

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of M. Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Carl Levin, Bernard Sanders, Joe Donnelly, Maria Cantwell, Barbara A. Mikulski, Tom Harkin, Tim Kaine, Jeanne Shaheen, Jon Tester.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 83 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Franken	Murkowski
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murphy
Baldwin	Graham	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson
Begich	Harkin	Portman
Bennet	Hatch	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Heitkamp	Reid
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeben	Rockefeller
Brown	Isakson	Rubio
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Cardin	Kaine	Schatz
Carper	King	Schumer
Casey	Klobuchar	Scott
Coburn	Leahy	Stabenow
Cochran	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Toomey
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	McCain	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Flake	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—23

Blunt	Grassley	Paul
Burr	Heller	Risch
Chambliss	Inhofe	Sessions
Coats	Johanns	Shaheen
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Crapo	Kirk	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Vitter
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—2

Landrieu	Warner
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 75, the nays are 23.

The motion is agreed to.

NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER REID COOPER TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

NOMINATION OF M. DOUGLAS HARPOOL TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

NOMINATION OF GERALD AUSTIN MCHUGH, JR., TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

NOMINATION OF EDWARD G. SMITH, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the clerk will report the nominations.

The assistant bill clerk read the nominations of Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia; M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri; Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; and Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Republican whip.

BETTER FOCUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I wish to say a few words about the business pending before the Senate; that is, providing aid and assistance to the citizens of Ukraine who find themselves invaded by the Russian federation. But before I get to Ukraine, I wish to say a quick word about a story that appeared today in the New York Times.

This was a remarkable story, remarkable in its transparency but also in its cynicism in terms of what some of our friends across the aisle have in mind between now and November. To put it in a word, they have given up. They have given up legislating and are going to spend the next several months holding a series of show votes which are in essence those designed to highlight poll-tested messages.

The New York Times writes this:

The proposals have little chance of passing.

Little chance of passing.

But Democrats concede that making new laws is not really the point. Rather, they are trying to force Republicans to vote against them.

I would think the American people would expect and certainly they would

deserve better than that from the Senate—scheduling a series of show votes, not for the purpose of actually improving the lives of the American people or solving the problems that confront our country at this time of low economic growth and high joblessness but, rather, for show votes, for purely partisan political reasons.

At a time when millions of people have lost their health insurance, when millions have been forced to pay higher premiums or deductibles, when 3.8 million people have been unemployed for more than 6 months, when the labor force participation rate—the number of people actually looking for work—has fallen to 30-year lows, and when nearly 46.8 million people are receiving food stamps, it is more than a little disappointing that the leaders of the Democratic Party in the Senate are into scoring cheap political points.

As I said, the American people certainly deserve better. Again, I am a little bit surprised that some of the leadership on the Democratic side of the aisle would be so transparent and so obvious as to state their intentions to the New York Times, but that is what it appears.

What we need is a Senate and a Congress that is more focused on creating an economic condition where the American people can find jobs rather than politicians who are focused solely on saving their jobs, particularly leading up to the next election. Of course, this is the kind of stuff that makes people extraordinarily cynical about Washington, DC, but with an election coming up, I guess some people have lost all sense of proportion.

UKRAINE

As we continue to discuss the proper response by the United States of America to Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, it is important that we stay focused on two overarching realities; No. 1, the Government of Russia is much more vulnerable to Western pressure than it might appear from the outside; No. 2, we have far more leverage today against Moscow than we did 10 years ago or even 5 years ago because of the renaissance in American energy, the oil and gas boom we are experiencing in America, thanks to the discovery of a man named George Mitchell from Houston, TX, who pioneered horizontal drilling, which together with fracking has allowed access to natural gas and oil reserves undreamed of just 5 or 10 years ago.

Let's start with the first reality. As Ruchir Sharma of Morgan Stanley Investment Management wrote on Monday in the Wall Street Journal:

Russia has become a classic weak-investments, high-inflation economy.

An economy plagued by massive levels of corruption.

According to Mr. Sharma:

... wealthy Russians have been moving money out of the country at one of the fastest rates in two decades—\$60 billion a year since 2012—and now foreign investors are pulling out too.

So it is worth noting that Russia's economy is currently suffering through a period of stagnation, despite the fact that oil prices remain high. As a matter of fact, its government's main source of income is oil and gas revenue, which has led our friend the senior Senator from Arizona to say that Russia these days is "a gas station masquerading as a sovereign state."

They depend on the ability to sell that oil and gas to Ukraine and Europe. Indeed, they use this as a political tool to work their will in Europe and obviously in Ukraine.

Sometimes we talk about crony capitalism here in America in which private individuals and private companies collude with government in order to gain special benefits. That is what crony capitalism is. The Russian economy represents crony capitalism on steroids. If we could squeeze the oligarchs and the Kremlin advisers who have gotten fabulously rich thanks to their collaboration with Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government, many of Vladimir Putin's closest allies will begin to rethink their support. That is an area of vulnerability we ought to be focused on like a laser.

As I said yesterday, I am encouraged by the sanctions the Obama administration announced on Thursday. It is a good start, but I would urge the administration to continue imposing serious penalties on high-level Kremlin officials and the super-rich oligarchs who comprise Putin's inner circle. In other words, sanctions are not enough. We need to do more to dissuade and discourage Putin and his allies from engaging in the current course of conduct, as well as further adventures in other parts of Europe and areas of the former Soviet Union.

It is time for more robust sanctions that target the financial energy sectors of the Russian economy. The cost for Moscow's aggression must be real, and that is not just me saying that, that is what President Obama said too. With that in mind, I urge the administration to sanction the Russian arms exporter known as Rosoboroneexport, which has been tied up in all sorts of corruption scandals and which is also the primary arms supplier for Bashar al-Assad in Syria, who has murdered about 150,000 of his own people in the ongoing Syrian civil war.

I cosponsored an amendment introduced by the Senator from Indiana that would end all U.S. Government contracts with Rosoboroneexport and punish the companies with whom it does military-related business. Once again, I hope that the majority leader, Senator REID, would reconsider and allow the amendment to receive a vote, something he refused to do yesterday. I am hoping after a good night's sleep and reconsideration, maybe he would be open to that.

I would also call on the majority leader, Senator REID, to allow us to offer another amendment introduced by the junior Senator from Wyoming,

which would greatly expand American exports of liquefied natural gas by granting automatic approval to all applications for new LNG terminals that would ship gas to Ukraine and other members of our NATO alliance.

One may wonder why that is necessary. Just to recapitulate, Putin uses energy as a weapon. If he is not getting what he wants out of Ukraine or Europe, he squeezes off the supply of energy which is essential to the economy and to life itself in those vulnerable parts of the world.

We have been blessed as a result of the innovations of people such as George Mitchell with this new renaissance in energy in America through shale gas—sometimes called unconventional plays—but the point is we are now able to produce much more energy than we can consume domestically, and in North America alone we are fast approaching energy independence. We can afford to be an exporter of some of this energy to vulnerable countries such as Ukraine and Europe, so we can get Putin's boot off their neck when it comes to the impact he has on their energy supply.

Before the shale gas revolution, which has just been in the last decade or so, there was very little the United States could do to deter Eastern Europe's dependence on Russia's LNG. The global energy landscape is much different than it was just a half decade ago.

Back in October the House Energy & Commerce Committee held a hearing at which several Eastern European diplomats discussed the geopolitical significance of America's natural gas boom. The Lithuanian Ambassador said bluntly: "We need your gas. We want to buy your gas." Well, Lithuania is one of the countries that are in the greatest jeopardy now against the depredations of somebody like Vladimir Putin and a Russian Federation on the march.

Meanwhile, the Czech Republic's Deputy Chief of Mission said that U.S. LNG exports would increase his country's leverage in future energy negotiations with Moscow. This same Czech diplomat has also urged the U.S. Government to treat LNG exports to NATO countries the same way it treats LNG exports to countries with which America has a free-trade agreement. This is how he put it: Such a policy shift "puts us in a different league. We are in League B and we would like to be in League A."

Passing the Barrasso amendment, of which I am a proud cosponsor, would put all NATO countries in league A, and it would send an unmistakable message to Vladimir Putin and his allies in this aggression against the people of Ukraine and potential aggression against other countries that this weapon he uses, known as energy, is no longer available to him to use to intimidate people and gain their territorial ambitions.

It would also demonstrate that Members of both political parties here in

Congress are committed to breaking Vladimir Putin's energy stranglehold over the nations of Eastern Europe. This is going to be very important because if Putin keeps coming—as he may very well do—and as Europe considers working with the United States to impose higher and higher costs, Europe is going to look in the mirror and say: What do sanctions against Russia mean in terms of our economy?

I am afraid they are going to be compromised if they realize their engagement with us—and increasingly high sanctions against Russia—has a negative impact on their economy because it will essentially jeopardize their energy imports.

In addition to sanctions and gas exports, the third prong of America's Ukraine strategy should include serious military assistance to Kiev. Everyone has said: We are not talking about American boots on the ground, but we are talking about providing military assistance to people who are trying to defend themselves.

If our alliance and agreement with Ukraine means anything, it means we are going to help them defend themselves against Russian depredation.

Believe me, not only is Ukraine watching but other nations, such as NATO—which has a treaty relationship with the United States and a self-defense agreement in section 5 of the NATO treaty where aggression against any single NATO country is treated as an attack against all of them—are watching America's response in Ukraine.

In some cases, America might not have to send that military aid directly. We might only have to facilitate the purchase of certain equipment from other sources. But either way, we should be doing everything possible to make sure our friends and our allies have the resources they need to deter Russian aggression further.

It is not just our enemies who are looking to see if America retreats—pulling back in the world and creating a vacuum that is being filled by people like Vladimir Putin—it is our friends and our allies who are wondering if America is a dependable friend and ally. If we are not, they are going to make other arrangements all around the world.

