

Union. That is a ridiculous statement, and it defies history and defies the facts that everyone knows. It is beyond belief that the Russian Foreign Minister would claim that the Red Army troops occupying the Baltic countries in June of 1940 were not the reason that these countries so-called "joined" the Soviet Union. Listen to the statement by the Russian Foreign Minister.

The August 3, 1940 decision of USSR Supreme Soviet to admit Lithuania into the Soviet Union was preceded by corresponding appeals from the highest representative bodies of the Baltic States.

Therefore it would be wrong to interpret Lithuania's admission to the USSR as a result of the latter's unilateral actions. All assertions that Lithuanian was "occupied" and "annexed" by the Soviet Union and related claims of any kind of neglect, political, historical and legal realities therefore are groundless.

This is the statement by the Russian Foreign Minister.

Let me tell you, he not only ignores the history of 1940 which is very clear, but he ignores the fact that in 1991 the Russian Foreign Ministry entered into a treaty with Lithuania in which Russia explicitly admitted that the 1940 Soviet annexation violated Lithuanian sovereignty and that Lithuania, they said, at the time was free to pursue its own security agreements and arrangements. So in 1991, in those enlightened moments as the Soviet empire came down and Russia became a new State with democratic elections, they entered into a treaty with Lithuania and acknowledged the reality that Lithuania was forcibly annexed into the Soviet Union. They said in 1991 Lithuania had the right, as the Baltic States do, to pursue their security arrangements.

Now, when Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia talk about membership in NATO, the Russian Foreign Minister and Russian President Putin come forward and say unacceptably, it would destabilize Europe; it would eliminate the so-called "buffer States." They still view these countries as vassals, as pawns to be used. They will not acknowledge the sovereignty which should be acknowledged of these countries.

These disturbing statements show clearly why the Baltic countries must be admitted to NATO; that is, to show Russia and any neighboring country that it must give up its territorial ambitions against NATO membership for the Baltic countries, and it would make it critically clear that the West would never again accept "buffer State" subjugation of them. The idea that the three tiny Baltic States could threaten the enormous and powerful Russian Federation is laughable. If Russia has no design on the Baltic States, it has nothing to fear from their membership in NATO.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have spoken about the drug problems in America and this issue of foreign pol-

icy. But there is another issue which is a continuing concern across America. It is the fact that this Senate and Congress have failed to act on the problem in America of gun violence. It has been a little over a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still the leadership in this Congress refuses to enact sensible gun safety legislation.

Most will recall that a little over a year ago, we passed in this Chamber, with the tie breaking vote of Vice President GORE, legislation which would allow us to do background checks on people who buy guns at gun shows. If you go to buy a gun here in America, they are going to ask some questions: Do you have a history of committing a crime; a history of violent mental illness; are you old enough to own a gun? That is part of the Brady law. And with that law, we stopped some 500,000 people from buying guns in America who were, in fact, people with a criminal record or a history of violent and mental illness, or children. We stopped it—half a million of them—but there is a big loophole there. If you go to the so-called gun shows which we have in Illinois and States such as Texas and all over the country, these gun bazaars and flea markets do not have any background checks. You do not have to be John Dillinger and the greatest criminal mind to understand if you need a gun, do not go to a gun dealer, go to a gun show. No questions are asked; you can buy it on the spot.

We passed a law. We said we have to close this loophole. If we really want to keep guns out of the hands of people who will misuse them, we need a background check at gun shows. That was part of our bill.

The second part of the bill related to a provision with which Senator KOHL from Wisconsin came forward. It said if you sell a handgun in America, it should have a child safety protection device, or so-called trigger lock. You have seen them. They look like little padlocks. You put them over the trigger so if a child gets his hands on a gun, he or she will not be able to pull the trigger and harm anyone.

Is this important? It is critically important. We read every day in the newspapers about kids being harmed, killing their playmates, and terrible things occurring when they find a handgun. It is naive for any gun owner to believe if they have a gun in the house, they can successfully hide a gun. Children are always going to find Christmas gifts and guns. We have to acknowledge that as parents. If they find Christmas gifts, it is disappointing. If they find guns, it can be tragic.

Those who say they will not have a gun in their house if they have little kids may not have peace of mind if they know their playmates' parents own guns and do not have a trigger lock on them.

