

perpetrated at least 43 cases of targeted persecution of the clergy and more than 109 acts pressuring churches and religious figures representing Orthodox Christians, Ukrainian Greek-Catholics, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses since the launch of its full-scale invasion in February 2022;

Whereas violent extremists and non-state actors continue to capitalize upon violence and instability in countries to perpetrate serious human rights violations against religious minorities, including in—

(1) Latin America, where criminal gangs and paramilitary groups threaten and displace indigenous communities, destroy places of worship, and forcibly require conversion or renunciation of ancestral practices;

(2) Nigeria, where violent, non-state militant groups such as Boko Haram target Christians, as well as persons engaged in “un-Islamic” activities, including Muslim critics and elders;

(3) the Sahel region of Africa, where violent extremist organizations threaten violence against Christians who do not convert to Islam;

(4) Syria, where violent extremist organizations restrict the religious freedom of non-confirming Sunni Muslims and threaten the property, safety, and existence of religious minority groups such as Alawites, Christians, and Druze; and

(5) Yemen, where the Houthis rebels harass, defame, and incite hatred against vulnerable faith communities including the Christians, Baha'is, Jews, and non-religious persons who continue to be forced to flee to the south of the country or leave Yemen entirely; and

Whereas religious sites continue to be damaged or destroyed, especially in areas of conflict, including in—

(1) Burma, where the military junta has destroyed approximately 200 houses of worship and religious sites such as Buddhist monasteries, churches, and mosques, and has occupied religious compounds for use as military bases;

(2) China, where the government has destroyed mosques, shrines, gravesites, and other religious and cultural sites throughout Xinjiang and the country;

(3) Ethiopia, where ongoing violence between the government and non-state actors has led to drone strikes and attacks on church compounds such as the Full Gospel Church in the Oromiya region in which 8 people were killed;

(4) India, where places of worship such as Christian churches and Muslim madrasas continue to be destroyed, especially those in predominantly Christian and Muslim neighborhoods;

(5) Nigeria, where violent, non-state groups, such as Boko Haram, attack population centers and religious targets, including churches and mosques;

(6) Sudan, where members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked a Coptic Christian monastery and raided the Sudanese Episcopal Church in Khartoum, using both as bases for military operations; and

(7) Ukraine, where over 600 religious buildings have been damaged or destroyed since Russia's full-scale invasion of the country began in February 2022: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes religious freedom as a fundamental human right;

(2) recognizes the critical importance of religious freedom in—

(A) supporting democracy, good governance, and the rule of law;

(B) encouraging pluralism and robust political participation; and

(C) fostering global stability and peace;

(3) expresses grave concern over threats to religious freedom around the world, such as

through harassment, violence, and imprisonment;

(4) condemns all efforts to suppress religious freedom, including through the criminalization of—

(A) religious exercise in public or private;

(B) the choice to have no faith;

(C) conversion from one religion to another;

(D) advocacy for religious freedom;

(E) sharing and spreading religious messages and educational materials; and

(F) construction and maintenance of religious holy sites;

(5) supports the invaluable work of religious freedom advocates in fighting for greater religious freedom around the world; and

(6) urges the Department of State to—

(A) continue robust bilateral and multilateral engagement with allies and partners on religious freedom;

(B) maintain and expand support for human rights activists, journalists, and civil society leaders working to protect religious freedom in countries of particular concern and Special Watch List countries;

(C) leverage all diplomatic and sanctions tools available to the United States Government to hold religious freedom violators accountable for their actions, including those authorized by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.);

(D) continue to impose sanctions on those responsible for violations of religious freedom pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Act (22 U.S.C. 2656 note);

(E) consider human rights abuses and religious freedom violations in prioritizing partners for free trade agreements; and

(F) promote religious freedom as an utmost priority for the United States in implementation of United States foreign policy.

SENATE RESOLUTION 53—RECOGNIZING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMPHIBIOUS LANDING ON THE JAPANESE ISLAND OF IWO JIMA DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE RAISINGS OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES ON MOUNT SURIBACHI

Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ERNST, Mr. KING, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. REED, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BANKS, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 53

Whereas, following the surprise attack by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the United States formally declared war on the Imperial Government of Japan on December 8, 1941;

Whereas, during the 4 years that followed the attack, the United States and Allied forces fought a prolonged counterattack against Japanese advances across the Pacific region;

Whereas the tactic of attacking, defeating, and controlling Japanese-held outposts through the use of amphibious assault landings against Japanese-held islands and territories (referred to in this preamble as “island hopping”) became crucial to successfully countering Japanese advances throughout the Pacific region;

Whereas the goal of island hopping was to secure airfields and supply bases—

(1) in order to progressively extend the sea control of the United States Navy westward across the Pacific Ocean towards Japan;

(2) in order to launch aerial bombardment attacks against the mainland of Japan using the new Boeing B-29 Superfortress; and

