

continue. Preconditions are an obstacle to that process in the Middle East as much as they were for another seemingly intractable conflict, in Northern Ireland.

Others have asked these questions, which are worth repeating: Does the Gaza war improve Israel's long-term, or even short-term, security? Was it realistic and in Israel's long-term interests to expect Hamas to accept Israel in advance of negotiations, rather than push for a total cessation of the use of violence and blockade, followed by negotiations? Was it realistic to expect the ceasefire to hold while Gaza remained under siege, rife with hunger, illness, joblessness, and hopelessness, and while construction of settlements continued, and even accelerated, in the West Bank?

On January 6, Secretary of State Rice spoke to the U.N. Security Council. I do not doubt the sincerity of her concern with the humanitarian situation in Gaza, or for the need for a ceasefire "that can endure and bring real security." We all want that. But her words were noteworthy for what they said about the dismal failure of the Bush administration's approach to the Middle East conflict. Eight years were squandered and mishandled, and President-elect Obama faces a far more difficult situation than his predecessor inherited.

Our credibility in the entire world has suffered immeasurably since 9/11. In particular our image in predominantly Muslim countries has been affected by the failure to advance a credible strategy to help resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict. This has pronounced and obvious implications for our security, for Israel's security, and for the entire Middle East region.

At this time of great opportunity in America to change our policies and make a true contribution to peace in the Middle East, we should be careful when we adopt resolutions on subjects as sensitive as this to be cognizant of the history of the region and the complexities of the situation. Above all, our goal should be to enhance our role as a force for peace and our ability to advance our Nation's interests.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, that there be no intervening action or debate, and that any statements related to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 10) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 10

Whereas Hamas was founded with the stated goal of destroying the State of Israel;

Whereas Hamas has been designated by the Secretary of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization;

Whereas Hamas has refused to comply with the requirements of the Quartet (the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations) that Hamas recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and agree to accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

Whereas, in June 2006, Hamas crossed into Israel, attacked Israeli forces and kidnapped Corporal Gilad Shalit, whom they continue to hold today;

Whereas Hamas has launched thousands of rockets and mortars since Israel dismantled settlements and withdrew from Gaza in 2005;

Whereas Hamas has increased the range of its rockets, reportedly with support from Iran and others, putting additional large numbers of Israelis in danger of rocket attacks from Gaza;

Whereas Hamas locates elements of its terrorist infrastructure in civilian population centers, thus using innocent civilians as human shields;

Whereas Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a statement on December 27, 2008, that "[w]e strongly condemn the repeated rocket and mortar attacks against Israel and hold Hamas responsible for breaking the ceasefire and for the renewal of violence there";

Whereas, on December 27, 2008, Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert said, "For approximately seven years, hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens in the south have been suffering from missiles being fired at them. . . . In such a situation we had no alternative but to respond. We do not rejoice in battle but neither will we be deterred from it. . . . The operation in the Gaza Strip is designed, first and foremost, to bring about an improvement in the security reality for the residents of the south of the country";

Whereas, on January 2, 2009, Secretary of State Rice stated that "Hamas has held the people of Gaza hostage ever since their illegal coup against the forces of President Mahmoud Abbas, the legitimate President of the Palestinian people. Hamas has used Gaza as a launching pad for rockets against Israeli cities and has contributed deeply to a very bad daily life for the Palestinian people in Gaza, and to a humanitarian situation that we have all been trying to address";

Whereas the humanitarian situation in Gaza, including shortages of food, water, electricity, and adequate medical care, is becoming more acute;

Whereas Israel has facilitated humanitarian aid to Gaza with over 500 trucks and numerous ambulances entering the Gaza Strip since December 26, 2008;

Whereas, on January 2, 2009, Secretary of State Rice stated that it was "Hamas that rejected the Egyptian and Arab calls for an extension of the tahadiya that Egypt had negotiated" and that the United States was "working toward a cease-fire that would not allow a reestablishment of the status quo ante where Hamas can continue to launch rockets out of Gaza. It is obvious that that cease-fire should take place as soon as possible, but we need a cease-fire that is durable and sustainable"; and