I have a few final words about what is at stake.

When Ukraine voluntarily gave up its nuclear arsenal in the mid-1990s, it did so after receiving a U.S. security guarantee. When other Eastern European nations decided to join NATO, they too were seeking a guarantee from America that we would come to their defense and other NATO allies would also come to their defense.

If Russia's annexation of Crimea is allowed to stand, many of our allies, our partners, and our friends will no longer trust American promises, and many would-be aggressors, such as China, will be emboldened to pursue their territorial claims with much

more belligerence, and correspondingly the world will become a much more dangerous place. In other words, the outcome in Ukraine is critically important both to U.S. credibility and the future of the international order. Our policies should reflect that.

I am disappointed that the majority leader has seen fit to cut off any opportunity for Senators on both sides of the aisle to offer constructive additions for a vote. We are not even asking for assurance that they would pass; we are just asking for a vote on amendments, such as military assistance to the Ukraine, expediting the permitting of LNG export facilities to help alleviate the stranglehold Putin has on Europe and Ukraine. The majority leader has said no, he is not going to allow that, and we do need to get this bill out of here tomorrow—and we will—to send a unified message that this sort of aggression will not be met with silence by the U.S. Government. Even the advocates of this underlying bill have said it is not enough. This is just a start.

I would like to hear a schedule from the majority leader of when he purports to bring some of these other important issues to the floor—particularly if Putin does what many expect him to do, and that is to continue rolling on into Western Ukraine and perhaps other countries. What will be America's response? What will be the bipartisan response of the Senate? What we have done so far is a start, but it is nowhere near good enough to exact the kinds of costs President Obama said he wants to exact on Putin and Russia for this act of international aggression and invasion in the country of Ukraine.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I believe Senator MCCAIN is on his way to the Chamber. We want to have a colloquy about Ukraine. I ask permission to do that when Senator MCCAIN arrives.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, as Senator MCCAIN makes his way to the floor, we are trying to figure out what to do as a nation—along with our allies in Europe and throughout the world—about Ukraine and really what to do with Putin.

In my view, this is a symptom of a greater problem. Crimea had been a part of Russia for a very long time, but in 1954, I believe it was, Crimea became part of a sovereign nation called the Ukraine through an agreement. In 1994 the Ukrainians—after the collapse of

the former Soviet Union, which was the third largest nuclear power in the world—agreed to turn their nuclear weapons back over to the Russian Federation as part of the Budapest agreement. In return for receiving the weapons, the Russian Government promised to honor the territorial integrity of the Ukraine, and we were part of that deal.

I guess no one really fleshed out what honoring the territorial integrity of the Ukraine would mean, but clearly, in 1994 when the Ukrainian people gave up the nuclear weapons they possessed to the Russians—and we were part of the deal where we were going to guarantee their territorial integrity for the swap—no one envisioned that Russia would move into Crimea because they don't like the political dynamic in Kiev. If the people of the Ukraine want to move west, that is not a reason to basically abrogate the 1994 agreement.

What is going on around Russia is the following: As the former Soviet Union collapsed, people who had been in the sphere of influence of Russia—the former Soviet Union—have all embarked on a different path for the most part. There are a couple of people who align with Russia but not many.

My goal is quite simple: Allow the people of the Ukraine, Poland, and the former Soviet Union to make their decision about how they would construct their country apart from threats of force or intimidation by Russia.

It is no surprise to me that all those who could choose to move away from Russia because of the experience they had in the past have done so. Ukrainian people will always have a unique relationship with Russia, but they want to be Ukrainian.

There are a lot of ethnic Russians in Ukraine. We have everybody in America. America is an idea, not an ethnic group or a particular religion. Ukraine is multiethnic. They have ethnic Russians with a bunch of other folks—“Ukrainians,” for lack of a better word.

The bottom line is that they have been debating among themselves about how to move forward and in what direction to move. Yanukovych won an election. He moved the Ukrainian people away from Europe and toward Russia. The President preceding him rode a revolution into power—the Orange Revolution, which some would argue did not produce the results the Ukrainian people were hoping for. It took us a long time as a nation—and we are still trying—to figure out who we are and where we are going. Democracies are messy.

The one thing we should all be doing is aligning ourselves around the concept that choosing one's destiny as an individual within the confines of the law and choosing one's destiny as a nation in international law should preclude having that choice taken away by your neighbor through military force and intimidation.

Entering into Crimea was a breach of international law. It was a breach of

the 1994 agreement. Putin has proven to be an antidemocratic force in the world and in Russia.

When you are dealing with somebody, you need to look at their value system and their agenda and their interest. The value system of Mr. Putin is that of a KGB colonel. Most of his adult life he worked for the KGB, so his value system comes from that organization. It is about the ends, not the means. Democracy is about the process. I am not surprised that he snuffed out democracy—as any reasonable person would know it in Russia—and that he has made the Duma almost irrelevant, if not a joke. There is no independent judiciary; if you oppose Putin, you are liable to go to jail. I understand where he is coming from because of his value system; I just don't agree with it.

What we can't do is let him affect those who are living around him who want to go on a different path because the day you begin to do that, it never works out well. In World War II, every time somebody gave Hitler a little of this or a little of that, it never worked out well.

So what do we do? The European community, along with the United States, has a historic chance to reset what I think is a deterioration of world security and order. Having sanctions combined with aid, including sanctioning the Russians in a fashion they will feel, hitting their energy sectors, their oil and gas companies masquerading in this country, and increasing the capability of a gutted Ukrainian Army to defend themselves from further insurgents, would be a combination of hitting the Russians and helping the Ukrainians militarily and economically without any boots on the ground from the United States. I hope that is what the President will do. That is what we are trying to do here—to some extent, at least—on the sanctions side in the U.S. Senate.

I see Senator MCCAIN has arrived. He has been the most consistent voice for the last decade about the role of America, our destiny as a country, with what we should align ourselves, understanding the Arab spring, and he has been a thorn in the side of Putin and Russia for quite awhile. So I wish to, if I could, ask a question of Senator MCCAIN.

Given what we know about Putin's past and what he has done in Crimea, what does the Senator expect in the future and what can we reasonably do as a nation to change the outcome?

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank my colleague.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from South Carolina.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank my colleagues. The American people should know exactly what has happened and what is happening now, and what may happen, unless we show a steadfast and robust response to the active aggression which

has just taken place as Colonel Putin has moved and is aggressively using the force of arms, invaded a country and absorbed part of that country into Russia. A blatant act of aggression, sparked by the age-old practice of demonstrations and desire for intervention to protect Russian-speaking people has just been enacted by Vladimir Putin.

Vladimir Putin's forces, I would say to my friend from South Carolina, as he knows, are on the border of Eastern Ukraine right now, and they are poised to invade. They even have forces in Belarus. Vladimir Putin is figuring out the cost-benefit ratio of moving into Eastern Ukraine, the cost-benefit ratio of moving into Moldova, which is not a member of NATO; of inciting the Russians there—there are 1,400 Russian troops stationed in Transnistria. He is figuring out the cost-benefit ratio of inciting violence in the Russian-speaking population of the Baltic countries, especially Estonia.

Vladimir Putin is on the move. A fundamental and naive attitude toward Vladimir Putin by this President and this administration, I hope, is shattered for all time. Vladimir Putin is a KGB colonel who said the greatest mistake of the 20th century was to break up the Soviet Union. He is intent on restoring the Russian empire. That is what Vladimir Putin is all about. And what has been our response? Fascinating. The President of the United States, in his press conference yesterday, basically said, So what I announced and what the European Council announced was that we are consulting and putting in place the framework, the architecture for additional sanctions, additional costs should Russia take the next step.

How does Vladimir Putin read that statement by the President of the United States? He reads it by saying, We got away with it. We got Crimea back.

Both the Senator from South Carolina and I predicted he would not give up Sevastopol and he would invade if he felt it was necessary to do so.

So that is where we are today. Does anybody believe that when the President of the United States says "the architecture for additional sanctions, additional costs, should Russia take the next step"—how does Vladimir Putin interpret that statement?

I wish to digress for a minute. There has been a lot of conversation about what the reaction was to Georgia and the invasion of Georgia and what the Bush administration did or did not do. I will let people judge what the Bush administration did or did not do.

I will submit for the RECORD an opinion piece written by Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and Senator Joe Lieberman dated August 26, 2008, after the invasion by Vladimir Putin into Georgia at the conclusion of my remarks.

At that time—this is 2008—Senator Lieberman and Senator GRAHAM wrote:

There is disturbing evidence Russia is already laying the groundwork to apply the

same arguments used to justify its intervention in Georgia to other parts of its near abroad—most ominously in Crimea.

That is what Senator GRAHAM and Senator Lieberman said 6 years ago.

They went on:

This strategically important peninsula is part of Ukraine, but with a large ethnic Russian population and the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol.

Then Senator Lieberman and Senator GRAHAM went on to argue for a much more robust response than the Bush administration gave:

Specifically, the Georgian military should be given the anti-aircraft and antiarmor systems necessary to deter any renewed Russian aggression.

Our response to the invasion of Georgia must include regional actions to reassure Russia's rattled neighbors and strengthen trans-Atlantic solidarity. This means reinvigorating NATO as a military alliance.

It goes on and on.

Senator Lieberman and Senator GRAHAM 6 years ago predicted this. I wonder what lesson this President took from that event and their predictions. The fact is—and it is with great sadness I tell my colleagues—we will hear a lot of rhetoric, there will be a lot of meetings, gatherings and conversations and threats about what needs to be done. But for a broad variety of reasons, which I do not have the time to go through, I predict to my colleagues now that the sanctions that are in place, which are for a handful of people, will be the extent of our reaction to the invasion of Crimea and the further violation of Ukrainian territory from the east.

