

printed in italic, and with an amendment to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

S. RES. 386

Whereas the people of the United States have a strong relationship with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a strong commitment to the principles of democracy and adherence to the rule of law;

Whereas, in 2006, the Government of the DRC adopted a new constitution that limited the President to two consecutive five-year terms, which for President Joseph Kabila expired on December 19, 2016;

Whereas President Kabila swore to uphold the constitution of the DRC as part of his oath of office;

Whereas the constitutionally required elections have not yet taken place;

Whereas citizens of the DRC have repeatedly demanded that their constitutional right to elect a new President after two terms be upheld and that President Kabila must therefore step down;

Whereas, on December 31, 2016, the National Episcopal Conference of Congolese Bishops mediated a political agreement between the ruling coalition and main opposition parties under which President Kabila is prohibited from running for a third term, constitutional changes which would extend the President's time in office are prohibited, and elections were to be held before the end of 2017;

Whereas, on March 31, 2017, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2348, which called for a "swift implementation" of the December 2016 political agreement, including "peaceful, credible, inclusive and timely elections no later than December 2017, leading to a peaceful transition of power";

Whereas, on June 21, 2017, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2360, which stressed "the importance of the DRC and its national partners taking all necessary steps to accelerate preparations for the elections without further delays";

Whereas, on November 5, 2017, the Congolese electoral commission released a calendar that would delay elections until at least December 23, 2018, while noting numerous "constraints" that could impact respect of this calendar;

Whereas the failure to hold constitutionally required elections has increased political uncertainty, violence, and instability inside the DRC, and the United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said that amid the political stalemate, "conflict is rapidly spreading across the country and in appalling ways, even in a country blighted by violence and insecurity for decades";

Whereas, despite contributions in billions of dollars in development, peacekeeping, humanitarian, and diplomatic support from the United States and the international community over the past two decades, persistent insecurity has plagued the DRC and a perpetual humanitarian crisis is devolving rapidly further as a result of President Kabila's continued effort to maintain the presidency;

Whereas the natural wealth of the DRC is monopolized by a narrow few and enabled by endemic corruption, regional proxy conflict, and poor governance, which together have promoted insecurity and resulted in rates of internal displacement, disease, and mortality approaching the highest in the world;

Whereas political space in the DRC continues to be heavily restricted, as evidenced by arrests and detention of members of the political opposition, democratic activists, and journalists, and by restrictions on fundamental freedoms such as speech and assembly, and Congolese state security forces have repeatedly responded to peaceful protestors with violence including assaults on Catholic communities;

Whereas American Michael Sharp and Swede Zaida Catalán, members of the United Nations

Group of Experts, were assassinated in 2017 while investigating reports of atrocities by state security forces in the Kasai region, and there has been little effort made by the Government of the DRC to cooperate with any independent investigation into these murders; and

Whereas members of the opposition have been targeted, arrested, harassed, and violently attacked by security forces: Now, therefore, be it Resolved,

That the Senate—

(1) expresses concern that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo failed to hold elections in 2016 as required by its Constitution and later failed to fulfill its political commitment to hold elections in 2017;

(2) expresses concern that the growing security, humanitarian, and human rights crisis in the DRC is exacerbated by the lack of a duly elected leadership;

(3) recognizes that impunity and the lack of effective rule of law undermine democracy, and that the arrest and detention of civil society activists and the harassment of political opponents close political space and repress peaceful dissent;

(4) calls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to complete concrete steps towards holding elections, including—

(A) issuance of district-level voter registration data;

(B) completion of legislation to enable redistricting;

(C) fulfillment of the constitutionally required step of "calling the electorate";

(D) publication of the final list of presidential and parliamentary candidates; and

(E) holding presidential, parliamentary, and provincial elections by December 23, 2018;

(5) calls on the opposition to take all steps possible within the DRC to support and promote immediate free, fair, and inclusive elections;

