

The physicians of the Stanislaus County Medical Society formed the Stanislaus Foundation for Medical Care to guarantee the delivery of quality medical care on a prepayment basis at a just and equitable cost to both the patient and physician. The foundation was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1957, and acts as a health management system. It was created and operated by local physicians to serve the best interests of the public and professional community.

Today, the Stanislaus County Medical Society has over 650 active, retired and resident members. The members serve the purpose of "promoting and developing the science and art of medicine, conserving and protecting the public health, promoting the betterment of the medical profession, cooperating with organizations of like purposes and uniting with similar societies from other counties of the State to form the California Medical Society."

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate the Stanislaus County Medical Society upon 100 years of service. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing the Society, and all of the members, many years of continued success.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 2010

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5136) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Chair, I rise today in strong support of amendment number 38 to the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2011.

I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON for including this amendment, which I introduced, in an en bloc package today.

Representative JOHN FLEMING of Louisiana, a member of the Armed Services Committee's Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, is cosponsoring the amendment. I appreciate his support and the leadership he has shown on the issue of improving and protecting our nation's bomber fleet.

This amendment requires reports from the Institute of Defense Analyses, the Congressional Budget Office and the Department of Defense that, taken together, will provide a comprehensive review of the sustainment and modernization requirements and costs related to the U.S. bomber force and long-range strike capability.

Over the past year, as I've met with Air Force leaders, including Secretary Michael Donley and Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz, we have discussed the need to sustain and modernize our nation's current bomber fleet as the Air Force begins to develop a next-generation bomber and long-range strike capability needed to maintain a strategic deterrence.

Since I was first elected to Congress in 2004, I have worked closely with the brave air-

men at Ellsworth Air Force Base in my state of South Dakota. Ellsworth is home to two wings of B-1 bombers, and I know the important role those planes have played in Iraq and Afghanistan. These planes, and the other bombers in our fleet, project power across the globe in order to keep potential enemies at bay and also serve to protect and save the lives of troops fighting on the ground.

As Members of Congress, we are charged with equipping our Armed Forces and are responsible for allocating taxpayer funds in the most fiscally responsible manner. This amendment ensures that we will accomplish both goals by better informing Congress and the Department of Defense on the best path forward for our nation's bomber fleet.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

PRESIDENT OF GABON, ALI BONGO ONDIMBA

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Madam Speaker, in early March, it was my pleasure and privilege to meet the new President of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba.

President Bongo was in New York in his capacity as head of state of the country that, for the month of March, presided over the United Nations Security Council. Gabon is one of three African countries that are members of the Security Council on a rotating basis.

President Bongo came to office after the death of his predecessor last year. Between June and October, Acting President Rose Francine Rogombe, who had previously served as president of Gabon's Senate, led a smooth and swift transition.

As a member of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, and Chair of the Financial Services Subcommittee on International Monetary Policy and Trade, I understand the importance of the relationship between the United States and countries of the Central African region.

In our conversation, I was impressed by President Ali Bongo's determination to improve the quality of life for the people of Gabon. He is committed to eliminating corruption that has plagued Gabon in the past.

I was particularly interested in Gabon's role as one of the six members of the Bank of Central African States and as a member of the Economic Community of Central African States. Gabon's capital city, Libreville, is also the location of one of the key regional offices of the African Development Bank, and it is the headquarters of the locally-owned and operated Gabonese Development Bank.

As one might expect, Central African countries, including Gabon, were hit hard by the global economic meltdown of the past few years. As a report from the International Monetary Fund noted on March 15, "The Gabonese economy went through a difficult year in 2009 due to the unusual domestic environment because of painful social developments and the preparation of the presidential elections on the one hand and to the unfavorable international economic situation on the other."

Given these circumstances, I listened carefully as President Bongo explained what his

government and those of neighboring states were doing to stabilize currency in the region and to regularize customs and tariffs. He also expressed his desire for attracting more foreign investment to Gabon—especially beyond the dominant oil-industry sector—and his vision for how to achieve that.

During his visit to the United States, President Bongo met with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Washington. Secretary Clinton said after their meeting that "Gabon is a valued partner of the United States, and this visit gave us an opportunity to discuss a wide range of common concerns." She went on to thank President Bongo "for his and Gabon's efforts on behalf of regional stability in Central Africa and for its leadership on the world stage, particularly at the United Nations."

In line with my own conversation with President Bongo on the same topics, Secretary Clinton said "We are very supportive of Gabon's efforts to diversify its economy, widen the circle of prosperity, and create new opportunities for its people" and added: "I want to recognize President Bongo's efforts to improve government efficiency, eliminate waste, and fight corruption."

To offer a sense of the purpose of President Bongo's visit to the United States, I would like to insert in the RECORD an article from America.gov by Jim Fisher-Thompson entitled "Gabon's President Meets Clinton, Calls Corruption Africa's Cancer," which was published on March 9.

[From America.gov, Mar. 9, 2010]

GABON'S PRESIDENT MEETS CLINTON, CALLS CORRUPTION AFRICA'S CANCER

(By Jim Fisher-Thompson)

WASHINGTON.—Gabon's president, Ali Bongo, intends to use his country's two-year seat on the United Nations Security Council to highlight democratic reforms and his fight against corruption, which he terms a "cancer" sapping Africa's strength and potential. "Unfortunately, when it comes to the African body, we have many diseases—and corruption is one of them," Bongo told America.gov in an interview after meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton March 8 at the State Department.

"Corruption is a major problem that has to be stopped," the African leader said, "which is why we are committed to fighting it. We know if we want to build a better future with responsible people, we especially need accountability, and this is what has been lacking." Gabon, with a population of fewer than 2 million, is largely dependent on the energy and extractive (mining and timber) sectors and is the fifth-largest supplier of oil in sub-Saharan Africa to the United States. In 2009, the nongovernment group Transparency International rated the nation 106 out of 180 countries in its annual corruption index, tied with Argentina, The Gambia, Niger and Benin.

After his election as president in August 2009 and before traveling to the United States, Bongo instituted a number of government reforms, including cutting Cabinet posts while restructuring the Treasury Department and launching an environmental effort called "Green Gabon."

At the same time, he streamlined government by eliminating several agencies and bureaucracies that were hindering innovation and investment in Gabon. He has also threatened criminal penalties for persons attempting to bribe public officials, according to a recent press report.

Despite the challenges of corruption and reform, Bongo told America.gov: "I remain