(3) in preparation for, and in anticipation of, a United States invasion of Japan;

Whereas, by early 1945, the United States and Allied forces bravely fought and advanced to the island of Iwo Jima, an 8-square mile island of volcanic rock and sand with 3 strategic airfields, located between the Mariana Islands and Japan;

Whereas Iwo Jima was—

(1) a strategic island with airfields to support the bombers of the United States with fighter escorts; and

(2) an essential base for emergency, refueling, and diversionary landings for B-29 bombers;

Whereas, under the command of Japanese Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, Iwo Jima was a heavily fortified island with nearly 11 miles of underground and networked tunnels, rooms, bunkers, artillery emplacements, ammunition dumps, and pillboxes supporting more than 21,000 Japanese soldiers;

Whereas, on February 19, 1945, under the leadership of United States Navy 5th Fleet Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, United States Marine Corps V Amphibious Corps Major General Harry Schmidt, 3rd Marine Division Major General Graves B. Erskine, 4th Marine Division Major General Clifton B. Cates, and 5th Marine Division Major General Keller E. Rockey, the United States launched an amphibious landing and assault on Iwo Jima (referred to in this preamble as the “Battle of Iwo Jima”) that culminated with the engagement of more than 70,000 members of the United States Marine Corps, supported by thousands of members of the United States Navy, the United States Coast Guard, and the United States Army serving as assault, garrison, and support forces;

Whereas the members of the United States Marine Corps who fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima overcame numerous disadvantages in the 36-day battle that included treacherous terrain, unfavorable weather conditions, and heavy enemy fire from an entrenched, determined, and fierce Japanese fighting force in places immortalized by members of the United States Marine Corps, including the “Meat Grinder” and “Bloody Gorge”;

Whereas, on February 23, 1945, only 5 days into the Battle of Iwo Jima, members of the United States Marine Corps ascended the highest point on the island, Mount Suribachi, and raised the flag of the United States 2 times, the second of which resulted in the iconic, Pulitzer Prize-winning image that—

(1) was captured on film by photographer Joe Rosenthal;

(2) has become a recognized symbol of determination, perseverance, and struggle;

(3) has been memorialized as the United States Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia;

(4) immortalized the fighting spirit of the United States Marine Corps and the heroism of the 6 Marine flag raisers portrayed; and

(5) has continued to inspire the people of the United States to fight in support of our Nation's interests and in support of our allies, even against formidable odds;

Whereas Secretary of the Navy, Hon. James Forrestal, who was observing the battle from the sea aboard a landing craft, remarked to Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith that, “the raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years.”;

Whereas the Battle of Iwo Jima, one of the bloodiest battles in the history of the United

States Marine Corps, resulted in more than 26,000 casualties for the United States, more than 6,800 of whom were killed;

Whereas the Battle of Iwo Jima led to 22 members of the United States Marine Corps and 5 members of the United States Navy receiving the Medal of Honor, representing—

(1) the most members of the United States Marine Corps ever to receive the highest military decoration in the United States for a single battle; and

(2) more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of all members of the United States Marine Corps to receive the decoration during World War II;

Whereas the secured airfields on Iwo Jima became emergency landing locations for 2,251 B-29 Bombers, saving the lives of an estimated 24,761 crewmen;

Whereas 160 days after the end and victory of the pivotal Battle of Iwo Jima the United States received the unconditional surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945;

Whereas the world owes a debt of gratitude to the members of the United States Marine Corps who selflessly led the fight for the strategic island of Iwo Jima in the middle of the Pacific theater; and

Whereas the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima will be marked by commemorative events on the island of Iwo Jima, in Washington, D.C., and internationally, organized by the people of the United States and Japan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 80th anniversary of the amphibious landing on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima that began on February 19, 1945, and ended on March 26, 1945;

(2) commemorates the iconic and historic raisings of the flag of the United States on Mount Suribachi that occurred on February 23, 1945;

(3) honors the Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, Army Air Crew, and Coast Guardsmen who fought bravely on Iwo Jima, including the thousands of Japanese soldiers who tenaciously defended the island;

(4) remembers and venerates the service members who gave their last full measure of devotion on the battlefield;

(5) recognizes the Allied victory at the Battle of Iwo Jima, which—

(A) was led by the United States Marine Corps; and

(B) made the defeat of the Empire of Japan in World War II possible;

(6) affirms the immortal words of Admiral Chester Nimitz, who stated that “uncommon valor was a common virtue” among the service members of the United States who fought on Iwo Jima;

(7) reaffirms the bonds of friendship and shared values between the United States and Japan, whose strong and resilient alliance demonstrates the power of reconciliation between former adversaries;

(8) encourages the people of the United States to honor the veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities;

(9) honors the service and sacrifice of the men and women who serve the United States today, carrying on the proud tradition of the individuals who came before them; and

(10) salutes the 250th year since the founding of the United States Marine Corps and the United States Navy.