(6) welcomes United States Government sanctions targeting several senior security officials and other individuals responsible for human rights abuses, impeding democracy, and gross corruption in the DRC;

(7) encourages the careful vetting of all planned United States assistance to Congolese state security forces to ensure that its impact and importance to United States national security objectives outweigh the potential damage to United States interests that might result in working with the state security services of the DRC;

(8) notes the importance of continued unity among the international community that untested, un-piloted technology, such as electronic voting machines, given their high cost, risk of failure, and potential for manipulation, should not be used if a credible election process is intended to benefit all Congolese citizens;

(9) calls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to cooperate with United States, Swedish, and United Nations officials to enable a credible and independent investigation of the killing of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, and to identify and bring to justice those responsible for their murder;

(10) calls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end political arrests and free political detainees, including youth activists, in support of a credible and inclusive electoral environment; and

(11) urges the President of the United States, in close coordination with regional and other international partners, to use appropriate means—

(A) to provide appropriate electoral assistance to support the organization of credible elections in the DRC by December 23, 2018; and

(B) to deter further electoral calendar slippage and abuses against the people of Congo, including through the consideration of targeted sanctions against high-level DRC officials, including close associates of President Joseph Kabila responsible for further delay of or impediment to elections or otherwise maintaining President

Kabila's rule beyond the constitution's two-term limit.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on adoption of the resolution, as amended.

The resolution (S. Res. 386), as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to, the preamble, as amended, be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2018

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, July 17; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Blew nomination, under the previous order, and that at 11:45 a.m. all time be yielded back and the Senate then vote on confirmation of the nomination with no intervening action or debate, and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that following disposition of the Blew nomination and notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motions filed on Thursday, July 12 ripen; finally, that following the cloture vote on the Quarles nomination, the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the

previous order, following the remarks of Senators BROWN and SASSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Nebraska.

TRUMP-PUTIN SUMMIT

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about what happened in Helsinki today.

Let's not mince words. Today was a terrible day for the American brand, for the American people, and for all of our allies. We did not negotiate from a position of strength. We acted from a position of weakness. As a result, one of the world's worst despots walked away today from Helsinki with a win.

Vladimir Putin is walking away from Helsinki with an undeserved legitimacy. The United States took a loss today when we backed away from our longstanding commitment to principled American leadership and, frankly, basic reality.

Today the press asked the President of the United States whom he believed on the subject of Russia's information operation in the United States in 2016. Did he believe in the men and women of the U.S. intelligence community or did he believe in Vladimir Putin, a member of the Russian intelligence community, a thug turned Russian despot?

The choice here was between the people who are risking their lives on behalf of our freedom and people who go around the world taking people's lives to limit freedom. Did the President of the United States—how did he answer? He answered that he didn't see "any reason" why Putin would have interfered in the U.S. election.

Make no mistake. Putin has a reason. The reason is clear to all those who have been watching growing Russian authoritarianism in recent years. Putin wants to weaken the U.S. Government. Putin wants to make the American people believe that our system of government isn't any different than his "thugocracy." Putin wants to destroy NATO, which isn't just an alliance. It is, arguably, the most important military alliance in two millennia.

Putin wants to undermine confidence in self-government, not only in this country but around the world. That is why Putin, a Soviet-style dictator who thinks a lot more about American elections than he ever thinks about his sham elections, attacked us in 2016. It is why he is planning to attack us this fall in 2018. It is why there are ongoing information operations against the United States and against our public at present, as everyone who goes into a SCIF and reads their intelligence briefing knows. It is why Putin is planning to attack the U.S. 2020 election already.

That is why the men and women of the U.S. intelligence community unanimously and without any regard to party understand that Putin waged

an information operation against the United States in 2016.

That is why Dan Coats, an esteemed former Member of this body, went to the press today—not 6 months ago—and reaffirmed: "Our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy" remain the opinion of the U.S. intelligence community.

