

Whereas the Wagner Group was involved in the Russian Federation's military takeover and illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region in February and March 2014, and in the subsequent insurgencies in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk;

Whereas the Wagner Group has been providing military support to the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria since 2015, fighting alongside its forces and helping it recapture significant parts of the country;

Whereas, on February 7, 2018, the Wagner Group led an armed assault on United States troops near the city of Deir al-Zour in eastern Syria, prompting a United States counterattack, in what the Washington Post has described as "the deadliest United States-Russia clash since the Cold War";

Whereas the Wagner Group has supported Khalifa Haftar and his "Libyan National Army" by providing mercenaries, artillery, tanks, drones, and ammunition in violation of a United Nations arms embargo, with Yevgeniy Prigozhin personally attending a meeting between Haftar and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in Moscow on November 7, 2018;

Whereas a United Nations report made public on May 6, 2020, concluded that the Wagner Group has operated up to 1,200 military contractors in Libya, including snipers and specialized military teams, serving "as an effective force multiplier" for Haftar's army;

Whereas Yevgeniy Prigozhin and his affiliated entities have been tied to influence operations on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation in Africa, with entities associated with Prigozhin reportedly operating in at least 20 countries, including the Central African Republic, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan;

Whereas about 235 Russian military and private security personnel have deployed to the Central African Republic since 2017, some of whom are reportedly employed by the Wagner Group, and some of whom provide personal security for President Faustin-Archange Touadéra;

Whereas Russian national Valery Zakharov, who is reportedly a former intelligence official, has served as a top national security advisor to Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra since at least 2018;

Whereas, in July 2018, Russian journalists Orkhan Dzhemal, Kirill Radchenko, and Alexander Rastorguyev were murdered in the Central African Republic while working on a documentary about the activities of the Wagner Group in that country;

Whereas neither the Government of the Central African Republic nor the Government of the Russian Federation are conducting credible and thorough investigations into the murder of these 3 journalists;

Whereas, according to an investigation by the London-based Dossier Center, the journalists had been tracked by officers of the Central African Republic gendarmerie who were in close communication with Russian nationals with ties to Prigozhin, including Alexander Sotov, who in turn was reportedly in contact with Zakharov;

Whereas companies owned by Yevgeniy Prigozhin reportedly had made regular payments to senior Central African Republic officials, including the Police Chief and the Minister of National Security;

Whereas, on December 20, 2016, the Department of the Treasury designated Yevgeniy Prigozhin under Executive Order 13661, "Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine," "for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in

support of, senior officials of the Russian Federation";

Whereas, on June 20, 2017, the Department of the Treasury designated the Wagner Group under Executive Order 13660, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine," "for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine";

Whereas, on March 15, 2018, the Department of the Treasury designated Yevgeniy Prigozhin, his affiliated entities, including the Internet Research Agency, and his subordinates under Executive Order 13694, "Blocking the Property of Certain Persons Engaging in Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities," for being "involved in interfering with [United States] election processes or institutions";

Whereas, on February 16, 2018, the Department of Justice announced the indictment of Yevgeniy Prigozhin and his affiliated entities, including the Internet Research Agency, for engaging in "operations to interfere with the United States political system, including the 2016 United States presidential election" and conducting "information warfare" against the United States;

Whereas, on September 20, 2018, the Department of State added Prigozhin, his affiliated entities, including the Internet Research Agency, and the Wagner Group to the list of persons identified as part of, or operating for or on behalf of, the defense or intelligence sectors of the Government of the Russian Federation under section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9525);

Whereas, on September 30, 2019, under Executive Order 13848, the Department of the Treasury took additional steps to increase pressure on Prigozhin by designating physical assets—3 aircraft and a yacht—and 3 associated front companies of his;

Whereas, on February 15, 2019, Gavin Williamson, then-United Kingdom Defense Secretary, said that the "clandestine use of proxies, mercenary armies like the infamous and unaccountable Wagner Group, allows the Kremlin to get away with murder while denying the blood on their hands";

Whereas, on December 13, 2018, John Bolton, then-Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, affirmed that "the predatory practices pursued by China and Russia. . . in Africa. . . pose a significant threat to United States national security interests"; and

