

invasive drug-resistant staph infection. Out of 94,000 infections, researchers found that more than half were acquired in the health care system—people who had recently had surgery or were on kidney dialysis, for example. The 9,000—often needless—American deaths from these infections every year account for more than the number of people who died from HIV/AIDS, homicide, emphysema, or Parkinson's.

MRSA infections are a persistent crisis. In 2002, Illinois hospitals diagnosed 6,841 cases of MRSA. In 2006, that number was 10,714. Steady growth in the incidence of MRSA cases shows a 56.7 percent increase over a 5-year period. As a result, the State of Illinois has taken aggressive steps to identify the infection before it grows out of control. Illinois was the first State to require testing of all high-risk hospital patients and isolation of those who carry the MRSA bacteria. Twenty-two States have passed laws that will give their residents important information about hospital infections. Nineteen States have laws that require public reporting of infection rates.

Hospitals are actively working to identify and control infections, implementing infection control plans to maintain the safety of patients. For example, Evanston Northwestern Hospital is now placing patients who test positive for MRSA in "contact isolation." That means patients are placed in private rooms or rooms with other MRSA-positive patients. Also, patients who developed symptoms of infection at the hospitals are tested and treated on the premises. The strategy is working. Evanston Northwestern went from 1,200 cases of patient-to-patient MRSA transmission in 2003 to 80 cases in 2006, and the \$600,000-a-year program saved twice as much as it cost.

But we can't leave it up to the hospitals to control these infections. About half of the infections that end up being treated in hospitals were actually picked up in the community. Schools in Illinois, Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and Kentucky have had to close to help contain the spread of an infection. School officials in Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, and Virginia have reported student deaths from bacteria, while officials in at least four other States reported cases of students being infected.

Today, I am introducing a bipartisan resolution with the support of my colleagues Senator HATCH, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator SPECTER, and Senator BROWN to designate March as MRSA Awareness Month. We hope this resolution will bring more attention to the need to address this critical public health issue—not only by communities and healthcare organizations, but by the Federal Government.

SENATE RESOLUTION 455—

CALLING FOR PEACE IN DARFUR

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr.

COLEMAN, Mr. VOINOVICH, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 455

Whereas, during the past 4 years in Darfur, hundreds of thousands of innocent victims have been murdered, tortured, and raped, with more than 2,000,000 people driven from their homes;

Whereas some but not all of the parties to the conflict in Darfur participated in the first round of a United Nations-African Union peace process launched in October 2007 in Sirte, Libya;

Whereas the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) reached between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in January 2005 has not been fully or evenly implemented;

Whereas the Government of Sudan has continued to obstruct the deployment of a joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force to Darfur that would include non-African elements;

Whereas elements of armed rebel movements in Darfur, including the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), have made violent threats against the deploying peacekeeping force;

Whereas 13 former world leaders and current activists, including former president Jimmy Carter, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Bangladeshi microfinance champion Muhammed Yunus, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have called for the immediate deployment of the peacekeeping force; and

Whereas, while these and other issues remain pending, it is the people of Darfur, including those living in refugee camps, who suffer the continuing consequences: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls upon the Government of Sudan and other signatories and non-signatories to the May 5, 2006, Darfur Peace Agreement to declare and respect an immediate cessation of hostilities, cease distributing arms to internally displaced persons, and enable humanitarian organizations to have full unfettered access to populations in need;

(2) calls upon the Government of Sudan to facilitate the immediate and unfettered deployment of the United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force, including any and all non-African peacekeepers;

(3) urges all invited individuals and movements to attend the next round of peace negotiations and not set preconditions for such participation;

(4) calls upon the diverse rebel movements to set aside their differences and work together in order to better represent the people of Darfur and end their continued suffering;

(5) encourages the participation in future talks of traditional Arab and African leaders from Darfur, women's groups, local non-governmental organizations, and leaders from internally displaced persons (IDP) camps;

(6) condemns any intimidation or threats against camp or civil society leaders to discourage them from attending the peace talks, whether by the Government of Sudan or rebel leaders;

(7) condemns any action by any party, government or rebel, that undermines or delays the peace process in Darfur; and

(8) calls upon all parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to support and respect all terms of the agreement.

Mr. DUBRIN. Mr. President, time and time again I have come to the floor

to speak about the ongoing genocide in Darfur.

