline of important economic and cultural services, including—

(1) land productivity, with a reduction in the productivity of approximately ¼ of the land surface;

(2) land and freshwater resources, with more than ⅓ of the land surface and 75 percent of freshwater resources devoted to crop or livestock production;

(3) global crops, with approximately \$500,000,000,000 of global crops at risk due to pollinator loss;

(4) marine fisheries, with ⅓ of marine fisheries overfished, 60 percent fished at capacity, and only 7 percent fished below capacity; and

(5) environmental health, with 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions caused by land clearing, crops, and fertilization;

Whereas the decline of biodiversity disproportionately impacts indigenous and other communities that rely on nature for essential services, including Native Americans and Alaska Natives, who offer unique perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge critical to preserving biodiversity;

Whereas the decline of biodiversity and ecosystem services observed worldwide is occurring in the United States;

Whereas the United States possesses an abundance and great diversity of species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are of significant value to the United States for intrinsic, aesthetic, ecological, educational, cultural, recreational, economic, and scientific reasons;

Whereas the decline of biodiversity presents a direct threat to the security, health, and well-being of the people of the United States by causing economic harm through the loss of valuable ecosystem services, including zoonotic disease buffering, pollination, water filtration, soil replenishment, the provision of game species, medicinal products, and recreational opportunities;

Whereas communities of color, low-income communities, Tribal communities, and other populations that have been systematically and deliberately targeted for citing environmentally degrading activities and excluded from conservation efforts face disproportionate impacts from biodiversity loss;

Whereas Federal agencies are tasked with protecting and conserving biodiversity in the United States and worldwide through a variety of legal and policy channels;

Whereas there is no coordinating policy to maximize the effectiveness of the conservation efforts of the Federal Government and collaboration by the Federal Government with States, local governments, Indian Tribes, private landowners, and other non-governmental stakeholders;

Whereas the United States should play a leading role on the international stage in addressing the biodiversity crisis, yet the United States—

(1) is not a party to—

(A) the Convention on Biological Diversity, done at Rio de Janeiro June 5, 1992;

(B) the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (commonly known as “the Convention on Migratory Species”), done at Bonn November 6, 1979; or

(C) other relevant international agreements;

(2) does not issue a periodic national biodiversity outlook, contrary to most other countries; and

(3) does not have a national biodiversity strategy as part of the Intergovernmental

Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and

Whereas scientific research highlights essential pathways forward, including—

(1) establishing the effective conservation, restoration, and durable protection of not less than 30 percent of an ecologically representative area of the lands, freshwaters, and oceans in the United States and in the world by 2030 by working collaboratively with governments, land owners, fishers, indigenous peoples, communities, and others;

(2) restoring or rewilding species, degraded habitats, and ensuring integrity and connectivity of protected areas;

(3) retaining and protecting highly intact ecosystems;

(4) reducing pesticide use to levels not higher than necessary for ecologically sustainable and safe food production; and

(5) addressing the threats posed by invasive species: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) it is in the national interest for the Federal Government to establish a national biodiversity strategy to—

(A) ensure the conservation and restoration of the biodiversity of the United States;

(B) secure and restore the ecosystem services provided by nature for current and future generations;

(C) deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

(D) set ambitious, yet necessary, goals for protecting biodiversity in the coming decades;

(E) promote social equity and justice in the conservation of the biodiversity of the United States;

(F) coordinate the actions of Federal agencies to advance the conservation of biodiversity;

(G) promote collaboration among Federal, State, and Tribal governments, nongovernmental stakeholders, civil society, and international parties to advance conservation;

(H) honor the Federal trust obligations to Indian Tribes and Native Americans; and

(I) provide global leadership in addressing the biodiversity crisis; and

(2) the national biodiversity strategy described in paragraph (1) should include direction on—

(A) achieving the national goal of conserving not less than 30 percent of the lands and waters of the United States to protect biodiversity and address climate change by 2030 (referred to in this resolution as “30x30”), supporting international efforts to achieve the same goal on a global scale, and setting other goals necessary to reduce the threats to biodiversity as indicated by the best available scientific information;

(B) taking action to protect threatened, endangered, and at-risk species from further imperilment or extinction;

(C) climate adaptation and mitigation strategies for biodiversity conservation, including—