After Hitler invaded Austria in 1938, he gave a speech in Vienna, from the balcony of a hotel in Vienna. We should look back at that speech—and I will give more quotes from it. It is a carbon copy of what Vladimir Putin said about Crimea. Hitler said they had to go in and protect the German-speaking people and they had to do it with force of arms. But guess what. They were going to have a referendum. And they had—they used to call it plebiscites then—they had a referendum—a plebiscite—in Austria, and guess what. Ninety-six percent of the people voted that they wanted to be a part of Nazi Germany. This is an old playbook Vladimir Putin is operating from.

So, tomorrow, fortunately, there is going to be a vote on some assistance to our beleaguered friends in Ukraine. I believe military assistance is a vital part of the assistance.

I ask my friend from South Carolina: Isn't it true the first thing people need once they have been invaded, once part of their country has been taken over, is the ability to defend themselves? And isn't it a fact that the Ukrainian military, because of previous administrations, has been emasculated and they only have about 6,000 troops they can rely on? We just saw in Crimea their total inability to resist what the Russians did to their fleet and to their bases.

Mr. GRAHAM. The Senator from Arizona is absolutely right.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, if I could interrupt to ask unanimous consent that the article entitled "Russia's Aggression Is a Challenge to World Order" by LINDSEY GRAHAM and Joe Lieberman, dated August 26, 2008, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Aug. 26, 2008]

RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION IS A CHALLENGE TO WORLD ORDER

(By Lindsey Graham and Joe Lieberman)

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Georgia, the United States and its trans-Atlantic allies have rightly focused on two urgent and immediate tasks: getting Russian soldiers out, and humanitarian aid in.

But having just returned from Georgia, Ukraine and Poland, where we met with leaders of these countries, we believe it is imperative for the West to look beyond the day-to-day management of this crisis. The longer-term strategic consequences, some of which are already being felt far beyond the Caucasus, have to be addressed.

Russia's aggression is not just a threat to a tiny democracy on the edge of Europe. It is a challenge to the political order and values at the heart of the continent.

For more than 60 years, from World War II through the Cold War to our intervention in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the U.S. has fostered and fought for the creation of a Europe that is whole, free and at peace. This stands as one of the greatest strategic achievements of the 20th century: the gradual transformation of a continent, once the scene of the most violent and destructive wars ever waged, into an oasis of peace and prosperity where borders are open and uncontested and aggression unthinkable.

Russia's invasion of Georgia represents the most serious challenge to this political order since Slobodan Milosevic unleashed the demons of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans. What is happening in Georgia today, therefore, is not simply a territorial dispute. It is a struggle about whether a new dividing line is drawn across Europe: between nations that are free to determine their own destinies, and nations that are consigned to the Kremlin's autocratic orbit.

That is the reason countries like Poland, Ukraine and the Baltic States are watching what happens in the Caucasus so closely. We heard that last week in Warsaw, Kiev and Tbilisi. There is no doubt in the minds of leaders in Ukraine and Poland—if Moscow succeeds in Georgia, they may be next.

There is disturbing evidence Russia is already laying the groundwork to apply the same arguments used to justify its intervention in Georgia to other parts of its near abroad—most ominously in Crimea. This strategically important peninsula is part of Ukraine, but with a large ethnic Russian population and the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol.

The first priority of America and Europe must be to prevent the Kremlin from achieving its strategic objectives in Georgia. Having been deterred from marching on Tbilisi and militarily overthrowing the democratically elected government there, Russian forces spent last week destroying the country's infrastructure, including roads, bridges, port and security facilities. This was more than random looting. It was a deliberate campaign to collapse the economy of Georgia, in the hope of taking the government down with it.

The humanitarian supplies the U.S. military is now ferrying to Georgia are critically

important to the innocent men, women and children displaced by the fighting, some of whom we saw last week. Also needed, immediately, is a joint commitment by the U.S. and the European Union to fund a large-scale, comprehensive reconstruction plan—developed by the Georgian government, in consultation with the World Bank, IMF and other international authorities—and for the U.S. Congress to support this plan as soon as it returns to session in September.

Any assistance plan must also include the rebuilding of Georgia's security forces. Our past aid to the Georgian military focused on supporting the light, counterterrorism-oriented forces that facilitate Tbilisi's contribution to coalition operations in Iraq. We avoided giving the types of security aid that could have been used to blunt Russia's conventional onslaught. It is time for that to change.

Specifically, the Georgian military should be given the anti-aircraft and antiarmor systems necessary to deter any renewed Russian aggression. These defensive capabilities will help to prevent this conflict from erupting again, and make clear we will not allow the Russians to forcibly redraw the boundaries of sovereign nations.

Our response to the invasion of Georgia must include regional actions to reassure Russia's rattled neighbors and strengthen trans-Atlantic solidarity. This means reinvigorating NATO as a military alliance, not just a political one. Contingency planning for the defense of all member states against conventional and unconventional attack, including cyber warfare, needs to be revived. The credibility of Article Five of the NATO Charter—that an attack against one really can and will be treated as an attack against all—needs to be bolstered.

The U.S. must also reaffirm its commitment to allies that have been the targets of Russian bullying because of their willingness to work with Washington. The recent missile-defense agreement between Poland and the U.S., for instance, is not aimed at Russia. But this has not stopped senior Russian officials from speaking openly about military retaliation against Warsaw. Irrespective of our political differences over missile defense, Democrats and Republicans should join together in Congress to pledge solidarity with Poland, along with the Czech Republic, against these outrageous Russian threats.

Finally, the U.S. and Europe need a new trans-Atlantic energy alliance. In recent years, Russia has proven all too willing to use its oil and gas resources as a weapon, and to try to consolidate control over the strategic energy corridors to the West. By working together, an alliance can frustrate these designs and diminish our dependence on the foreign oil that is responsible for the higher energy prices here at home.

In crafting a response to the Georgia crisis, we must above all reaffirm our conviction that Russia need not be a competitor or an adversary. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Democratic and Republican administrations have engaged Russia, sending billions of dollars to speed its economic recovery and welcoming its integration into the flagship institutions of the international community. We did this because we believed that a strong, prosperous Russia can be a strategic partner and a friend. We still do.

But Russia's leaders have made a different choice. While we stand ready to rebuild relations with Moscow and work together on shared challenges, Russia's current course will only alienate and isolate it from the rest of the world.

We believe history will judge the Russian invasion of Georgia as a serious strategic miscalculation. Although it is for the moment flush with oil wealth, Russia's political

elite remains kleptocratic, and its aggression exposed as much weakness as strength. The invasion of Georgia will not only have a unifying effect on the West, it also made clear that Russia—unlike the Soviet Union—has few real allies of strategic worth. To date, the only countries to defend Russia's actions in the Caucasus have been Cuba and Belarus—and the latter, only after the Kremlin publicly complained about its silence.

In the long run, a Russia that tries to define its greatness in terms of spheres of influence, client states and forced fealty to Moscow will fail—impoverishing its citizens in the process. The question is only how long until Russia's leaders rediscover this lesson from their own history.

Until they do, the watchword of the West must be solidarity: solidarity with the people of Georgia and its democratically elected government, solidarity with our allies throughout the region, and above all, solidarity with the values that have given meaning to our trans-Atlantic community of democracies and our vision of a European continent that is whole, free and at peace.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, if people are wondering why Senator McCain's name wasn't on that article—he is on everything else Joe and I did—it is because he was running for President and just got the nomination.

We were very much worried then, the three of us, that the Bush administration wasn't doing enough, and we needed to help the Georgian people as a signal not only to those in Georgia but other people in the neighborhood.

Let's talk about the Ukrainian military. It has been devastated, it has been gutted, because Yanukovich, the Ukrainian President, who won the election by less than 1 million votes—if you take Crimea out of Ukraine electorally, then no pro-Russian candidate inside Ukraine has much of a chance to win. So now they have destroyed the balance of power inside Ukraine politically. So as those left in Ukraine, the Ukrainian people move west, they are going to have the ability to align themselves with Europe. Putin is, in my view, very much likely to take some eastern cities that may ask for his help, because the referendum by the Ukraine to move west they opposed, but they can't stop because of the electoral change.

So watch out for a move by Ukraine to integrating the European Union in April or May when they have an election, and people in the east create a fake fight and Russia uses that as a reason to go further into the east.

But to Senator McCain's point: President Obama has conceded Crimea. There is just no other way we can say it. Our European allies and our President have basically said, if you do any more, we are going to get tougher with you. The Senator from Arizona nailed this. What does that say to Putin? I got Crimea. Seven people and I may be sanctioned, but I have been given Crimea by Europe and the United States.

The sanctions we are talking about get tougher only if he moves further into his sovereign neighbor.

Six thousand troops are combat-ready in Ukraine. Why? Because the pro-Russian President and their De-

fense Minister, who got fired yesterday, gutted the Ukrainian military, setting up a scenario such as this, making it impossible for the Ukrainians to effectively defend themselves.

Here is the question for us: Do we let the Russians get away with it? They have been planning this for a while. Clearly, the pro-Russian forces inside Ukraine took on the task of neutering the Ukrainian military and they have done a heck of a good job. Should the United States and our NATO partners, at the request of the Ukrainian people, supply them with defensive weapons to rebuild the military, gutted by pro-Russian elements? To me, the answer is yes. Because if we want to make Putin think twice about what he does next, he has to pay a price greater than he has for Crimea. If he gets away with this and he doesn't pay any price, he is going to be on steroids. But if he thinks about moving and he sees on the other side of Crimea a Ukrainian people willing to fight with some capacity, that will change the equation. Because it is one thing to cheer in Moscow for getting something for almost nothing in terms of effort. It will be another thing to talk about Russian soldiers getting killed to continue to be on the aggressive path.

