

The international community has monitored closely developments over the last several weeks and months in the Republic of Georgia. I have visited Georgia on several occasions and consider myself a strong friend of the Georgian people.

In 2003 the population of Georgia rose up to overthrow their government. The Rose Revolution, as it was called, was truly an inspirational moment for supporters of democracy and freedom around the world. President Bush has rightly called Georgia and the government of President Saakashvili “a beacon for democracy.”

The Georgian President and a strong cabinet of reform-minded leaders have implemented an aggressive reform agenda with the goal of joining the European Union and the NATO Alliance. This independent course was a brave effort to emerge from the authoritarian shadows of the Soviet Union and reduce its dependency on Russia.

In addition to political reforms, Georgia has enjoyed remarkable economic progress. This year the country's economy is estimated to grow at a rate of 9 percent and continues to be an international leader in its economic reform efforts.

Unfortunately, this impressive record has been threatened by recent events that could undermine the progress that has been achieved in Georgia. I was dismayed to learn of the imposition of emergency rule and the government's action to assert control over private media companies. While the threats to Georgia are clear and extremely dangerous, the suspension of basic freedoms was a significant step backward on Tbilisi's path toward a market oriented, democratic country. It is important that the United States express our concerns about activities that may undermine the strong record that has been built by Georgia.

I was relieved to learn that emergency rule was ended on November 17 and that restrictions on private media will be lifted this week. I applaud the efforts by the Department of State to send a strong, clear and unequivocal message to the government in Tbilisi.

The Republic of Georgia must return to the path of democracy. President Saakashvili has an opportunity to take important steps in this direction by ensuring that all political parties have equal opportunity and access to media coverage and that the election process is free and fair. I recommend that the Government of Georgia reject the strategies of some countries, including most recently Russia, to frustrate and interfere with international election monitors, particularly those from the OSCE. Instead, Georgia should take additional steps to ensure that the OSCE and other constructive organizations who want to observe the elections can participate fully and as quickly as possible.

It is my goal that this resolution will serve as encouragement to President Saakashvili and his government to em-

brace democracy and ensure that the upcoming elections are the freest and fairest in Georgian history.

SENATE RESOLUTION 392—RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. MARTINEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 392

Whereas Everglades National Park will celebrate its 60th anniversary on December 6, 2007;

Whereas when President Harry S Truman dedicated Everglades National Park on December 6, 1947, he stated: “Here is land, tranquil in its quiet beauty, serving not as the source of water, but as the last receiver of it. To its natural abundance we owe the spectacular plant and animal life that distinguishes this place from all others in our country”;

Whereas Marjory Stoneman Douglas gave the Everglades the name “River of Grass” stating, “There are no other Everglades in the world”;

Whereas Everglades National Park has been designated an International Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage Site, and a Wetland of International Importance, in recognition of its significance to all the people of the world;

Whereas the Everglades ecosystem encompasses 3,000,000 acres of wetlands and is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States featuring slow-moving freshwater that flows south from Lake Okeechobee through sawgrass and tree islands to the mangroves and seagrasses of Florida Bay;

Whereas Everglades National Park is home to rare and endangered species, such as the American crocodile, the Florida panther, and the Western Indian manatee and more than 350 species of birds, including the Great Egret, Wood Stork, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Roseate Spoonbill;

Whereas the greater Everglades ecosystem is also an international center for business, agriculture, and tourism, with a rapidly growing population of varied ethnic, economic, and social values, all of which are dependent on a fully functioning ecosystem for an adequate freshwater supply, a healthy and sustainable economy, and overall quality of life;

Whereas Everglades National Park is the subject of the most extensive ecosystem restoration plan in the history of mankind, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan; and

Whereas this restoration plan must succeed in order for the treasures of Everglades National Park to be passed on to our children and grandchildren: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 60th anniversary of Everglades National Park; and

(2) dedicates itself to the success of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

SENATE RESOLUTION 393—EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE TO THOSE AFFECTED BY THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF DECEMBER 5, 2007, AT WESTROADS MALL IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for himself and Mr. HAGEL) submitted the fol-

lowing resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 393

Whereas, on Wednesday, December 5, 2007, the worst mass slaying in Nebraska history occurred at Westroads Mall in Omaha;

Whereas lives were tragically lost, and others were wounded;

Whereas the brave men and women of the Omaha Police Department, Fire Department, and other emergency responders acted valiantly to save lives;

Whereas the people of Omaha have embraced those affected and will continue to offer support to their neighbors who have suffered from this tragedy; and

Whereas the community of Omaha will endure the aftereffects of this tragedy to emerge stronger than it was before: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses its heartfelt condolences to the friends and families of those who lost their lives in the tragic shooting on December 5, 2007, at Westroads Mall in Omaha, Nebraska: Gary Sharf of Lincoln, Nebraska, John McDonald of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Angie Schuster, Maggie Webb, Janet Jorgensen, Diane Trent, Gary Joy, and Beverly Flynn, all of Omaha;

(2) shares its prayers and best wishes for recovery to those who were wounded;

(3) extends its thanks to the first responders, police, and medical personnel who responded so quickly and decisively to provide aid and comfort to the victims; and

(4) stands with the people of Omaha as they begin the healing process in the aftermath of this terrible attack.

SENATE RESOLUTION 394—RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH AND DECLARING THE MONTH OF MAY 2007 AS NATIONAL CANCER RESEARCH MONTH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. SPECTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 394

Whereas the American Association for Cancer Research, the oldest and largest scientific cancer research organization in the United States, was founded on May 7, 1907, at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC, by a group of physicians and scientists interested in research to further the investigation into and spread new knowledge about cancer;

Whereas the American Association for Cancer Research is focused on every aspect of high-quality, innovative cancer research and is the authoritative source of information and publications about advances in the causes, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of cancer;

Whereas, since its founding, the American Association for Cancer Research has accelerated the growth and dissemination of new knowledge about cancer and the complexity of this disease to speed translation of new discoveries for the benefit of cancer patients, and has provided the information needed by elected officials to make informed decisions on public policy and sustained funding for cancer research;

Whereas partnerships with research scientists and the general public, survivors and patient advocates, philanthropic organizations, industry, and government have led to advanced breakthroughs, early detection