(i) leading international agreements to combat climate change, including the decision of the 21st Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted in Paris on December 12, 2015 (commonly known as the “Paris Agreement”);

(ii) establishing climate refugia and climate corridors for conservation of species affected by climate change; and

(iii) the rapid build-out of renewable energy;

(D) reviewing existing laws, plans, programs, and strategies that are relevant to addressing threats to biodiversity to assess how the laws, plans, programs, and strategies can contribute to the objectives of this resolution and, as necessary, recommending new laws, plans, programs, and strategies;

(E) ensuring integration of biodiversity protection across the activities of the Federal Government, including foreign policy and foreign assistance;

(F) advancing conservation in collaboration with State and Tribal governments and on private lands through incentives, funding, technical support, and partnerships;

(G) incorporating indigenous knowledge and practices to support conservation and biodiversity, safeguarding the rights and needs of indigenous peoples, and ensuring fulfillment of the Federal trust obligations that apply to government decisionmaking that impacts the interests of Native Americans;

(H) ensuring equitable access to nature, inclusive decisionmaking on biodiversity protection, and just allocations of resources to achieve the goals of this resolution, including with respect to systematically and deliberately targeted populations such as communities of color, low-income communities, and Native American communities;

(I) establishing regular monitoring and reporting on the status of biodiversity in the United States and globally, including a quadrennial assessment reported to Congress and the people of the United States;

(J) prioritizing programs to identify knowledge gaps and accelerate research and development of new conservation solutions across sectors;

(K) assessing and integrating the role of the United States in international biodiversity, ecosystem services, and nature conservation in—

(i) national security and foreign policy strategies, including in international development policies, planning and finance, diplomatic dialogues, and trade agreements; and

(ii) advancing global adoption of and progress toward 30x30; and

(L) funding existing conservation programs, developing new funding sources, and reducing subsidies that harm biodiversity in amounts commensurate with the scale of the harm to biodiversity.

SENATE RESOLUTION 495—HONORING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC UNDER THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. RICKETTS (for himself and Mrs. FISCHER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 495

Whereas Nebraska has the highest percentage of citizens with Czech ancestry of any State in the United States;

Whereas the State Partnership Program was created in 1993 to link a State's National Guard with a partner nation's military, security forces, and disaster response organizations in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship;

Whereas, in July 1993, the partnership between the State of Nebraska and the Czech Republic under the State Partnership Program was established;

Whereas the State Partnership Program has fostered military-to-military cooperation and enhanced interoperability between units of the Nebraska National Guard and the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic;

Whereas that cooperation has included joint training exercises, exchanges of personnel, and sharing of military expertise and practices;

Whereas, since 1993, the Nebraska National Guard has executed more than 300 engage-

ments with the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic and has engaged with more than 2,500 members of those forces;

Whereas the State Partnership Program has been mutually beneficial for the Nebraska National Guard and the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, strengthening diplomatic, military, and cultural ties and contributing to regional and international security and cooperation;

Whereas the State Partnership Program has better prepared the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exercises, integration in NATO air mobility operations, cyber defense, and combined exercises with other State Partnership Program partners;

Whereas the Czech Republic has been a trusted and valuable member of the NATO alliance since the Czech Republic joined the alliance in 1999;

Whereas the Czech Republic has contributed to various NATO-led missions, including in Afghanistan, where 11,500 Czech soldiers were deployed and 14 were killed in action fighting the Taliban;

Whereas the Czech Republic has provided significant military and humanitarian support to Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in response to Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022; and

Whereas the Czech Republic has been recognized with awards for joint military operations carried out in cooperation with the United States, NATO achievements, and acts of heroism and service: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the cooperation and beneficial relationship between the Czech Republic and the State of Nebraska and the steadfast partnership between the Czech Republic and the United States over the past 30 years;

(2) expresses appreciation for the commitment of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic to the Nebraska National Guard in advancing peace, stability, and mutual understanding;

(3) expresses continued support for the State Partnership Program between the State of Nebraska and the Czech Republic;

(4) commends the Czech Republic for committing to meet the NATO target of spending at least two percent of its Gross Domestic Product on defense in 2024; and

(5) commends the Czech Republic for increasing its cooperation with Taiwan, including collaboration that may enhance Taiwan's defense posture.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1376. Ms. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1373 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 2670, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1376. Ms. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1373 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 2670, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for