

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH FLYNN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate Joseph Flynn, a constituent and friend, on the occasion of his 90th birthday. It has often been said that our Greatest Generation is comprised of those Americans who pulled the country out of the depths of the Great Depression and went on to lead the Allies to victory in World War Two. My friend Joe Flynn is a quintessential member of that generation. One of 11 children born to immigrant parents in Chicago, he exemplifies the virtues of love of family, devotion to country, generosity to neighbors, and unstinting hard work.

Growing up in Chicago's Old Town neighborhood, the guiding light of Joe's life was his mother, Mary. She instilled in him the moral foundation that continues to guide him to this very day. Joe began his working life while still a boy, hawking newspapers on Chicago street corners and stocking shelves in the neighborhood grocery store. When Joe was just out of his teens, he, like so many other young men of his time, faced the prospect of his country going to war and calling on him to do his part.

Except Joe didn't wait for his country to call—he enlisted in the Army 2 months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Joe spent the next 4 years in the Army serving as a medic in the 941st Field Artillery. His unit landed on Omaha Beach shortly after D-day, was among the first American units to enter a liberated Paris, and saw action at the Battle of the Bulge.

Despite all that, Joe—never one to complain—says that he had an easy war. His opinion is that the American men and women in uniform today are the ones with the tough duty. They are the ones that this old soldier respects.

Coming home to a country at peace, Joe married his girlfriend, Martha Tampa, herself a veteran of the Women's Army Corps. They raised six children: Tim, Joe, Anne, Martha, Deborah and Kevin. Joe and Martha had been married for more than 57 years when Martha passed away, but if you ask

Joe, he will no doubt tell you she is still very much alive in his heart.

To provide for his family, Joe worked at the A. Finkl & Sons steel mill. He supervised the loading of multiton pieces of machined steel onto trucks to keep America's industrial base supplied. He rose at 4:30 a.m. to take a CTA bus to his job, and he often worked 60 hours or more to earn the precious overtime money his family needed to pay for their mortgage, their groceries, and their education.

As hard as Joe worked, when he got off the bus at night, he would run a half mile home because he couldn't wait to see his family. After greeting Martha and his kids, he would sit down and call his mother.

The people Joe loves are everything to him, and he now has nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren: Ryan, Meghan, Gwyneth, Gillian, Dylan, Ashley, Brittney, Courtney, Caitie, Ethan and Oliver. He also holds dear his children's spouses and significant others: Doug, Catherine and Bill.

Joe's politics are simple. Being a life-long working man—who still mows his own lawn and cleans his own gutters—he believes that the working men and women of the United States deserve their fair share of the country's prosperity in the good times and its help in the hard times.

History doesn't often record people like Joe as being great men, but as his family will tell you, he is the greatest example of a good man they know.

SANCTIONS ON IRAN

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, on May 25, Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote a column in the Washington Post explaining that Russia's recent agreement to tighten sanctions on Iran is not as significant as the Obama administration has claimed.

Dr. Kagan wrote that the Obama administration paid a high price to get Russia to agree to "another hollow U.N. Security Council resolution" and that the Russians "sometimes used to say and do more" during the Bush administration. It is unclear to me what the administration can point to as the fruits of the Russia reset, at least as far as the United States is concerned.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have Dr. Kagan's column printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, May 25, 2010]

A HOLLOW 'RESET' WITH RUSSIA

(By Robert Kagan)

It took months of hard negotiating, but finally the administration got Russia to agree to a resolution tightening sanctions on Iran. The United States had to drop tougher measures it wanted to impose, of course, to win approval. Nevertheless, senior Russian officials were making the kinds of strong statements about Iran's nuclear program that they had long refused to make. Iran "must

cease enrichment," declared Russia's ambassador to the United Nations. One senior European official told the New York Times, "We consider this a very important decision by the Russians."

Yes, it was quite a breakthrough—by the administration of George W. Bush. In fact, this 2007 triumph came after another, similar breakthrough in 2006, when months of negotiations with Moscow had produced the first watered-down resolution. And both were followed in 2008 by yet another breakthrough, when the Bush administration got Moscow to agree to a third resolution, another marginal tightening of sanctions, after more negotiations and more diluting.