For more than 4 years the world has watched this humanitarian crisis unfold—thousands murdered, tortured, raped, and chased from their homes. Thousands more languishing year after year in refugee camps.

Many of us on both sides of the aisle have repeatedly called for greater U.S. and international action. President Bush has called the situation genocide and British Prime Minister Brown said "Darfur is the greatest humanitarian crisis the world faces today."

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has made ending the crisis in Darfur one of his top priorities.

Thirteen former world leaders and current activists—a group of "Elders"—including former president Jimmy Carter, former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Bangladeshi microfinance champion Muhammed Yunus, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have called for the immediate deployment of a peacekeeping force to Darfur.

Here at home, thousands of students, churches, and other activists have helped raise awareness of the horrible human suffering in Darfur.

Such efforts led to an important vote last year by the U.N. Security Council to deploy 26,000 peacekeepers from the U.N. and African Union. This peacekeeping force would go to Darfur to halt the violence and create conditions for a long-term political settlement.

Late last year, Congress passed the Sudan Divestment and Accountability Act, which will help concerned Americans ensure that their investments do not support the murderous regime in Khartoum.

Yet, despite such overwhelming calls for action, the Sudanese government continues to brutalize its own people and thumb its nose at the international community.

Earlier this week Sudanese army and allied militia forces, with the help of helicopter gunships and planes, conducted yet another major assault in Darfur, burning villages, killing civilians, and forcing thousands more to flee into increasingly unstable Chad.

Equally troubling are blatant efforts by the Sudanese government to obstruct deployment of the peacekeeping force. For example, Sudan's leaders have balked at deployment of non-African forces. Last month government forces fired upon a peacekeeping convoy.

In recent months the regime has even appointed notorious figures complicit in the Darfur genocide to senior government positions. Two are wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes.

Incredibly, one such figure, Ahmed Haroun, was actually appointed to be Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, ostensibly to assist the very people he helped displace.

It is time to bring an end to the violence and set the conditions for a long-term political settlement.

Last week Senator BIDEN led a resolution that called on the President to immediately address any equipment shortcomings with the peacekeeping force.

I wholeheartedly agree.

The White House must not allow a modest shortage of equipment to prolong the suffering in Darfur.

Today I am introducing a resolution, along with Senators BIDEN, BROWNBACK, COLEMAN, FEINGOLD, MENENDEZ, and VOINOVICH calling for an immediate halt to the violence and a commitment from all sides to participate in the next round of peace talks.

The resolution also calls upon the government of Sudan to facilitate the immediate and unfettered deployment of the U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force, including any and all non-African peacekeepers.

The resolution calls upon the diverse rebel movements to set aside their differences and work together in order to better represent the people of Darfur and end their continued suffering.

The resolution condemns any action by any party—government or rebel—that undermines or delays the peace process.

The resolution call upon the government of Sudan to enable humanitarian organizations to have full unfettered access to populations in need; and it calls upon all parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between North and South Sudan to support and respect all terms of the agreement.

We have allowed the humanitarian crisis in Darfur to continue for far too long. We have allowed a brutal regime to repeatedly obstruct and ignore the international community.

I call on my colleagues to join us as we call on the U.S. to put its full weight behind deployment of a peacekeeping force and pushing all sides toward a long-term political solution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 456—DIRECTING THE UNITED STATES TO UNDERTAKE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH CANADA TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT TO CONSERVE POPULATIONS OF LARGE WHALES AT RISK OF EXTINCTION THAT MIGRATE ALONG THE ATLANTIC SEABOARD OF NORTH AMERICA

Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. SUNUNU) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 456

Whereas populations of large whales in the north Atlantic, including north Atlantic right whales, fin whales, and humpback whales, were substantially reduced, largely due to commercial whaling efforts that ended more than 60 years ago in the United States and more than 30 years ago in Canada, and rebuilding and protecting these species requires significant conservation efforts;

Whereas the United States and Canada share the goals of marine resource conservation through sound scientific research and

seek to protect large whales at risk of extinction;

Whereas north Atlantic right whales, humpback whales, and fin whales are listed as “endangered” under the United States Endangered Species Act and “depleted” under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and north Atlantic right whales are listed as “endangered” and fin whales are listed as a species of “special concern” under Canada’s Species at Risk Act;