Whereas General Stephen J. Townsend, Commander of the United States Africa Command, on April 2, 2019, expressed great "concern" about the Wagner group, and, on January 30, 2020, noted that private military contractors such as Wagner, are "leading the fight in Libya against the UN-backed and U.S.-recognized Government of National Accord"; Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the activities of Russian national Yevgeniy Prigozhin, his affiliated entities, and the Wagner Group pose a threat to the national interests and national security of the United States; and

(2) the President, in addition to maintaining sanctions on Yevgeniy Prigozhin, his affiliated entities, and the Wagner Group, should work with Congress to develop and execute a strategy drawing on the multiple instruments of United States national power available to the President, to counter the malign influence and activities of Prigozhin, the entities linked to him, and the Wagner Group.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I have 4 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS AND TO ADVANCING THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 465, S. Res. 392.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 392) recognizing the importance of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative to the relationship between the United States and the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and to advancing the policy of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic, and with an amendment to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

Whereas the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) was created in 2013 to build

a cadre of emerging leaders in member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with the goal of fostering regional cooperation and partnership with the United States;

Whereas YSEALI is composed of influential young leaders between 18 and 35 years of age from ASEAN countries (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and Timor-Leste who are making a difference in their communities, countries, and the region;

Whereas 65 percent of the population of the ASEAN region is under 35 years of age, and these 400,000,000 youth will determine the future of the region for decades to come;

Whereas YSEALI aims to further strengthen the enduring partnership between the United States and ASEAN;

Whereas YSEALI bolsters the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community pillar that seeks to build a people-centered, people-oriented ASEAN community, as reiterated at the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bangkok in July 2019;

Whereas YSEALI encourages its leaders to partner with each other and the United States Government to address common challenges, including economic growth, sustainable development, education, and civic engagement;

Whereas YSEALI academic and professional exchange programs in the United States allow visiting leaders to experience the culture and values of the United States first-hand, while establishing personal and professional ties to experts, institutions, organizations, companies, and local governments in the United States;

Whereas participants in YSEALI exchanges, upon returning to their countries, help promote a positive understanding of the United States;

Whereas YSEALI allows United States experts to visit ASEAN countries to share their expertise and work with YSEALI alumni on projects that advance common goals;

Whereas YSEALI programs in the Indo-Pacific region build the capacity of civil society in the fields of human rights, good governance, anti-corruption and transparency, social entrepreneurship, and media literacy, which are key to the Indo-Pacific efforts of the United States Government;

Whereas YSEALI programming increases the visibility of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region;

Whereas, in seven years, YSEALI has grown into a thriving community of more than 5,000 alumni and more than 140,000 virtual network participants;

Whereas YSEALI alumni are already distinguishing themselves as influential government officials, entrepreneurs, human rights activists, journalists, social entrepreneurs, and educators;

Whereas outstanding YSEALI alumni include two former Malaysian cabinet ministers and a Pulitzer Prize-winning Burmese journalist imprisoned for investigating human rights violations against the Rohingya;

Whereas YSEALI alumni are valuable partners to embassies and agencies of the United States overseas;

Whereas the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-409; 132 Stat. 5387) (referred to in this preamble as "ARIA") emphasized the importance of ASEAN to the United States and supported the elevation of the relationship between the United States and ASEAN to a strategic partnership; and

Whereas ARIA authorized \$25,000,000 to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to support Indo-Pacific young leaders initiatives, including YSEALI, the ASEAN Youth Volunteers Program, and other people-to-people exchange programs that focus on building the capacity of democracy, human rights, and good governance activists in the Indo-Pacific region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates the partnership of the United States with young leaders in Southeast Asia;

(2) recognizes the importance of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) to—

(A) advancing the soft power of the United States in Southeast Asia; and

(B) promoting human rights, democracy, and good governance in the Indo-Pacific region;

(3) emphasizes the key role of YSEALI in—

(A) strengthening the relationship of the United States with the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); and

(B) elevating the profile and standing of the United States as a major partner in the region;

(4) stresses the importance of YSEALI in building leadership capacity among civil society, governments, and private enterprises in ASEAN member states and across Southeast Asia; and

(5) encourages the Department of State to promote the YSEALI program to the maximum extent possible as a valuable tool to advance mutually beneficial cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment to the resolution be agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that 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, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 392), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 392

Whereas the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) was created in 2013 to build a cadre of emerging leaders in member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with the goal of fostering regional cooperation and partnership with the United States;

Whereas YSEALI is composed of influential young leaders between 18 and 35 years of age from ASEAN countries (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and Timor-Leste who are making a difference in their communities, countries, and the region;