SENATE RESOLUTION 54—EXPRESSING THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PANAMA CANAL TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. TUBERVILLE, and Mrs. BLACKBURN) submitted the following

resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 54

Whereas early efforts of the Colombian government and French investors to construct a canal across Panama were unsuccessful and resulted in bankruptcy by 1889;

Whereas, as a condition of United States Government support for Panama's independence from Colombia, including the positioning of United States troops in the then-territory of Panama, the United States was to be assured access to construct and control a canal in perpetuity, an agreement that culminated in the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, signed at Washington November 18, 1903;

Whereas the Panama Canal was never initiated, engineered, or built by the Panamanian government;

Whereas the United States Government funded, pioneered, and built the Panama Canal over a 10-year period from 1904 to 1914, at a cost of \$375,000,000 and 10,000 lives, and raised the canal above sea level through construction of a lock system;

Whereas, historically, the Panama Canal has been distinct from the sovereign territory of Panama;

Whereas the Panama Canal serves as a vital connection between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, connecting the east and west coasts of the United States and providing passage for more than 14,000 vessels in 2023;

Whereas approximately 72 percent of vessels traveling through the Panama Canal are traveling to or from United States ports;

Whereas, without the Panama Canal, vessels would have to pass through the notoriously dangerous Cape Horn, extending transit by nearly 8,000 miles;

Whereas, in 1977, President Carter surrendered United States control over the Panama Canal in a series of treaties with Panama known as the “Torrijos-Carter Treaties”;

Whereas one of those treaties, the Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal, signed at Washington September 7, 1977, otherwise known as the “Neutrality Treaty”, reserved the right of the United States to use armed force to defend the permanent neutrality of the Panama Canal;

Whereas, for nearly a decade, the People's Republic of China has steadily increased its footprint in the Panama Canal;

Whereas, in 2016, Panama ceded control of Margarita Island, the Panama Canal's largest Atlantic port, to the People's Republic of China-affiliated Landbridge Group in a \$900,000,000 agreement;

Whereas, in 2018, Panama entered into a \$1,400,000,000 agreement for the China Communications Construction Company and the China Harbor Engineering Company to construct the fourth bridge across the Panama Canal;

Whereas CK Hutchison Holdings, based in Hong Kong, manages two of the Panama Canal's five ports, including the Balboa port along the Pacific and Cristobal port along the Atlantic;

Whereas the rapid acceleration of Chinese influence in the Panama Canal poses a high risk of intelligence-gathering and surveillance by the People's Republic of China;

Whereas Chinese law requires the assets of civilian firms to be made available to support the armed forces of the People's Republic of China;

Whereas the Panama Canal would serve as a logistics point between the east and west coasts of the United States in the event of a conflict involving United States Armed Forces, cementing its value to homeland and hemispheric defense; and

Whereas the ability of the People's Republic of China to control major entry and exit

points of the Panama Canal would provide the People's Republic of China with a significant military advantage relevant to United States Armed Forces in the event of a conflict: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the ingenuity and labor of Americans that made the Panama Canal possible for future generations, with special regard for those Americans who lost their lives in pursuit of the Panama Canal project;

(2) expresses that the Panama Canal is vital to United States regional security, hemispheric hegemony, and economic interests;

(3) assesses that a pattern of Chinese-backed investment in port infrastructure and canal operations in Panama constitutes a violation of the Neutrality Treaty; and

(4) urges the Trump administration to ensure that the canal remains neutral and to take all appropriate measures to enforce the Neutrality Treaty.

SENATE RESOLUTION 55—RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2025 AS “NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH”

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BLUNT ROCH-ESTER, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WYDEN and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 55

Whereas the goals of National Mentoring Month are to raise awareness of and celebrate the powerful impact of mentoring relationships, recruit new mentors, and encourage institutions to integrate quality mentoring into their policies, practices, and programs;

Whereas quality mentoring fosters positive life and social skills, promotes self-esteem, bolsters academic achievement and college access, supports career exploration, and nurtures youth leadership development;

Whereas mentoring happens in many settings, including community-based programs, elementary and secondary schools, colleges, government agencies, religious institutions, and the workplace, and in various ways, including formal mentoring matches and informal relationships with teachers, coaches, neighbors, faith leaders, and others;

Whereas effective mentoring of underserved and vulnerable populations helps individuals confront challenges and display improved mental health and social-emotional well-being;

Whereas studies have shown that incorporating culture and heritage into mentoring programs can improve academic outcomes and increase community engagement, especially for Alaska Native and American Indian youth;

Whereas mentoring encourages positive youth development and smart daily behaviors, such as finishing homework and having healthy social interactions, and has a positive impact on the growth and success of a young person;

Whereas mentors help young people set career goals and can help connect mentees to industry professionals to train for and find jobs;

Whereas mentoring programs generally have a significant, positive impact on youth