We said as a matter of standard safety in America, we want every handgun to be sold with a trigger lock. Is it an

inconvenience for the gun owner? Yes, let's concede that fact. Do we face inconveniences every day bringing safety to our country and to our lives? Of course we do. Have you gone through an airport lately? Did you have to put that purse or that briefcase on the conveyor belt? Did you go through the metal detector? It is inconvenient, isn't it? It slowed you down, didn't it? We all do it because we do not want terrorists on airplanes and we want to fly safely.

So the idea of a trigger lock on a handgun I do not believe is a major obstacle to gun ownership or using a gun safely and legally. That was the second part of the bill that passed and went over to the House of Representatives.

The third part is one that is highly arguable, and that is, we ban the domestic manufacture of high-capacity ammunition clips in this country, clips that can hold up to 100 or more bullets. The belief was nobody needed them. The only people who would need those would be the military or police. The average person has no need for them.

I said time and again that if a person needs an assault weapon or some sort of automatic weapon with a 100-round clip to shoot a deer, they ought to stick to fishing. Sadly, there are people who found if you could not manufacture these high-capacity ammo clips in the United States, you could import them from overseas. The third part of our gun safety legislation said we are going to stop the importation of high-capacity ammo clips which are designed to kill people. They have nothing to do with legitimate sports or hunting.

Three provisions: Background checks at gun shows, trigger locks on handguns when they are sold, and no more importation of high-capacity ammo clips. Do those sound like radical ideas to you? They do not to me. They sound like a commonsense effort to keep guns out of the hands of people who would misuse them.

We barely passed the bill. The National Rifle Association, the gun lobby, opposed it. The bill received 49 votes for, 49 votes against. Vice President AL GORE sat in that chair, as he is entitled under the Constitution, and cast the tie-breaking vote—50–49. The bill went to the House of Representatives—this is after Columbine—and with all this determination, we said: We are finally going to do something to respond to gun violence.

Of course, when it went over to the House of Representatives, the gun lobby, the National Rifle Association, piled it on, and the bill was decimated. There is nothing in it that looks like what I described. Then it went to conference. We are supposed to work out differences between the House and the Senate in conference. They have sat on it for a year, and every day in America, 12 or 13 children are killed by guns. The same number of kids who died at Columbine die each day, not in one place but all across America. They are kids

who commit suicide. They are kids who are gang bangers shooting up innocent people. They are kids who are playing with their playmates.

The gun tragedy continues in America, and this Congress refuses to do anything. Many of us come to the floor of the Senate on a regular basis as a reminder to our colleagues in Congress that this issue will not go away because gun violence is not going away, and we need to do something to make America safer.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, the Democratic leadership in the Senate who supports this gun safety legislation will read some names into the RECORD of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year and will continue to do so every day the Senate is in session. In the name of those who have died and their families, we will continue this fight.

The following are the names of just some of the people killed by gunfire 1 year ago on the dates that I mention. On June 19, 1999, these were the gun victims in just some of the States and some of the cities across America:

Milton Coleman, 58, Gary, IN; Darnell Green, 28, Gary, IN; Ronald Hari, 25, Chicago, IL; David Jackson, 23, St. Louis, MO; Andre Johnson, 24, Detroit, MI; Eien Johnson, 19, Detroit, MI; Nakia Johnson, 22, Philadelphia, PA; Lewis Lackey, 47, Baltimore, MD; Malcolm Mitchell, Gary, IN; Mann Murphy, 76, Detroit, MI; Robert Rodriguez, 31, Houston TX; Donnell Roland, 20, Kansas City, MO; Denise Wojciechowski, 33, Chicago, IL; an unidentified male, 36, Long Beach, CA; another unidentified male, 53, Nashville, TN; another unidentified male, 19, Newark, NJ.

In addition, since the Senate was not in session on June 17 or June 18, I ask unanimous consent that the names of those who were killed by gunfire last year on June 17 and June 18 be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JUNE 17

Donald R. Gauldin, Pine Bluff, AR; Phillip Martello, 18, New Orleans, LA; Lee Martindale, 14, St. Louis, MO; Marcus D. Miller, 18, Chicago, IL; Larry Mitchell, 19, Dallas, TX; Raymond Reed, 71, Charleston, SC; Molly Roberts, 15, Houston, TX; Norberto Rodriguez, 26, San Antonio, TX; Philip M. Spears, 51, Houston, TX; and Tony Williams, 19, Chicago, IL.