Given that history, few accomplishments have been more oversold than the Obama administration's "success" in getting Russia to agree, for the fourth time in five years, to another vacuous U.N. Security Council resolution. It is being trumpeted as a triumph of the administration's "reset" of the U.S.-Russian relationship, the main point of which was to get the Russians on board regarding Iran. All we've heard in recent months is how the Russians finally want to work with us on Iran and genuinely see the Iranian bomb as a threat—all because Obama has repaired relations with Russia that were allegedly destroyed by Bush.

Obama officials must assume that no one will bother to check the record (as, so far, none of the journalists covering the story has). The fact is, the Russians have not said or done anything in the past few months that they didn't do or say during the Bush years. In fact, they sometimes used to say and do more. Here's Vladimir Putin in April 2005: "We categorically oppose any attempts by Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. . . . Our Iranian partners must renounce setting up the technology for the entire nuclear fuel cycle and should not obstruct placing their nuclear programs under complete international supervision." Here's one of Putin's top national security advisers, Igor S. Ivanov, in March 2007: "The clock must be stopped; Iran must freeze uranium enrichment." Indeed, the New York Times' Elaine Sciolino reported that month that Moscow threatened to "withhold nuclear fuel for Iran's nearly completed Bushehr power plant unless Iran suspends its uranium enrichment as demanded by the United Nations Security Council"—which prompted the Times' editorial page to give the Bush administration "credit if it helped Moscow to see where its larger interests lie." Nine months later, of course, Russia delivered the fuel.

It remains to be seen whether this latest breakthrough has greater meaning than the previous three or is just round four of Charlie Brown and the football. The latest draft resolution tightens sanctions in some areas around the margins, but the administration was forced to cave to some Russian and Chinese demands. The Post reported: "The Obama administration failed to win approval for key proposals it had sought, including restrictions on Iran's lucrative oil trade, a comprehensive ban on financial dealings with the Guard Corps and a U.S.-backed proposal to halt new investment in the Iranian energy sector." Far from the comprehensive arms embargo Washington wanted, the draft resolution does not even prohibit Moscow from completing the sale of its S-300 surface-to-air missile defense system to Tehran. A change to the Federal Register on Friday showed that the administration had lifted sanctions against four Russian entities involved in illicit weapons trade with Iran and Syria since 1999, suggesting last-minute deal sweeteners.

What is bizarre is the administration's claim that Russian behavior is somehow the result of Obama's "reset" diplomacy. Russia

has responded to the Obama administration in the same ways it did to the Bush administration before the “reset.” Moscow has been playing this game for years. It has sold the same rug many times. The only thing that has changed is the price the United States has been willing to pay.

As anyone who ever shopped for a rug knows, the more you pay for it, the more valuable it seems. The Obama administration has paid a lot. In exchange for Russian cooperation, President Obama has killed the Bush administration’s planned missile defense installations in Poland and the Czech Republic. Obama has officially declared that Russia’s continued illegal military occupation of Georgia is no “obstacle” to U.S.-Russian civilian nuclear cooperation. The recent deal between Russia and Ukraine granting Russia control of a Crimean naval base through 2042 was shrugged off by Obama officials, as have been Putin’s suggestions for merging Russian and Ukrainian industries in a blatant bid to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty.

So at least one effect of the administration’s “reset” has been to produce a wave of insecurity throughout Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltics, where people are starting to fear they can no longer count on the United States to protect them from an expansive Russia. And for this the administration has gotten what? Yet another hollow U.N. Security Council resolution. Some observers suggest that Iran’s leaders are quaking in their boots, confronted by this great unity of the international “community.” More likely, they are laughing up their sleeves—along with the men in Moscow.

Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, writes a monthly column for *The Post*.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge Memorial Day, which provides us with an opportunity to take time out from our busy lives to remember and honor those men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the United States and the liberties we hold dear.

Mississippians have a strong affinity for our national defense, with thousands of brave citizens volunteering to serve in the Armed Forces. We also understand that, unfortunately, we will lose loved ones as part of that dedication.

The very first Memorial Day, originally known as Decoration Day, was observed in 1868 by decorating the graves of Civil War soldiers, and since then Americans have set aside a time each year to honor their fallen heroes.

Columbus, MS, proudly claims to be the birthplace of this tradition, but Memorial Day wasn’t officially established as a Federal holiday until 1971. In the nearly 234 years since we became an independent nation, Americans have fought in numerous wars, and many have given their lives in defense of the ideals that the United States represents.