So if the NATO alliance, along with the United States, doesn't help rebuild the Ukrainian military so they can defend themselves without our troops being involved, we have made a historic mistake, because everybody in the world is watching how this movie ends. The Iranians are watching, after Syria, now Russia. Does anybody in their right mind believe the Iranians take us seriously as a nation when it comes to stopping their nuclear program?

So I say to Senator McCain, you have been a voice for realism, understanding Putin for who he is. For years, you have been telling the Senate and the country and the world at large: Watch this guy. There have been a series of foreign policy failures that have added up to make it confident to Putin that he can move forward without consequences.

So I hope we can convince our colleagues in the Senate and the House to honor a reasonable request by the Ukrainian people to help them rebuild the military destroyed by pro-Russian forces.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I would like to make a couple additional points to my friend from South Carolina, and I notice the Senator from New Hampshire is here.

In 1994, an agreement, a treaty was reached which divested Ukraine of the world's third largest nuclear inventory. In return for Ukraine turning over that inventory of nuclear weapons, there was a pledge made by Russia, the United States, and the British that they would respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea. That was a part of the treaty. Obviously, Vladimir Putin violated that.

The second point is, look, I have no illusions or worry about the long-term future of Russia. Russia is now a gas station masquerading as a country. Once we get the LNG and other energy to the European countries, it will dramatically reduce and eventually eliminate Vladimir Putin's influence because there is nothing but corruption and oligarchs in Russia today. One of the reasons Vladimir Putin wanted the Crimea and did not want Ukraine to be independent is because he was afraid this "disease" may spread to Russia. The Russian people are also sick and tired of the kleptocracy and the corruption.

Finally, again we need—and we should have had in this legislation—a commitment to help export our excess energy to the Europeans so they then would be able to reduce their dependency—not just Ukraine but all of Europe on their dependency on Russian energy.

So I have no doubt about the future of Russia. It will collapse like a house of cards. But in the short term, what Mr. Putin will do in committing further aggression—because this has raised his popularity dramatically at home. One of the most respected people whom Senator GRAHAM and Senator AYOTTE and I had to deal with over the years was Bob Gates. Mr. Gates served this country in a variety of posts, the latest of course being as an outstanding Secretary of Defense. This morning in the Wall Street Journal he wrote a piece called "Putin's Challenge to the West." I am not going to read the whole thing.

I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Mar. 25, 2014]

PUTIN'S CHALLENGE TO THE WEST

(By Robert M. Gates)

Russia has thrown down a gauntlet that is not limited to Crimea or even Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has a long-festering grudge: He deeply resents the West for winning the Cold War. He blames the United States in particular for the collapse of his beloved Soviet Union, an event he has called the "worst geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century."

His list of grievances is long and was on full display in his March 18 speech announcing the annexation of Crimea by Russia. He is bitter about what he sees as Russia's humiliations in the 1990s—economic collapse; the expansion of NATO to include members of the U.S.S.R.'s own "alliance," the Warsaw Pact; Russia's agreement to the treaty limiting conventional forces in Europe, or as he calls it, "the colonial treaty"; the West's perceived dismissal of Russian interests in Serbia and elsewhere; attempts to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO and the European Union; and Western governments, businessmen and scholars all telling Russia how to conduct its affairs at home and abroad.

Mr. Putin aspires to restore Russia's global power and influence and to bring the now-independent states that were once part of the Soviet Union back into Moscow's orbit. While he has no apparent desire to recreate

the Soviet Union (which would include responsibility for a number of economic basket cases), he is determined to create a Russian sphere of influence—political, economic and security—and dominance. There is no grand plan or strategy to do this, just opportunistic and ruthless aspiration. And patience.

Mr. Putin, who began his third, non-consecutive presidential term in 2012, is playing a long game. He can afford to: Under the Russian Constitution, he could legally remain president until 2024. After the internal chaos of the 1990s, he has ruthlessly restored "order" to Russia, oblivious to protests at home and abroad over his repression of nascent Russian democracy and political freedoms.

In recent years, he has turned his authoritarian eyes on the "near-abroad." In 2008, the West did little as he invaded Georgia, and Russian troops still occupy the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. He has forced Armenia to break off its agreements with the European Union, and Moldova is under similar pressure.

Last November, through economic leverage and political muscle, he forced then-President Viktor Yanukovich to abort a Ukrainian agreement with the EU that would have drawn it toward the West. When Mr. Yanukovich, his minion, was ousted as a result, Mr. Putin seized Crimea and is now making ominous claims and military movements regarding all of eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine is central to Mr. Putin's vision of a pro-Russian bloc, partly because of its size and importantly because of Kiev's role as the birthplace of the Russian Empire more than a thousand years ago. He will not be satisfied or rest until a pro-Russian government is restored in Kiev.

He also has a dramatically different worldview than the leaders of Europe and the U.S. He does not share Western leaders' reverence for international law, the sanctity of borders, which Westerners' believe should only be changed through negotiation, due process and rule of law. He has no concern for human and political rights. Above all, Mr. Putin clings to a zero-sum worldview. Contrary to the West's belief in the importance of win-win relationships among nations, for Mr. Putin every transaction is win-lose; when one party benefits, the other must lose. For him, attaining, keeping and amassing power is the name of the game.

The only way to counter Mr. Putin's aspirations on Russia's periphery is for the West also to play a strategic long game. That means to take actions that unambiguously demonstrate to Russians that his worldview and goals—and his means of achieving them—over time will dramatically weaken and isolate Russia.

Europe's reliance on Russian oil and gas must be reduced, and truly meaningful economic sanctions must be imposed, knowing there may be costs to the West as well. NATO allies bordering Russia must be militarily strengthened and reinforced with alliance forces; and the economic and cyber vulnerabilities of the Baltic states to Russian actions must be reduced (especially given the number of Russians and Russian-speakers in Estonia and Latvia).

Western investment in Russia should be curtailed; Russia should be expelled from the G-8 and other forums that offer respect and legitimacy; the U.S. defense budget should be restored to the level proposed in the Obama administration's 2014 budget a year ago, and the Pentagon directed to cut overhead drastically, with saved dollars going to enhanced capabilities, such as additional Navy ships; U.S. military withdrawals from Europe should be halted; and the EU should be urged to grant associate agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.

So far, however, the Western response has been anemic. Mr. Putin is little influenced by seizure of personal assets of his cronies or the oligarchs, or restrictions on their travel. Unilateral U.S. sanctions, save on Russian banks, will not be effective absent European cooperation. The gap between Western rhetoric and Western actions in response to out-and-out aggression is a yawning chasm. The message seems to be that if Mr. Putin doesn't move troops into eastern Ukraine, the West will impose no further sanctions or costs. De facto, Russia's seizure of Crimea will stand and, except for a handful of Russian officials, business will go on as usual.

No one wants a new Cold War, much less a military confrontation. We want Russia to be a partner, but that is now self-evidently not possible under Mr. Putin's leadership. He has thrown down a gauntlet that is not limited to Crimea or even Ukraine. His actions challenge the entire post-Cold War order including, above all, the right of independent states to align themselves and do business with whomever they choose.

Tacit acceptance of settling old revanchist scores by force is a formula for ongoing crises and potential armed conflict, whether in Europe, Asia or elsewhere. A China behaving with increasing aggressiveness in the East and South China seas, an Iran with nuclear aspirations and interventionist policies in the Middle East, and a volatile and unpredictable North Korea are all watching events in Europe. They have witnessed the fecklessness of the West in Syria. Similar division and weakness in responding to Russia's most recent aggression will, I fear, have dangerous consequences down the road.

Mr. Putin's challenge comes at a most unpropitious time for the West. Europe faces a weak economic recovery and significant economic ties with Russia. The U.S. is emerging from more than a dozen years at war and leaders in both parties face growing isolationism among voters, with the prospect of another major challenge abroad cutting across the current political grain. Crimea and Ukraine are far away, and their importance to Europe and America little understood by the public.

Therefore, the burden of explaining the need to act forcefully falls, as always, on our leaders. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "Government includes the act of formulating a policy" and "persuading, leading, sacrificing, teaching always, because the greatest duty of a statesman is to educate." The aggressive, arrogant actions of Vladimir Putin require from Western leaders strategic thinking, bold leadership and steely resolve—now.

Mr. MCCAIN. This is very important for all of our colleagues and the American people to know, and they do not have to take Senator GRAHAM's and my word for it. Already we are accused of being partisan—politics stops at the water's edge, all of that baloney. When they cannot rebut the message, they shoot the messengers. This is former Secretary of Defense Gates:

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So we are not just even talking about Ukraine. We are not even talking about that part of Europe. We are talking about the lesson that bad people—whether they be Kim Jong Un or whether they be the Chinese who want to increase their influence in the South China Sea or whether they be the Iranians who continue to supply weapons to Hezbollah fighters to the fight in Syria, which the resistance is losing—in case you missed it, there was an interesting article this morning about how jihadists will establish a base in Syria with which to export terrorism throughout the Middle East and the world, including the United States of America.

The President of the United States has to understand Vladimir Putin for what he is and what his ambitions are and what he will do.

My friend from South Carolina and I are not sure what he will do now. But I think it is obvious, with his troops amassed on the boarder of Eastern Ukraine, he is contemplating further action. Whether he does so, I am not sure, but I think his calculation has to do with the cost-benefit ratio of further aggression against a sovereign nation.

I see my colleague.

Could I just make one more comment because my colleague was in Ukraine recently. These are wonderful people. All they want is what we have. They do not want to be part of Russia. They are tired of their corrupt dictator, Yanukovich, whom they had. They are willing to stand for weeks in freezing weather in Maidan—this huge square in Ukraine. Madam President, 110 of them were assassinated by snipers.

Can't we at least give them some weapons with which to defend themselves and speak up for them, rather than saying "additional costs should Russia take [the] next step."