Whereas north Atlantic right whales, humpback whales, and fin whales, migrate throughout the north Atlantic Ocean, including through the waters of the United States and Canada along the eastern Atlantic Seaboard;

Whereas the populations of large whales in the north Atlantic Ocean are affected by natural factors including availability of forage and oceanographic conditions such as water temperature, salinity, and currents, and additional research on these topics will facilitate whale conservation;

Whereas some fishermen in both the United States and Canada employ fixed gear types within the migratory range of large whales, thereby exposing the species to risks of entanglement, and ships transiting both United States and Canadian waters have been known to strike large whales resulting in injury or death of the cetaceans;

Whereas the United States has taken significant regulatory and advisory steps to reduce the impacts of its fishing and shipping activities on large whale species, including restrictions on fixed fishing gear, closures of areas to certain types of fishing effort seasonally, and advisory restrictions on vessel traffic;

Whereas effective regulations to ensure conservation and protection of these large whale species must be a transboundary, bilateral effort that equitably distributes the costs and benefits of whale conservation among regulated and other concerned parties in each Nation, including the United States and Canadian governments, the fishing and shipping industries, States, Canadian provinces, and interested nongovernmental organizations;

Whereas Canada and the United States have a history of cooperation on transboundary marine resource issues, including a joint effort by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the United States’ Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies and the New England Aquarium to assist entangled large whales in the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine;

Whereas the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has long been involved with a series of bilateral discussions with Canada concerning the United States Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, and the Canadian Species at Risk Plan;

Whereas encouraging collaboration between representatives of the United States and Canadian Federal governments, affected States and Canadian provinces, affected fishing and shipping industries, and nongovernmental organizations will facilitate the parties’ ability to develop a sound, scientifically supported, mutually acceptable agreement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate, That—

(1) the United States should undertake bilateral discussions with Canada to negotiate an agreement for the conservation and protection of migratory or transboundary populations of large whales at risk of extinction in the northwest Atlantic Ocean;

(2) the agreement negotiated pursuant to paragraph (1) should contain mechanisms, inter alia, for reducing incidents of endangered large whales becoming entangled in

fishing gear, being struck by ships, or otherwise adversely impacted by human activity;

(3) the mechanisms developed pursuant to paragraph (2) should ensure that—

(A) the costs and benefits of whale conservation regulations are to the extent feasible fairly and equitably distributed among regulated and other concerned parties including the United States and Canadian governments, the fishing and shipping industries, States, Canadian provinces, and interested nongovernmental organizations;

(B) the full economic impact on fishing communities is considered in the development of such measures; and

(C) the best available science on whale behavior, including diving, feeding, and migration, is used to develop conservation mechanisms;

(4) as any bilateral agreement is negotiated and implemented, the United States and Canada should consult with, inter alia, affected fishery management agencies, coastal States and provinces impacted by the agreement, and appropriate industry and nongovernmental organizations; and

(5) until the agreement pursuant to paragraph (1) becomes operational, the United States should continue to undertake efforts to reduce the impacts of human activity on endangered large whales while taking steps, to the extent consistent with United States law, to minimize the economic impact of such efforts on affected industries.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a resolution directing the U.S. to undertake bilateral discussions with Canada to negotiate an agreement to conserve endangered large whales that migrate along the Atlantic seaboard of North America. I would also like to thank my colleagues, Senators COLLINS and SUNUNU for their cosponsorship. Whales do not recognize international boundaries, and it is critical that we work with our neighbors to develop consistent means to protect whales from potentially harmful interactions with fishing gear, ships, and other manmade threats.

Both the U.S. and Canada have taken steps to reduce the impacts of their respective maritime industries on endangered whale populations, but neither country can provide adequate protection working independently of the other. Large whales, including critically endangered north Atlantic right whales, humpback whales, and fin whales, migrate throughout the north Atlantic Ocean, crossing frequently between Canadian and U.S. waters where fishermen on both sides of the boundary employ fishing methods that pose a risk of entanglement, and transiting ships have been known to strike the cetaceans, resulting in serious injury or death.

The U.S. has long been a global leader in marine mammal protection. The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, developed under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS, carries a mandate to reduce incidents of whale entanglement with fishing gear and of ship strikes, and it has issued numerous regulations aimed at achieving its goals. Unfortunately, many of its regulations on the U.S. fishing industry have not been matched by their management counterparts north of the border. Most recently, in