Whereas the ultimate goal of the United States is a sustainable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will allow for a viable and independent Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel, which will not be possible as long as Israeli civilians are under threat from within Gaza: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses vigorous support and unwavering commitment to the welfare, security, and survival of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure bor-

ders, and recognizes its right to act in self-defense to protect its citizens against acts of terrorism;

(2) reiterates that Hamas must end the rocket and mortar attacks against Israel, recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and agree to accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

(3) encourages the President to work actively to support a durable, enforceable, and sustainable cease-fire in Gaza, as soon as possible, that prevents Hamas from retaining or rebuilding the capability to launch rockets and mortars against Israel and allows for the long term improvement of daily living conditions for the ordinary people of Gaza;

(4) believes strongly that the lives of innocent civilians must be protected and all appropriate measures should be taken to diminish civilian casualties and that all involved should continue to work to address humanitarian needs in Gaza;

(5) supports and encourages efforts to diminish the appeal and influence of extremists in the Palestinian territories and to strengthen moderate Palestinians who are committed to a secure and lasting peace with Israel; and

(6) reiterates its strong support for United States Government efforts to promote a just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a serious and sustained peace process that leads to the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state living in peace alongside a secure State of Israel.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEVIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST STEPHEN G. ZAPASNIK

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a very special person and remember his life and sacrifice as a young man. I can identify with this; I was a specialist in the U.S. Army.

Stephen Zapasnik of Broken Arrow, OK—that is right outside of Tulsa—lost his life. He was only 19 years of age. He died on December 24—that was on Christmas Eve—in Baghdad, Iraq, along with two other soldiers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Stephen followed in the footsteps of his father by joining the Army and

went on to complete basic training in Fort Sill, OK. He was stationed at Fort Carson, CO, and assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. He deployed to Iraq in 2008.

Stephen, or Bud, as his mom called him, or Zap, as his friends called him—he had lots of names—is survived by his parents, Gary and Chris, and his sister, Ashley, and a very close friend, also named Chris, who lived with the Zapasniks since he was 15 years old, whom Stephen considered to be his brother.

Stephen's mother described his determination to enter the Army by losing over 90 pounds to get in. He was grossly overweight, but he made that sacrifice. She said she barely recognized him after basic training because he lost even more weight at that time.

His friends and fellow soldiers affectionately nicknamed him "Zap," describing him as a jokester who would happily make fun of himself if anyone needed to be cheered up. Zap would create short skits and record them on his camera in order to share them with anyone who would watch. After the accident, many of his fellow soldiers from his battalion got together and watched the movies he had made, staying up throughout the night, telling stories about him and laughing—exactly what Zap would have wanted them to do. Stephen loved video games, particularly his flight simulator game. He wanted to become a pilot someday.

His colleagues described Stephen as a fantastic shot, always a qualifying expert in every weapon. Chris Hamil said his brother volunteered to man the machine gun on top of his humvee. As we all know, and certainly the occupant of the Chair knows, that is one of the most exposed positions a person can take. He was willing to do that.

In his tribute comments, Staff Sergeant Barry summed Stephen up by saying:

Zap would give the shirt off his back or the last dollar in his pocket to anyone that needed it.

A comment from a friend:

My family will be forever grateful for young men like Stephen who risk themselves to provide protection and security to this great country of ours . . .

A spouse stationed at Fort Carson wrote:

Zap was one of my husband's soldiers and friends. Zap left an impression on our lives that we will never forget. He would come to my house and have the best manners and be so respectful . . . Zap always cared about others before himself, even offering to babysit my three children so that my husband and I could have a date right before he deployed. He left an impression on our lives that will never be forgotten and most of all my son loved him dearly . . . He was a hero in so many ways and he was a respected soldier always giving 100 percent.

His mom Chris wrote:

I am so proud of my son and what he accomplished as a member of the military family. I would not take back the man he had become or the hero he will always be for any-

thing, even if I could have him beside me again. He was an outstanding young man and he will live forever in my heart and soul.