I yield for my colleague from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I wish to thank my colleague from Arizona and my colleague from South Carolina. I was in Ukraine on Sunday, and I was in Maidan, along with two of

my colleagues: Senator DONNELLY, who represents Indiana in the Senate, as well as Representative STEPHEN LYNCH, who is a Congressman who represents Massachusetts.

We had an opportunity, actually, to see and meet Ukrainians. In fact, when we went down to Maidan, there were 30,000 people there protesting. Do you know what they were protesting? They were protesting the Russian invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea. They were standing for their country, and they were standing against Russian aggression.

In fact, one of the experiences we had is that as we walked along, so many people came up to us and said: Thank you, America. Thank you for standing with us. In fact, I met a mother and daughter who had come from Crimea. They were waving a flag—a Ukrainian flag—and they gave me this, what I hold in my hand, and they put it around me. What they wanted me to know is that they were from Crimea and they did not accept the Russian aggression and invasion of their country. What they asked us to stand for is to stand for the freedom of the Ukrainian people to decide their future and to not let Russia interfere with their ability to decide what they want for their country.

They are wonderful people. They are very patriotic. In Maidan there were over 100 Ukrainians who were killed. Many of them were murdered by snipers who were up on the rooftops, who were just killed in cold blood by the Yanukovich government, the pro-Russian-backed government, because they were simply doing what we in the United States of America call coming out and stating their viewpoint, saying: We want a government that is not corrupt. We want a government that will allow us to have a say in our future. For that they were murdered in cold blood.

We are at an important moment for our country right now. What happened in Crimea and what is happening in Ukraine matters very much to the United States of America, because if we do not stop Russian aggression toward Ukraine, then I think this very much threatens the NATO alliance. It puts us in a position where our words do not have meaning because we were a signatory to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, along with the United Kingdom.

Russia violated that memorandum by invading Crimea. They have made further efforts to amass their troops on the boarder of Eastern Ukraine. In fact, what they are also doing is sending armed Russian agents into Eastern Ukraine to try—they are armed, they have money—and they are trying to actually create artificial demonstrations in Eastern Ukraine so they can use the very same excuse they used in Crimea to go over and take more territory of Ukraine in violation of international law and in violation of all standards among civilized countries.

I believe it is time for us to set forth—I appreciate what the President has done with the sanctions, but we need to do more. If we do not do more now, then Russia—I fear that Vladimir Putin in particular will move into the remainder of Ukraine and that we will undermine our agreement on the Budapest Memorandum. But, most important, we have a lot at stake.

First, as my colleagues have said, if we do not stand with NATO to send a strong message to Vladimir Putin, by not just sanctioning individuals, we should sanction segments of the Russian economy so he understands there are serious consequences for invading another country.

We should provide military assistance to the Ukraine military so they can defend themselves. We should revisit our decision and reinstate the memorandums of understanding that we have with Poland and the Czech Republic for missile defense systems. We as a country should be looking to help Europe reduce their dependency on Russian natural gas and oil, and there are steps we can take that will be good for our economy but will also be good for the safety and security of the world.

We should be doing all that now so Vladimir Putin, who is a schoolyard bully, understands we are very serious.

Why does it matter? Not just NATO, but we had Ukraine give up their nuclear weapons in exchange for the agreement of the United Kingdom and the United States that we would respect their sovereignty, and they felt they had assurances of security from us.

How are we going to deal with nuclear proliferation around the world and get other countries to give up their nuclear weapons if we are not serious and we do not say now: Vladimir Putin, we are serious—tough sanctions, much tougher than have been in place. We are going to support the Ukrainian military and we are not going to stand for any more aggression against the Ukrainian people—because otherwise why give up your nuclear weapons, again, if you are a country, if the United States of America does not mean anything they say on an agreement they have signed on to?

In addition, what will the Chinese do? In the Senkaku Islands they have been very aggressive toward the territory of not only the Japanese but also the Philippines, the Vietnamese, and they are watching. They are watching whether we care whether Russia invades another country, whether we care that Vladimir Putin is pushing the Ukrainian people around.

That is why this matters, not just because we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine—we do and we should—so they can decide their future, not Vladimir Putin—they, the people of their country, should decide their future—but also because it matters for us around the world, not just China, not just nuclear proliferation,

but what do the ayatollahs in Iran think about how serious we are about ending their nuclear weapons program.

This is an important moment for America, and it is time for our President to really step forward. The initial steps he took were in the right direction, but it is time not to continue saying there will be further costs. The costs must be rendered now. The Senate will be taking an important step in providing loan guarantees to Ukraine and a scheme for sanctions, but ultimately I call on the President of the United States to say to Vladimir Putin now—to recognize whom we are dealing with, the former KGB colonel—to say to him: We are going to impose sanctions on entire segments of your economy. We are going to hurt your ability to do business in the world because you have invaded another country. We are going to bolster NATO, and we are going to reinstate missile defense systems in the Czech Republic and Poland, that we will not accept this aggression.

It is time for the President to say this very clearly and to impose the consequences on Russia now because after they invade Eastern Ukraine, it will be too late.

Vladimir Putin needs to understand now that we are very serious about this, that we will stand by our word under the Budapest Memorandum, that we will stand with the Ukrainian people, and that we will make sure that we will not accept aggressions from Vladimir Putin, and that this school yard bully understands, through strength, that the United States of America will not be bullied around, nor will our friends and allies.

Mr. GRAHAM. Will the Senator yield for a question?

There is the Membership Action Plan, MAP—I think that is the acronym—where a country gets ready to enter into NATO. Georgia would like that. I think Ukraine now would like that. Here is the basic tension; don't you agree?

A plurality before Crimea was invaded wanted to move into the European Union and Ukraine. Now, I think clearly a majority, if you take the Crimea out, wants to associate with the European Union. Putin is saying hell no. So the Ukrainian people in the coming months are going to make a move toward the European Union and alliances with NATO, most likely, and the Russians are going to try to stop them.

I fear the way they will choose to stop them is not to try to influence the vote but to try to grab some eastern cities where you will have vocal minority Russian populations saying: Come here and help your fellow Russians. We are being absorbed by a bunch of thugs in Kiev. Senator McCain made a good point while we are talking. The theory of the case for Russia is: We have a legitimate right to go into this area to protect native Russians, ethnic Russians. That has no limit in that region.

If we adopt the theory of the case, ignore international law, let him break

the 1994 agreement with no punishment for taking the Crimea, then I hope you understand what comes next. The theory of this case can apply to many countries in the region, not just Crimea and the Ukraine. So we need to reject this theory of the case.

We need to make him pay a price for what he has done, not what he might do. If he does not pay a price for what he has done, I can assure you what he will do. He will do more. The last thought is that Senator McCain and I and Senator Ayotte have been talking about the Al Qaeda buildup in Syria.

The Director of National Intelligence has testified before the country as a whole, before the Congress, that the Al Qaeda elements in Syria are representing a direct threat to our European allies and to our own homeland. There was a press report yesterday: What is your Congress and your Commander in Chief doing about it?

We have been told as Members of the Senate that the 26,000-plus Al Qaeda fighters, many of them European, some American, are amassing in Syria. Al Qaeda leaders from the tribal regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan are moving into Syria to organize this cabal. One of the goals that they would like to achieve is to take this force that is in the fight in Syria and disperse it back to Europe and the United States.

What are you doing about this threat, Mr. President? Members of the Senate, you have been told—11, 12 years after 9/11—that Al Qaeda is thinking about hitting us again. They exist in a certain part of the world. They are amassing capability. Their leaders are moving in to help organize this group. What is our response? What are we doing?

It is just not Ukraine. The whole world is melting down. I would end with this thought. Ronald Reagan had a great slogan. It was not a slogan. It was a world view: Peace through strength. Here is what I will say to the times in which we live, and I will talk about this more later. I want to come with my colleagues and talk about the Al Qaeda threat in Syria and elsewhere.

Peace is an illusion when it comes to radical Islam. It can never be achieved. But here is what can be achieved: security through strength. We need to have as a Nation security policies, national security policies that will deter aggression from nation-states and radical Islamic organizations who do not fear death. We have no such policy. We need to have security through strength. We are cutting our military. We are gutting our ability to defend ourselves through reducing intelligence capabilities at a time when the threats are on the rise.

This is the most dangerous time in American history—since the end of the Cold War, in many ways since the end of World War II—because the enemies of this Nation are getting stronger and we are getting weaker. Somebody needs to change that calculation before it is too late.

So to Senator McCain and Senator Ayotte, both of you have been to the Ukraine in the last couple of weeks. You have done the hard work of traveling away from your constituents and your families to find out first hand what is on the ground. I hope that people in the body will listen to their experiences. There are a lot of Democrats who seem to have the same experience.

Mr. McCain. I thank my colleague, and I appreciate his longstanding support for freedom and democracy throughout the world, but also for a very prescient piece that he and Senator Lieberman wrote 6 years ago predicting the likelihood of the events that we have just observed taking place. There is an article in the Washington Post: "Three ways NATO can bolster Ukraine's security," by Ian Brzezinski. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 24, 2014]

THREE WAYS NATO CAN BOLSTER UKRAINE'S SECURITY

(By Ian J. Brzezinski)

NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn a red line, but it is one that leaves Ukraine militarily isolated, fending for itself. If the West's economic and diplomatic sanctions are to deter Moscow from further military aggression, they must be complemented by a robust defensive strategy to reinforce Ukraine's armed forces.

When Russia invaded Crimea, it mobilized 150,000 troops along Ukraine's eastern frontier. Most of those forces still menace Ukraine, with some 20,000 troops still occupying the peninsula while provocateurs sent by Moscow continue to stir unrest in the country's eastern regions.

NATO's response has, by contrast, been underwhelming. The United States and Britain reinforced the air space of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with a handful of fighter jets, and AWACs patrols fly over Poland and Romania. The United States deployed about a dozen F-16s to Poland and sent an additional ship to the Black Sea. No ally appears to have mobilized any ground forces.

When Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk met with President Obama this month, his request for weapons that would enable his military to better defend against Russia's massed forces was politely declined. Instead, the Obama administration offered uniforms and military meals.

In a similarly negative move, Vice President Biden visited Warsaw and Vilnius, Lithuania, last week to reassure them of the U.S. military commitment to their security, but he bypassed Kiev. This was surely noted by Moscow, as was Obama's recent statement that he would not allow the United States to get involved in a "military excursion" in Ukraine.

These U.S. and alliance actions constitute a red line that depicts Kiev on the outside and on its own. This must be deeply disillusioning for Ukrainians who in recent months have so courageously expressed their desire for freedom and a place in Europe—and whose forces participated in a NATO collective defense exercise as recently as November. This red line can only reassure Vladimir Putin and his military planners, whose use of unmarked military personnel—and the plausible deniability they provided—in Crimea reflected at least initial concern about potential responses from the West.

There are prudent defensive measures the United States and NATO can and should take to bolster Ukraine's security. First, Yatsenyuk's request for military equipment should be immediately approved, and anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons should be included. Equipment and weapons could quickly be transferred from prepositioned U.S. military stocks in Europe.

If NATO cannot attain the consensus to initiate such assistance, then Washington should forge a coalition of the willing or act on its own. These weapons would complicate Russian military planning and add risk to its operations against Ukraine. U.S. equipment in particular would bring back unpleasant memories of when Soviet forces encountered Western weapons in Afghanistan.

Second, the alliance or a U.S.-led coalition should back that assistance with the deployment of intelligence and surveillance capabilities and military trainers to Ukraine. This would provide not only needed situational awareness and help the Ukrainian military maximize its defensive capacities, but it would also force Moscow to consider the potential political and military repercussions of any actions that affect that presence. The deployment of military trainers to Georgia was one of the more effective elements of the U.S. effort to bolster Georgia's security after it was invaded by Russia in 2008.

Third, NATO allies and partners should soon conduct a military exercise in Ukraine as part of the effort to train the Ukrainian military. The alliance's plan to wait until its next scheduled exercise in Ukraine, this summer, could incentivize Russia to take additional military action before then.

The NATO Response Force, created to deploy on short notice a brigade-level force backed by combat air support, is well suited for such an exercise. The force offers a means to demonstrate Western resolve prudently and rapidly. It has the potential to significantly reinforce Ukraine's defense against a sudden Russian offensive, but it is not big enough to jeopardize Russia's territorial integrity.

Each of these initiatives would complicate Putin's ambitions regarding Ukraine and could be executed in the near term. None would present a threat to Russia. They would, however, amend the red line the alliance has mistakenly created, assure Ukrainians that they are not alone and force Moscow to consider the possibility of a much more costly and prolonged military conflict. The absence of a firm Western response will only encourage Putin to act aggressively again, be it to drive deeper into Ukraine, make another attempt to seize Georgia, expand Russia's occupation of Moldovan territory or grab other areas that were once part of the Soviet Union.

NATO's response to this crisis is critical to both Ukraine's security and the alliance's long-term future. A NATO summit planned for September is to focus on the alliance's way forward in a new world. But what it does to assist Ukraine today and in the coming weeks will have a far more profound influence on its future and transatlantic security.

Mr. MCCAIN. It goes on to say:

These U.S. and alliance actions constitute a red line that depicts Kiev on the outside and on its own. This must be deeply disillusioning for Ukrainians who in recent months have so courageously expressed their desire for freedom and a place in Europe—and whose forces participated in a NATO collective defense exercise as recently as November. This red line can only reassure Vladimir Putin and his military planners, whose use of unmarked military personnel—and the plausible deniability they provided—in Cri-

mea reflected at least initial concern about potential responses from the West.

One of the more remarkable returns to the days of the Soviet Union was when Vladimir Putin had the press conference and was asked if those were Russian military in Crimea, and he said: Well, they can buy old uniforms from most any store in the region.

He not only denied that Russian troops were there, but he added to the flat-out lie with a statement so ridiculous that he must have known that we knew that he was absolutely lying through his teeth. Let me just say to my colleagues what we need to do is we must recognize the reality that President Putin is not, and will never be, our partner. He will always insist on being our adversary and working to revise the entire post Cold War vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace—and the security architecture that supports it. Our policy must begin with the reality of what Vladimir Putin is, what his ambitions are, and what he is willing to do.

We have to support Ukraine's emergence as a successful democracy with a thriving economy, fighting corruption, and with a strengthened national unity. We must ensure that the March elections in Ukraine occur on time, freely, and fairly. We must meet Ukraine's request for immediate military assistance as part of a larger, long-term initiative to help the Ukrainian armed forces rebuild and reform into an effective force that can deter aggression and defend their nation; support countries such as Moldova and Georgia in deepening democratic, economic, and military reforms that can hasten their integration into the Euro-Atlantic community; expand sanctions under the Magnitsky Act; increase targeted sanctions against Putin's sources of power, especially for corruption; push for an arms embargo against Russia; prevent defense technology transfers; use the upcoming NATO summit to enlarge the alliance; move Georgia into the Membership Action Plan; expand NATO cooperation with Ukraine; conduct significant contingency planning within NATO to deter aggression and defend alliance members, especially along the eastern flank; strategically shift NATO military assets eastward to support deterrence.

We must take these actions. None of them, by the way, entail the commitment of American troops. I also want to make one additional comment. I hope that the Senator from New Hampshire would comment as well. Whenever I see a news story—no matter which network it is on—the overwhelming majority of American people do not want to have anything to do with Syria.

The overwhelming majority of Americans do not want to have anything to do with Ukraine. We do not even want to assist the people of Ukraine. We do not want to assist the people of Syria that are fighting and struggling—

140,000 of whom have been slaughtered already in the most atrocious fashion. I say to my colleagues and to the American people: We cannot ignore the lessons of history. We cannot revert to the 1930s when isolationist impetus in this country kept us out of being prepared for a conflict.

If it had not been for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the actions he took in the late 1930s, we would have had an even worse time after Pearl Harbor. It is up to the President of the United States to inform the American people of what our vital national security interests are. That does not mean involvement in another war.

But we cannot leave the world because the world will not leave us. So the President of the United States—rather than announcing that if the Russians go any further there will be punishment for it, the President of the United States needs to go before the American people and say: Here is what we are facing. We are facing what Senator GRAHAM just talked about: the rise of Al Qaeda across the Middle East; the failure in Syria, which is now becoming a breeding ground for Islamic extremism; the Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea; the Iranian talks which are “failing;” and of course this latest and most outrageous aggression committed by Vladimir Putin.

The world is a dangerous place. It cries out for American leadership. As LINDSEY GRAHAM said, there was a guy, in the words of Margaret Thatcher, who won the Cold War without firing a shot. It is called peace through strength. It is through being steadfast.

Right now, when the Chinese announced that they are increasing their defense spending by 12.2 percent, we are announcing that we are cutting our defense dramatically. That is a long series of cuts in defense, which can put this Nation's national security interests further in danger.

I thank my colleague from New Hampshire for going to Kiev. It is an uplifting and wonderful experience to see how much they want to be like us, how much they appreciate what little we do, how much it matters to them to be able to be part of Europe and free, and to have an economic system that is not beset with the corruption and kleptocracy that devastated their economy.

They need our help. I hope tomorrow we will be passing legislation which will be the first step in providing that assistance to this Nation. I say to my colleagues, the people of Ukraine will be watching us. They are watching what we do. The sooner we guarantee \$1 billion of loan guarantees to them, the sooner we impose these sanctions which are embodied in this bill in a bipartisan fashion, the better it will be for the people of Ukraine to know that we stand with them.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I want to thank the senior Senator from Arizona for his leadership and to really frame what Ronald Reagan said. It is

so important at this moment. He said: Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the U.S. was too strong. So when we talk about peace through strength, we are talking about ensuring that we do not have to get involved in another conflict. Before I went to Ukraine I was in Afghanistan. One of the commanders that I was speaking with in Afghanistan said to me: You know, Senator AYOTTE, I worry about America's span of attention. I am worried. I have fought here. I have done multiple tours here. We sacrificed here. I am really worried. I understand how people at home view where things are in Afghanistan. But for us just to throw our hands up right now and what that will do—I am just worried that we are forgetting the lessons of what happened on September 11, when we thought that we did not have to be engaged, when we thought that the fight could stay over here and that this country Afghanistan, which was a haven for Al Qaeda, that they would just leave us alone.

Unfortunately, in this fight with Al Qaeda, they won't leave us alone. Now we are facing a situation in Syria where our Secretary of Homeland Security or our Director of National Intelligence has said the threat of Al Qaeda in Syria is a threat to our homeland.

As we look at events unfolding around the world, what is happening in Ukraine does matter to the United States of America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Ms. AYOTTE. I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

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

Ms. AYOTTE. I would say in order that we don't have to deal with wars here and that we hopefully don't have to send our men and women in uniform to war, we have to maintain a strong position in the United States and Ukraine using the strongest sanctions we can, having a prepared military, and supporting our allies to ensure that we don't fall back into forgetting the lessons we have seen. When America disengages, it becomes dangerous for America. That is what this is about.

I am pleased we are going to pass bipartisan legislation to support Ukraine. I ask the President to issue even stronger sanctions against Russia, Vladimir Putin, and to ensure we stand with the people of Ukraine, because when we stand with them we stand for ourselves as well and what we believe in.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. MURPHY. Yesterday, healthcare.gov saw about 1.2 million visits to the site. The call centers, which are busy enrolling people at a pace that is now exceeding 50,000 to 100,000 people a day, saw 390,000 phone calls.

