

111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# S. RES. 108

Commending Captain Richard Phillips, the crew of the “Maersk Alabama”, and the United States Armed Forces, recognizing the growing problem of piracy off Somalia’s coast, and urging the development of a comprehensive strategy to address piracy and its root causes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 22, 2009

Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. CHAMBLISS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

Commending Captain Richard Phillips, the crew of the “Maersk Alabama”, and the United States Armed Forces, recognizing the growing problem of piracy off Somalia’s coast, and urging the development of a comprehensive strategy to address piracy and its root causes.

Whereas Somalia has been without a functioning central government since 1991, resulting in lawlessness and an increasingly desperate humanitarian situation;

Whereas according to a Somali human rights group, violence during the period from 2007 to 2009 has killed an estimated 16,000 people, wounded more than 28,000 people, and displaced more than 1,000,000 people;

Whereas these grim conditions and the absence of a functioning government have made Somalia an ideal base for piracy operations and a fertile ground for terrorist organizations, including the group al-Shabaab, whose leaders have ties to al-Qaeda;

Whereas acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia have been on the rise for more than a year, with the International Maritime Bureau reporting an estimated 111 attacks in 2008;

Whereas on Wednesday, April 8, 2009, Somali pirates used grappling hooks and weapons to board the Norfolk, Virginia-based container ship Maersk Alabama, which was captained by Richard Phillips, a resident of Underhill, Vermont, and crewed by 19 other citizens of the United States, and which was delivering food aid from the World Food Programme to hungry people in east Africa;

Whereas Captain Phillips, a native of Winchester, Massachusetts and a 1979 graduate of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, bravely led the Maersk Alabama crew in successfully retaking control of the ship by offering himself as a hostage in exchange for the release of the crew;

Whereas 4 pirates took Captain Phillips into an 18-foot lifeboat, held him captive at gunpoint, and repeatedly threatened to kill him;

Whereas the United States Central Command dispatched to the scene the destroyer U.S.S. Bainbridge, which was joined in subsequent days by the U.S.S. Halyburton and the U.S.S. Boxer, along with Navy SEAL teams, Marine Corps helicopters, and other joint assets of the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas hostage recovery experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation gave guidance to the crew of the U.S.S. Bainbridge, while the Department of State stayed in contact with Captain Phillips' family, including Phillips' wife Andrea and their 2 children, Daniel and Mariah, in Underhill, Vermont;

Whereas Maersk Limited, based in Norfolk, Virginia, worked diligently with the United States Armed Forces to try to obtain the release of Captain Phillips and the Maersk Alabama crew and to move the ship safely to port in Kenya, while sending personal representatives to Vermont to keep the Phillips family informed;

Whereas in the late evening of April 9, 2009, Captain Phillips made an escape attempt, jumping into the water of the Indian Ocean to swim for safety, only to be pursued by the pirates and quickly recaptured;

Whereas the President received regular briefings on the hostage crisis and provided the authority necessary for the United States Armed Forces to resolve it;

Whereas on April 12, 2009, Easter Sunday, Captain Phillips was rescued after the United States Armed Forces, which throughout the crisis spared no effort to defuse the situation and peacefully rescue Phillips, took the lives of 3 of the pirate captors when Phillips was seen to be in imminent danger; and

Whereas international commerce remains under threat while Somali pirates continue to hold for ransom more than 200 crew members of many nationalities: Now, therefore, be it

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

1           (1) Captain Phillips deserves the respect and  
2           admiration of all people of the United States for his  
3           brave conduct under life-threatening circumstances;

4           (2) the Senate shares the sense of relief and  
5           gratitude felt by the family and shipmates of Cap-  
6           tain Phillips;

7           (3) all members of the United States Armed  
8           Forces involved in the rescue operation, in particular  
9           members of the Navy and Navy SEAL teams who  
10          rescued Captain Phillips, the officials of other Fed-  
11          eral Government departments and agencies who con-  
12          tributed, and the crew of the Maersk Alabama, are  
13          to be commended for their exceptional efforts and  
14          devotion to duty; and

15          (4) the President should work with the inter-  
16          national community and the transitional government  
17          of Somalia to develop a comprehensive strategy to  
18          address both the burgeoning problem of piracy and  
19          its root causes.

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