As we gather this year to commemorate Memorial Day, we can reflect on all of the Mississippians who have perished protecting our Nation, whether in battles long ago or in the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom almost 10 years ago, more than 70 members of the Armed Forces with close ties to Mississippi have died fighting in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Since Memorial Day last year, nine Mississippi soldiers have died while serving the American people. Those valiant men include LCpl. Philip P. Clark, 19, of Brandon, died May 18, 2010; SGT Anthony O. Magee, 29, of Hattiesburg, died April 27, 2010; Army PFC Anthony Blount, 21, of Petal, died April 7, 2010; SSG William S. Ricketts, 27, of Corinth, died Feb 27, 2010; SFC Christopher D. Shaw, 26, of Natchez, died Sept. 29, 2009; SGT Matthew L. Ingram, 25, of Newton, died Aug. 21, 2009; and SFC Alejandro Granado, 42, of Fairfax, Va., died Aug. 2, 2009. Mississippi Guard; SFC Severin W. Summers III, 43, of Bentonla, died Aug. 2, 2009; and Army SSG Johnny Roosevelt Polk, 39, of Gulfport, died July 31, 2009.

I honor them, and my heart goes out to the families of all the brave Mississippi men and women in uniform who have died for our country. It is the endless support of families that motivates our service men and women to carry out their duties, and their dedication must not be forgotten this Memorial Day.

Congress is working diligently to provide our troops in Afghanistan with the funds necessary to finish the job and come home safely. I understand the necessity of matching our soldiers’ readiness with the means to complete their mission, and I am confident that the entire Mississippi delegation and Congress continue to take that duty very seriously.

As a veteran of the U.S. Navy, I am particularly thankful for the bravery and dedication of those who have fought and died for our country in our defense. We are blessed to live in a country that protects its citizens with such a fine, fighting force.

This Memorial Day, I encourage everyone to take a moment to remember the courageous American soldiers who have given their lives for our Nation and to thank their families. Our fallen warriors are true heroes, and we owe them our solemn gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. President, next week our Nation will observe Memorial Day, an occasion on which we honor the men and women who gave this country what President Lincoln called “the last, full measure of devotion”—their very lives. President Lincoln uttered those now timeless words at a ceremony honoring thousands of Civil War troops who fell in a battle surrounding a small town called Gettysburg. To this day, his words reflect, with unparalleled clarity, the heroic sacrifices that made, and have kept, this country safe and free. This Memorial Day we once again honor those men and women.

How do we properly honor those who gave their lives while in military service? Lincoln answered that question—“We honor them by dedicating ourselves to the cause for which they gave themselves. We honor those who died by ensuring, in Lincoln’s words, that they “shall not have died in vain.” We carry on, we remember them, and we remember to tend to their comrades and their families who live among us still.

The Senate’s role in this important task, to honor veterans and their family members with the care and benefits they have earned, falls in part to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. I have had the honor of serving on that committee for 20 years, most recently as its Chairman. In that capacity, I am pleased to report on the progress Congress has made since last Memorial Day.

Last Memorial Day, Congress had good reason to be proud when looking back at recent gains for veterans and their families. Since 2007, we have passed historic appropriations bills to properly fund VA, following years of drastic underfunding. We passed the most substantive GI bill since World War II, which has already been put to use by hundreds of thousands of Americans. And we made wide-ranging reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs—overhauling its mental health care and suicide prevention programs, and enhancing cooperation and collaboration between the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

This Memorial Day, we can be proud of having done even more to help VA adapt to the needs of today’s veterans and their families. I will focus on two of the most significant bills—one which reformed the broken funding process for veterans’ health care, and the other, which charts a course for VA where the needs of women veterans and family caregivers receive special attention.

When I became chairman of the committee, the VA health care system had endured many years of chronic underfunding, leading to health care rationing and budget shortfalls. While we succeeded in restoring VA’s budget to appropriate levels, we still had not addressed the underlying funding process—a one-year-at-a-time appropriations process that led to funding delays in 20 of the last 23 years. To fix this broken system, I introduced the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act. This bill was designed to take the process of advance appropriations—funding a program one year ahead of the regular appropriations process—and apply it to the Nation’s largest health care system. At this time last year, that bill was still pending in Congress. Since then, our colleagues overwhelmingly chose to support this legislation, and the President signed it into law. This change will be felt in every State of the Union. At the one thousand-plus points of care run by VA, administrators will know