A new poll just came out suggesting that a full 60 percent of Americans

want the Affordable Care Act to stay in place, and if they want changes, they only want minor changes. Only 11 percent of people in this poll said they want to repeal and replace the law, and only 18 percent said they wanted to repeal it completely.

It is not rocket science to figure out why we have hundreds of thousands of people lining up as we approach the deadline for enrollment seeking to get care. It is not rocket science why there are over 1 million people only yesterday alone going to the Web site trying to find out what their options are.

The simple fact is that even today, as we stand on the brink of the enrollment deadline, there are still millions of Americans who remain on the outside of the best health care system in the world. There are still millions of families who are waking up today, as they have week after week, year after year, wondering how they are going to pay the medical bills that are piling up for a sick father and worrying what would happen if their child were diagnosed with a disease, having no way to pay for it. That is a reality still today for millions of families. Many of them, frankly, have stayed away from the Web site because of the misinformation that has been spread by opponents of the health care law.

Now as we are coming to the enrollment deadline, we are seeing a surge of interest, much of it from families who are desperate to finally get access to health care insurance that will allow them to avoid the fate of millions of other Americans who have fallen into bankruptcy, have lost their homes, have lost their cars, and who have lost their savings simply because of a mistimed illness.

I was pleased today to see the President make a very simple announcement. What he said is that people who are in line trying to apply for health care insurance when the deadline hits on Monday are going to get a shot to complete their application.

For very complex cases, for instance, women who are in a situation of extreme domestic violence who don't want to apply jointly and have to apply themselves, they are going to be able to have a little extra time as well. For most of the people I represent, that is just common sense.

If someone is desperately in need of health care and if they have gone months, years, and maybe even decades without health care and they have this chance—a chance that will expire Monday this year—then if they are in line trying to fill out an application, they should be able to get through that application even if the midnight clock hits.

I heard my friend from Wyoming speak on the floor earlier today and criticize this announcement from the President. I thought it was worthwhile to come to the floor and make it clear that if someone is criticizing a simple decision to allow people a little bit of extra time, they are essentially rooting

for people to stay outside of the ranks of those who are insured. They are essentially guaranteeing that people who could get insurance, because they have the ability now over the course of the next few days to sign up, aren't going to be able to get it.

Of course, I think people understand this concept because there is plenty of precedent. When folks rush home from work late on election day to go vote, they often see very long lines outside of the polling place. But we don't shut down the polls at 8 o'clock when there is a line outside. We allow people who are in line to vote because they worked hard to get there, to get in line. They deserve a chance to express their choice in an election. That is essentially what the President has announced today, that individuals who are in line on March 31 are going to get a chance to sign up, because why on Earth would we deny people the ability to get insurance? I get it that there are people who oppose this law, who want it repealed, and many people of good faith who want it replaced with something else. But the reality of here and now is that there are millions of people who are going onto the Web site every day. There are hundreds of thousands of people who are calling, and they deserve a chance to get health care insurance, to be able to treat their loved ones for the diseases that they have today or may incur.

I would note that there is precedence to this. When President Bush was managing the enrollment process for Medicare Part D, he did, in fact, the same thing. He extended the enrollment deadline for people who were in process and for complex cases. People who were trying to sign up for Medicare Part D at the enrollment deadline received extra time, and there were plenty of Republicans who supported that effort.

I come to the floor today to make it clear that for a lot of folks it makes sense that if people are so desperate for health care and they are in the process of filling out these applications, they should get the chance to finish the job.

I am continuing to receive letters and emails from people who have gone through the process and whose lives have been transformed. I simply want to make sure that on Monday, if people are in the process of signing up, they don't get foreclosed from the possibility of experiencing a reality such as one of my constituents, Sean Hannon, from Weston, CT. I will finish by reading a letter he sent to our office.

Speaking for himself and his wife he said:

As working freelancers, my wife and I are not covered by company health plans and we have had to buy private health insurance out of pocket. It has been our largest financial burden. Last year, our monthly premium for Golden Rule was \$1,216. That came to \$14,592 annually. This plan also came with a huge deductible that needed to be met completely before any payout.

This year, Golden Rule increased our premium to \$1,476 a month, or \$17,712 annually.

On February 1, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, we were able to switch from Golden Rule to ConnecticutCare on the CT Exchange.

It wasn't easy to go through enrollment, but we had great assistance from a woman at the enrollment center in New Haven, and she stuck with us until we got it right.

Let me tell you what the new healthcare plan has done for us . . .

First and foremost, we lowered our monthly premium of \$1,475 to \$309. Let me spell that out so you know it wasn't a typo: three hundred and nine dollars. That is a savings of nearly 80%!

So now I am sure you are thinking that we must have made a huge sacrifice in quality of care or services. Just the opposite. We have lost none of the benefits we previously had. We were able to keep all of our doctors, our primary GP and specialists. They all accept the insurance.

While we still have a high deductible, unlike the previous plan that didn't pay anything until the deductible was met, we now have co-pays for doctor visits of \$30, and procedures such as CAT scans and MRIs are \$75 for each visit, and the remainder of the expense is covered COMPLETELY, even before the deductible is met.

And we have the peace of mind of not being dropped or penalized for pre-existing conditions.

They finish by saying:

Despite the messed up rollout and the attendant growing pains of a massive program, ObamaCare has been a Godsend, and we are overwhelmed and ecstatic over the dramatic difference this has made in our family budget.

We are sharing all of this personal information here because there is an aggressive campaign underway to dismantle this valuable program. The misinformation being put out there is skewing public opinion and this must not happen. . . . This treasure is ours to lose if we do not speak up now.

Yesterday 1.2 million people went to the Web site and 400,000 people called in to seek help. I imagine those numbers will continue to escalate as we move through the weekend. They deserve to be able to get to a reality that Sean Hannon and his family are experiencing now. They deserve to have a chance at paying lower premiums, 80 percent savings, for some individuals, to finally get insured for the diseases, illnesses, and conditions that have plagued these families for years.

I applaud the President for allowing these families the ability to complete their applications, and I hope that many of them get to see the same final reality that the Hannon of Weston, CT, have.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor, having heard my colleague's concerns and story of a family who was helped by the President's health care law. We want people in this country to be helped. My concern is there are a lot of people who are actually being hurt by the President's health care law. We shouldn't have to hurt people, specifically people who have had insurance, to try to help people who haven't had insurance. That is the big concern that my friend from Connecticut referred to as I came to the floor this morning to discuss.

I have grave concerns about the impact on the people of Wyoming and all

around the country as we are getting letters and concerns. We were told on the floor that all of these stories—nine of us were reading different stories—that all of these are lies.

These are not lies. These are people hurt by the President's health care law. We see them in States all around the country.

We don't know how many people have signed up, how many have gone to the Web site. The White House can't even tell us if they know how many have insurance.

Sure, they may have had a lot of people visit the Web site. I wonder how many people have actually paid to have insurance? What the President asked for is he said: We are going to get 30 million people who didn't have insurance to have insurance.

It looks as if there may be fewer than 2 million who go through that. We know that fewer than 1 in 10 young people—the people who are supposed to pay for this program—young people paying more so that older, sicker people will pay less, those people aren't signing up. Only 1 in 10 of those eligible at that age is signing up.

That is what we are seeing across the country, and that is why the worry is that there is going to need to be a big bailout of this program because the money that is being spent by the taxpayers is not getting the job done. They are not doing it in a way to actually help the people who need help without hurting so many other people, the 5 million people who received letters of cancellation.

I hear my friend and colleague from Connecticut. It is not only people—one person who may have gotten insurance in Connecticut who may have been helped in that situation. The impact on jobs and communities has been dramatic. When I looked at the State of Connecticut, there was a story in the New York Times only last month about the impact of this law that my colleague and friend has voted for that has now been changed over two dozen times. They are interviewing a superintendent of schools in Meriden, CT.

We just heard a story of somebody who was helped by the health care law. Now let's look at what has happened to the superintendent of schools in Meriden, CT, Mark Benigni. He is also a board member of the American Association of School Administrators.

In an interview with the New York Times, he said that the new health care law was having "unintended consequences for school systems across the Nation."

We have a letter from somebody in Connecticut, but let's see what happened to school systems across the country. Maybe they have children in school, I don't know.

The article states:

In Connecticut, as in many States, significant numbers of part-time school employees work more than 30 hours a week and do not receive health benefits.

We know the health care law defines a workweek as anything above 30

hours. They have people who are working part time with more than 30 hours, and according to the health care law those are full-time employees. So they have workers with more than 30 but who do not receive health benefits, and he says:

Are we supposed to lay off full-time teachers so that we can provide insurance coverage to part-time employees?

That is a question asked by the superintendent of schools in a town in central Connecticut. He says:

If we have to cut five reading teachers to pay for the benefits for substitute teachers, I'm not sure that would be best for our students.

The impact of this health care law and the mandate and the costs go way beyond the health care of an individual or a family or a community. It goes to so many other things, including the education of our young people. And those are some of the tradeoffs and the unintended consequences that have developed since passing a 2,700-page health care law.

Whether they delay the signup date to allow more people to sign up, as a doctor, my concern is for those people who do sign up, what kind of care are they going to get. Are they going to be able to keep their doctor, which the President promised. The deadline date is less important than the kind of care people can get with the insurance they are mandated to buy as a result of the health care law, and pay a lot more than they would have paid had the law not been passed. Will they be able to keep their doctor? Will they be able to see a doctor?

We know there is a shortage coming of about 90,000 physicians, half of them specialists, half of them primary care physicians around the country. This is coming in the next 5 or 6 years. We know the things that are happening along those lines with not enough nurses, not enough physician assistants, not enough EMTs, paramedics—across the board not enough people to take care of the population of this country. Having insurance is not enough to provide care.

The President made promises that are not being kept. That is a concern I have when I hear the deadline is extended. My concern is what happens after they sign up. Will they be able to get the care they need?