Whereas 65 percent of the population of the ASEAN region is under 35 years of age, and these 400,000,000 youth will determine the future of the region for decades to come;

Whereas YSEALI aims to further strengthen the enduring partnership between the United States and ASEAN;

Whereas YSEALI bolsters the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community pillar that seeks to build a people-centered, people-oriented ASEAN community, as reiterated at the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bangkok in July 2019;

Whereas YSEALI encourages its leaders to partner with each other and the United States Government to address common challenges, including economic growth, sustainable development, education, and civic engagement;

Whereas YSEALI academic and professional exchange programs in the United

States allow visiting leaders to experience the culture and values of the United States first-hand, while establishing personal and professional ties to experts, institutions, organizations, companies, and local governments in the United States;

Whereas participants in YSEALI exchanges, upon returning to their countries, help promote a positive understanding of the United States;

Whereas YSEALI allows United States experts to visit ASEAN countries to share their expertise and work with YSEALI alumni on projects that advance common goals;

Whereas YSEALI programs in the Indo-Pacific region build the capacity of civil society in the fields of human rights, good governance, anti-corruption and transparency, social entrepreneurship, and media literacy, which are key to the Indo-Pacific efforts of the United States Government;

Whereas YSEALI programming increases the visibility of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region;

Whereas, in seven years, YSEALI has grown into a thriving community of more than 5,000 alumni and more than 140,000 virtual network participants;

Whereas YSEALI alumni are already distinguishing themselves as influential government officials, entrepreneurs, human rights activists, journalists, social entrepreneurs, and educators;

Whereas outstanding YSEALI alumni include two former Malaysian cabinet ministers and a Pulitzer Prize-winning Burmese journalist imprisoned for investigating human rights violations against the Rohingya;

Whereas YSEALI alumni are valuable partners to embassies and agencies of the United States overseas;

Whereas the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-409; 132 Stat. 5387) (referred to in this preamble as "ARIA") emphasized the importance of ASEAN to the United States and supported the elevation of the relationship between the United States and ASEAN to a strategic partnership; and

Whereas ARIA authorized \$25,000,000 to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to support Indo-Pacific young leaders initiatives, including YSEALI, the ASEAN Youth Volunteers Program, and other people-to-people exchange programs that focus on building the capacity of democracy, human rights, and good governance activists in the Indo-Pacific region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates the partnership of the United States with young leaders in Southeast Asia;

(2) recognizes the importance of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) to—

(A) advancing the soft power of the United States in Southeast Asia; and

(B) promoting human rights, democracy, and good governance in the Indo-Pacific region;

(3) emphasizes the key role of YSEALI in—

(A) strengthening the relationship of the United States with the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); and

(B) elevating the profile and standing of the United States as a major partner in the region;

(4) stresses the importance of YSEALI in building leadership capacity among civil society, governments, and private enterprises in ASEAN member states and across Southeast Asia; and

(5) encourages the Department of State to promote the YSEALI program to the maximum extent possible as a valuable tool to advance mutually beneficial cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH 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. GARDNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 468, S. Res. 502.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 502) recognizing the 75th 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.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 502) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 13, 2020, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

SUPPORTING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN HELPING SAVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH VACCINES AND IMMUNIZATION THROUGH GAVI, THE VACCINE ALLIANCE

Mr. GARDNER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 469, S. Res. 511.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 511) supporting the role of the United States in helping save the lives of children and protecting the health of people in developing countries with vaccines and immunization through GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic, and with an amendment to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

Whereas access to vaccines and routine immunizations can protect children from deadly but preventable diseases, reduce poverty, and contribute to economic growth by enabling people to live longer, healthier, and more productive lives;

Whereas investments in the development and deployment of vaccines and immunizations can

also help enhance global health security by reducing the incidence of deadly and debilitating diseases and containing the spread of infectious diseases before they become pandemic health threats;

Whereas, prior to 2000, resources for and access to vaccines for children in the developing world were declining, immunization rates were stagnant or decreasing, and nearly 10,000,000 children were dying each year before reaching their 5th birthday;

Whereas, prior to 2000, it was common for new life-saving vaccines to take up to 15 years to be introduced in the world's least developed countries;