Stephen was committed to what he felt he was called to do and fully understood the sacrifice he would be making by serving his country in Iraq. All those guys and gals over there know the risk they are under. They are willing to do that.

Before Stephen left for Iraq, he said:

Mom, if I ever don't come back, you know I will always be with you, and I will be with Jesus, and I will be fine.

Stephen had a strong faith in God, a strong commitment to his family and his friends, and a calling to protect our Nation by his service in the Army.

His mom said:

I know that he is perfectly safe and spending Christmas up there with Jesus.

Keep this in mind: This happened late on Christmas Eve.

She also expressed Stephen's pride to serve in the Army and to serve our country by fighting terrorism. She told me just a few minutes ago what a man he had become, and she thanked the U.S. Army for doing for him what was done for him.

The pride is now in Stephen, this young Oklahoman who enthusiastically joined the military at age 17 and was willing to lose 90 pounds in order to serve his country. He sacrificed his life in order to provide us with the precious freedoms we enjoy each day. His life embodies what it means to be a hero.

We remember you today, Stephen, your sense of humor, your commitment to your family and to the Lord.

Having just talked with his mother, she reaffirmed how strong Stephen was in his love for Jesus. I think we can say today—and we understand this—as fleeting as life is, this wink of time we are here—and I talked with Chris about this—that this today is not saying goodbye to Stephen, it is saying we will see you later. Thanks for your job well done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the issue of the economy and how we address the question of economic stimulus in the context of what is a very severe slowdown, recession, and in the context of what is an extraordinary situation relative to our deficits.

Just yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office reported that the deficit this year will be \$1.2 trillion. That is a number which most of us cannot even fathom. To try to put it in context, that size of deficit has not occurred in this country, if you calculate it as a percentage of GDP, since World War II. It is a deficit that is extraordinarily large. A deficit means we are running up debt our children are going to have to pay for. So it has a real effect on the

next generation and generations after that and their ability to be prosperous.

Not only does CBO tell us the deficit is going to be \$1.2 trillion, but they also tell us that with the stimulus package that is being proposed—and the package that is being talked about is in the range of \$700 billion to \$800 billion, and when you throw that spending on top of the deficit, we are talking about a deficit which will be closing in on \$2 trillion, which is about 11 percent of GDP. That will be almost four times larger than the largest deficit we have run since World War II. There are a lot of things causing this, of course, and most of them are tied to the economic slowdown. The economic slowdown is severe, but as we try to mute and lessen the impact of that slowdown on working Americans and on everyday Americans, we have to be careful that we don't do things which aggravate significantly in the outyears this country's fiscal strength and our children's ability to have a high quality of life.

I have said on numerous occasions that I believe President-elect Obama is on the right track relative to bringing forward a very robust and aggressive stimulus package. But what is key to determining whether that package is a good package or a marginal package is the policy that underlies it. It is not the numbers so much as it is the policy.

I believe there are a few signposts which we should follow as we develop such a package. The first is that we not unduly aggravate this long-term debt situation which we have as a country.

We know we are facing a fiscal tsunami as a nation. The baby boom generation is about to be into full retirement. During the term of this Presidency, should the President be re-elected, the baby boom generation will be very close to full retirement. That will mean we will have doubled the number of people in retirement in this country, and the cost of maintaining those retirees will put a massive burden on the backs of this tax generation but especially the next generation. We are talking \$60 trillion of unfunded liability that is coming at us. That is debt coming at us. That doesn't count the debt we are putting on the books today to deal with this economic slowdown.

So what is very critical as we address trying to get the economy going by using a stimulus package is we have to be very careful that we put in place programmatic activity that doesn't add to the long-term debt of the Nation, that are one-time items that will basically retract and no longer be part of the deficit function or add to the deficit function in the outyears.

The TARP program is a good example. The TARP program was a program we put in place to try to stabilize the financial institutions of this country, and it has. That program basically