This isn't a question of Republican versus Democrats. This is a question of patriotism versus deciding that you want to be on the side of sowing discord and doubt in America.

We shouldn't sugarcoat this. Vladimir Putin is a despot, and he is propped up by a band of oligarchs every bit as corrupt as he is. Putin fakes democracy while preventing free and fair elections. Putin funnels massive amounts of Russian wealth from himself to himself and his cronies and keeps an iron grip on the press.

These matters are not matters of dispute. It is not "on the one hand" or "the other hand" or what some people are saying. The Russian people know who Vladimir Putin is. You can ask the leaders of political opposition in that country who tried to get a free and fair election. You can ask the human rights activists or the international observers who try to speak up against what he has done or show up in my office to give firsthand accounts in certain situations in which Putin has intervened. You can ask the journalists who tried to expose corruption in the country.

Do you know who these men and women often end up being? They are the men and women who just randomly, disproportionately happen to fall out of fifth story windows of office buildings in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the people who just randomly happen to show up in one-car accidents that either are never investigated or, when they are investigated, unfortunately, there weren't witnesses and there are never prosecutions.

Vladimir Putin is working overtime to make the Soviet Union great again. Over the past decade, he has carried out an aggressive, often brutal expansionist campaign. In 2008, he invaded next-door Georgia. In 2014, he invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea. Putin has provided military support to the Assad regime in Syria. Russian troops are responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians. Under the guise of attacking the Islamic State, Russia has targeted hospitals and schools and many other civilian locations.

Putin is currently flexing his muscle across Europe, although his preference there is always for subtle means than tanks and Kalashnikovs, if he can get away with it. One, he has more deniability and, two, it is cheaper. In 2007, Estonia was hit with a wave of cyber attacks originating in Russia—the beginning of a campaign of cyber warfare that has become one of Mr. Putin's primary tools. Not only in the Baltics and Ukraine but in Germany

and France, as recently as last year, Russian hackers attempted to interfere with elections, disrupt parliamentary proceedings, and shut down media operations. This is in addition to trying to put his thumb on the scale of pro-Putin parties across Europe, including by spreading misinformation through influential Russian-backed and Russian-originating social media accounts.

These questions are not actually gray—gray space war—but any Member of this body who does their homework, any Member of the House down the hall who does their homework, and lots of the good and well-meaning people who serve around the President who do their homework know these things to be true. These questions are not in dispute.

Putin's most daring performance to date, though, was deciding to take on the most powerful country in the world with an influence operation inside the United States. National political committees in 2016 saw their computer networks breached and their data stolen. Vladimir Putin isn't obsessed with the ups and downs of political life here in the United States. He isn't an agent of one party or the other—one candidate or the other. Vladimir Putin is an agent of chaos, and his objective is to undermine trust. His objective is to make Americans doubt ourselves and doubt whether U.S. leadership over the last 75 years has been a good or a bad thing and to doubt whether we should keep our word to our allies. Vladimir Putin's objective is to make us think there is no difference between countries on the global stage that believe in human rights, that believe in free press, free religion, free assembly, and free speech versus those who don't. Vladimir Putin's goal is to breach a moral equivalency that allows his thugocracy to be no less ugly than what happens in our country, where people who often disagree decide to argue by means of reason and persuasion, not by violence.

His goals aren't that hard to figure out. His enemy is trust and good faith. Vladimir Putin is trying to create mistrust in this country, and today the President of the United States decided to let Vladimir Putin off the hook and, in so doing, he creates an incentive for Putin to ratchet up his campaigns of misinformation. This should be a time for all Americans to stand together against what Putin is doing. It is a fundamental part of the President's job to articulate basic truths.

While we are being clear about who Vladimir Putin is, we should also be clear about who we, the American people, are. We are a nation that believes in human dignity. We believe this isn't just true of 320 million Americans; it is true of 7.5 billion people across this globe. We believe in free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right of protest—not because government gives us those rights but because God created us with dignity.