Whereas, in 2000, the United States Government joined forces with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization, the World Bank, other donor governments, and representatives of developing countries, faith-based organizations, civil society, and the private sector, including the vaccine industry, to create the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (now known as GAVI or GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance), a public-private partnership to expand access to new and underused vaccines, reduce the incidence of deadly and debilitating diseases, prevent epidemics, and save lives;

Whereas GAVI has since supported country-led vaccine initiatives in 73 countries, enabled immunizations for more than 760,000,000 of the world's most vulnerable children, helped avert an estimated 13,000,000 deaths, and contributed to a 70-percent reduction in the number of deaths due to vaccine-preventable diseases;

Whereas country ownership and sustainability are at the core of the GAVI model, which requires each eligible country to commit their own domestic resources to vaccination and immunization programs;

Whereas 15 countries have transitioned from GAVI support and are now self-financing their own vaccination and immunization programs, 3 more are expected to transition by the end of 2020, and an additional 10 countries are expected to transition by 2025 (in total, 40 percent of the original set of GAVI-eligible countries);

Whereas GAVI has transformed the market for vaccines by pooling demand from developing countries, securing predictable financing, expanding the global supplier base, enhancing the competitiveness and security of supply chains, and creating efficiencies that are expected to generate an estimated \$900,000,000 in savings between 2021 and 2025;

Whereas, in addition to its current portfolio of vaccines, GAVI is working to support the roll-out and scale-up of newly approved vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP) boosters, hepatitis B birth dose, multivalent meningococcal, respiratory syncytia (RSV), routine oral cholera, and rabies;

Whereas GAVI also collaborates with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative to bring polio vaccines into routine immunization programs, strengthen health systems, and implement additional polio protections;

Whereas GAVI has made significant progress in supporting the development and stockpiling of an effective vaccine to combat Ebola;

Whereas GAVI is participating in efforts to test and implement an effective vaccine to prevent malaria, a disease that kills more than 270,000 children a year;

Whereas GAVI is already helping countries maintain life-saving immunization programs in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to prevent multiple outbreaks and further loss of life from vaccine-preventable diseases;

Whereas GAVI also is working to help countries meet the threat of COVID-19 by providing vital resources, training, and supplies to help protect health workers and expand access to diagnostic testing;

Whereas GAVI will play a critical role in helping to rebuild immunization systems so that

once the immediate crisis is over, catch-up immunization campaigns can begin and COVID-19 vaccines can be introduced;

Whereas, in April 2020, GAVI joined the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, a collaboration of global health organizations aimed at accelerating development, production, and equitable access to new COVID-19 technologies, serving as the co-lead of the vaccines work stream within the initiative;

Whereas, on June 4, 2020, the United Kingdom will host an online virtual Global Vaccine Summit, GAVI's third replenishment conference, with an ambitious goal to raise \$7,400,000,000 in new donor commitments;

Whereas, with these additional resources, GAVI plans to support the immunization of 300,000,000 children against potentially fatal diseases and save an additional 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 lives between 2021 and 2025; and

Whereas the United States has been a leading supporter of GAVI since its inception, and its continued commitment will be essential to the achievement of the alliance's goals for 2021 through 2025: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the work of GAVI and its partners for their efforts to expand access to vaccines and immunizations for the most vulnerable men, women, and children in developing countries;

(2) affirms the continued support of the United States Government for GAVI as an efficient and effective mechanism to advance global health security and save lives by—

(A) reducing the incidence of deadly and debilitating diseases;

(B) leveraging donor, partner country, and private sector investments in health systems capable of sustainably delivering vaccines and immunizations; and

(C) reducing the cost of vaccines while promoting supply chain security and sustainability;

(3) affirms the support of the United States Government for the goal of securing at least \$7,400,000,000 in donor commitments for GAVI's third replenishment conference, to be held on June 4, 2020, hosted by the United Kingdom;

(4) urges donor countries and private sector partners to step up the fight against vaccine-preventable deaths and increase their pledges for the third replenishment conference;

(5) urges GAVI partner countries to continue to make and meet ambitious co-financing commitments to sustain progress in ending vaccine-preventable deaths; and

(6) encourages the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in cooperation with GAVI, to continue their work to strengthen public health capacity to introduce and sustain the use of new and underused vaccines in routine immunization programs.

Mr. GARDNER. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment to the resolution 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. GARDNER. I know of no further debate on the resolution, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution, as amended.

The resolution (S. Res. 511), as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. GARDNER. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be