JUNE 18

Warren Cunningham, 33, Charlotte, NC; Barron Howe, 31, Washington, DC; Daniel Metcalf, 31, Washington, DC; Tony Muse, Detroit, MI; Adam W. Newton, 36, Oklahoma City, OK; Nysia Reese, 15, Philadelphia, PA; Jeffrey Rhoads, 37, York, PA; Coartney Robinson, 20, Dallas, TX; Debra Rogers, 45, Dallas, TX; and Damian Santos, 20, Bridgeport, CT.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the reason these names are being read is to share with my colleagues in the Senate the fact that this is not just another

issue. The issue of gun safety and gun violence in America is an ongoing tragedy, a tragedy which we will read about in tomorrow morning's paper and the next morning's paper and every day thereafter until we in this country come forward with a sensible gun safety policy to keep guns out of the hands of those who misuse them.

I have seen the National Rifle Association, Mr. Heston, and all of his claims about second amendment rights to the ownership of guns. I believe people have a right to own guns, so long as they do so safely and legally, but I do not believe there is a single right under our Constitution—not one—that does not carry with it a responsibility.

There is a responsibility on the part of gun owners across America to buy their guns in a way that will keep guns out of the hands of those who would misuse them and to store their guns in a way so they are safely away from children who would use guns and hurt themselves and others, and not to demand guns in America that have no legitimate sport, hunting, or self-defense purpose.

Most Americans agree with what I have just said. I think it is a majority opinion in this country. It is clearly not the feeling of the Republican leadership in the Senate and the House of Representatives. They have continued to bottle up this legislation which would move us closer to the day when we have a safer society and when families and communities across America can breathe a sigh of relief that the crime statistics and gun statistics about which we read are continuing to go down and not up.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the last item I want to address today is relative to a suggestion by the Vice President of the United States to create what is known as a Medicare lockbox. There have been many suggestions made during the course of this Presidential campaign about Social Security and Medicare. It is no surprise. There are hardly any programs in Washington, DC, that affect so many people and affect the quality of life of so many families across America. I am proud to be a member of the Democratic Party which, under Franklin Roosevelt, created Social Security.

We took a group of Americans—our parents and grandparents, the seniors in America, who were literally one of the most impoverished classes in our society—and said: With Social Security, we will create for you a safety net. With this safety net, when you go into retirement in your senior years, you are going to have some peace of mind that you will not be destitute and poor and have to depend on your children for your livelihood.

Social Security has worked. It has now become a very bipartisan program—and it should. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike un-

derstand that this safety net for seniors and for disabled people in our country really makes America a better place.

In the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson—another Democrat—came up with the idea of Medicare. It was not a new one. President Truman had proposed some version of it earlier, and others had talked about it. President Johnson, with his legislative skill, was able to pass Medicare.

In Medicare, we said we would create for America a health insurance program for the elderly. This again was considered socialistic, radical, by its critics. They said America does not need this, that everything will be just fine.

Yet we see what has happened since we introduced and passed the Medicare program. Seniors are living longer. They are more independent. They are healthier. They are active. They are leading great lives because of the combination of Social Security and Medicare.

Many of us want to take care that in the midst of any Presidential debate about these two programs, we do not go on any risky escapade that could endanger the life of these programs. There are too many people who depend on them; and not just the seniors, but their children who expect Social Security and Medicare to be there.

George W. Bush, the Governor of Texas, and soon to be the Republican nominee for President, has proposed changing the Social Security system so that there could be a private investment factor so that individuals could direct the investment of some of their Social Security funds into private investments.

On its face, a lot of people who own stocks and mutual funds across America would say: Goodness, that gives me a chance to increase the amount of money I can put into these types of investments. Perhaps if the stock market continues to do well, I will profit from it. It is a surface reaction you might expect that is positive among some American families. But the real issue is, how would we come up with the same level of protection in Social Security if we started taking money out and letting people direct it as they care to in their own private investments?

The basic benefits on which many elderly depend for almost all of their retirement income could be cut by as much as 40 percent. How can that be, if George Bush is only talking about a few percentage points of investment?

Social Security is a pay-as-you-go program. The amount of money we collect in the payroll taxes goes out to pay today's seniors. When I become a senior citizen, eligible for Social Security—if I live that long—I will be paid by the current wage earners in the payroll tax that is collected from them.

It is a pay-as-you-go system. If at any point in time you want to remove some 2 percent, or whatever the number might be, of the money that workers are paying into Social Security, it