Last week, the Associated Press reported the results of a poll of all these different cancer hospitals. My wife is a cancer survivor, so I know how important it is for people to have the peace of mind to get the care they need. Of the 19 hospitals that responded to the Associated Press, only 4 of the 19 said, yes, they will be able to accept all of the plans of the people who are signing up on the Web site in those States where those hospitals are located. So it is not just a matter of keeping your own doctor, but it is getting the doctor you need at a time of family crisis, personal family concern—the time when people are most vulnerable. Will the

fact they have some coverage bought through a Web site actually help them get the care they need? And will the doctor who happens to see them—even if they are able to keep their own doctor—be able to spend the time interacting with the patient or, with all the additional paperwork and time-consumption activities, will the doctor have to cut the visit short, spend time looking more at the computer screen than looking at the patient? There are complaints in every State of the Union from patients who are complaining either to their doctor or the nurse at the office or at the checkout area of the office saying, you know, I would have liked to have had the doctor look more at me and not so much at the computer screen.

There are many components of this health care law that are harmful to health care delivery and to patient care in this country, and so the President decides to unilaterally delay a part of the law that this last week or the week before the Secretary of Health and Human Services said will not be done; this is the deadline; this is it. When is the law not the law anymore? When is it just Swiss cheese? When do you trust somebody, take them at their word? Words have meanings.

It is time for this President and this administration to actually realize the American people see what is happening. Each time they do a delay or do a change or do this or that, it has a huge impact on people's lives as they try to decide what to do and what matters and what doesn't matter under this administration. People are very disappointed as a result of the health care law. Those who were looking for something better haven't found it.

We still don't know how many people actually have paid for insurance. We may know how many went to the Web site, but we don't know how many of those who bought insurance through the Web site actually had their own insurance and got one of those letters—of the 5 million people who got letters of cancellation—canceling their insurance or how many were uninsured.

It looks as though the Web site doesn't even want to look into that. On the paper application there is actually a box to check off. It says: I didn't have insurance but now I am going to get it. The Web site left that off. I don't know if that was ineptitude on the part of the designers of the Web site or if it was left off or fell through the cracks in the disastrous rollout. I don't know, but it wasn't there. So the administration, which said our goal is that of the 30 million people who do not have insurance, getting them insured, will never know the answer to that. Then there is the question of who are these folks, in terms of young or old, sick or not sick. And we know of those eligible, only about 1 in 10 has signed up.

But the big concern is—regardless of some of these things the President is doing to delay this and let others sign

up or not sign up for a bit of time—what kind of care are they going to get? Whether they are insured through the Web site this week, next week, or the week after, what kind of care is going to be available to them? And what happens when they find the cost of the care—as for so many people I hear from in Wyoming—is much higher than they were paying before? And if they had a policy they liked—or are still finding, if they didn't have insurance—many of them still think the rates are unaffordable.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3521

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the floor again to try to move forward on a bill with near unanimous support. In fact, with regard to the actual substance of the bill, within the four corners of the bill, it has unanimous support because it would advance 27 community-based health care clinics for veterans in the VA system immediately, around the country, which would serve hundreds of thousands of veterans in communities that absolutely need this type of expanded community-based clinic. Two are in my State—one in Lafayette, one in Lake Charles, LA.

All of these community-based clinics—including the ones in Lafayette and Lake Charles—have been fully authorized by the VA and throughout the process. They have been on the books. We have been planning on them and moving forward with them for some time. But they have hit a series of bureaucratic glitches.

For the Lafayette and Lake Charles facilities in particular, first they hit a big VA glitch when the VA just screwed up—and those are their words, not mine—just screwed up in the letting process to put out contracts to locate land and to build or lease these facilities. Because of that bureaucratic mistake, the VA lost a whole year in the process in terms of moving forward with these clinics that are fully approved, fully authorized.

During that year of delay, out of the blue CBO decided to score how these clinics are financed differently than it ever did before. I won't go into the weeds, but suffice it to say that under this new scoring method, it created a scoring issue, which it never did before. Well, that was an additional hurdle and additional point of delay to which we had to respond. We overcame it with a

proposal that ensures the VA funds and handles this correctly so there is no scoring issue. The bill passed the House nearly unanimously. In fact, the vote in the House was 346 to 1. As the Presiding Officer knows, not much passes either body nearly unanimously, but this did with very widespread bipartisan support, 346 to 1. This is the bill which has come over here to get final approval.

With the addition of an amendment to help pay for any costs associated with the bill—and the amendment has been fully vetted and is supported in a bipartisan way—with the addition of an amendment, we have no opposition here in the Senate on the actual substance of my proposal, on moving forward with these 27 important VA clinics around the country, two of which are in Louisiana.

Unfortunately, the only objection that appears to reside here in the Senate is from the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, who does not object to this bill as amended, who does not object to the substance within the four corners of this bill, but who simply wants his much bigger, much broader VA bill passed. I applaud his passion to advocate for it, but there is significant concern with that much bigger, much more complicated proposal. There are 43 Senators, including myself, who have very significant concerns about that proposal.

I think it is really unfortunate for him to block something where there are no concerns—it has been vetted, it has bipartisan support, and every conceivable substantive issue has been worked out—simply to hold that as hostage for a much broader bill that has concerns and opposition from almost half of the Senate, 43 Senators. So I hope we can avoid that, and I come to the floor to ask for unanimous consent.

I think the American people want us to work together. I think the American people want us to agree on things we can agree on. There is a lot to fight about, there is a lot to wrestle with, there is a lot to disagree about, and we should work on that stuff too, toward an agreement. I am open to doing so with Senator SANDERS. But in the meantime, I firmly believe the American people want us to agree where we do agree. Don't create disagreements that don't exist. They want us to move forward where we can move forward. They want us to make progress where we can and keep working on the rest.

In that spirit, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of my bill, H.R. 3521, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that my amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I appreciate the interest my colleague from Louisiana has on this very important issue. I agree with him that we want to expand VA health care, that we have run into a bureaucratic morass, and there are 27 facilities in 18 States that can and should be approved. If the Senator from Louisiana is prepared to join with me, we can pass his concern today or within the next couple of weeks, along with many other provisions the veterans community is deeply concerned about.

During the last government shutdown, it is not widely known but the truth is that we were 7 to 10 days away from a situation where veterans—disabled veterans, veterans who have pensions—were not going to get their benefits. The comprehensive bipartisan legislation that received 56 votes here on the floor—unfortunately, not the vote from my colleague from Louisiana but 56 votes, and we are working to get the 60 votes we need to overcome a Republican point of order, and we are going to get those 60 votes—makes sure we do have advanced appropriations so no disabled veteran will not get a check in the event of another government shutdown.

My colleague from Louisiana may or may not think that is an important issue. I don't know. I think it is an important issue. And I can tell him the reason the legislation I introduced has the support of the American Legion—and, by the way, 500 of them were here this morning at a very interesting hearing—has the support of the VFW, the DAV, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Gold Star Wives of America, and virtually every organization is because they understand that the veterans community has very serious problems we have to address.

My friend from Louisiana may or may not have concerns about making sure that every veteran gets their benefits in an expedited way and that we don't have this backlog. Our legislation addresses that. My friend from Louisiana may or may not be concerned that there are veterans who want to take advantage of the post-9/11 GI bill—which over 1 million people are now having advantage of—and are having problems with getting instate tuition. Our legislation addresses that. Our legislation for the first time makes sure dental care will be part of VA health care. Our legislation addresses the reprehensible situation faced by many women and men in the military who had to deal with sexual assault. We think they should get the care they need. And on and on and on.

So we have a comprehensive piece of legislation which is supported by virtually every veterans organization in this country. We received 56 votes—1 person was absent who would have voted for it—57 votes, and we are now working with some of our Republican

colleagues to make sure we get the 60 votes. And I say to my colleague from Louisiana, work with us. Bring some of your other colleagues on board. Please don't tell me this is too expensive. If it is too expensive to take care of our veterans, then let's not go to war in the first place.

So I give my colleague from Louisiana the opportunity now to do something really extraordinary, to do something the veterans' committee wants.

I object to the proposal from my colleague from Louisiana, and in its place I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 297, S. 1950; that a Sanders substitute amendment, the text of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

If we pass this right now, we deal with the Senator's concerns and a lot of other concerns.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the request of the Senator from Louisiana.

Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I object on behalf of 43 Senators, including myself.

Reclaiming the floor and reclaiming my time, I would say we all want to work very hard to help veterans. We all acknowledge that the health care and work claim backlog issues are extremely important. That is why I am very involved in all of those issues across the board. That is why, for instance, I am an active member of the claims backlog working group, working with the VA to improve that situation and proposing focused legislation. We all care very much about that.

But right now Senator SANDERS' comprehensive bill has significant concerns in opposition—43 Senators, over 40 percent of the whole body. I do object on behalf of myself and the rest of those folks. I do commit to continuing to work on those issues, but I also express real regret that when this body is very divided on the important details of that bill—and the details do matter—we don't come together on something we agree on, and we can't accomplish a few important steps at a time.

Perhaps Senator SANDERS thinks that if we do this, somehow it takes away momentum for his larger bill. I think that is nonsense. These 27 clinics in 18 States are important, but they are a trivial part of that broader bill. They are a trivial part of all of the proposals in that broader bill. I don't think it takes away any momentum in any way, shape, or form for that broader bill. I will continue to be just as committed and just as interested in VA health care issues and working down the claims backlog and everything else. These clinics are a tiny part of

that. So he doesn't lose any advantage. He doesn't lose any momentum. We could move forward on something we do agree on and build from there. I think that is more reasonable and more constructive.

There is literally no disagreement among any of us in this body about these clinics. I have worked hard with several other colleagues to address every question and every concern out there. The amendment at the desk erases some of those concerns. We have covered the waterfront on this clinics issue in particular.

I am very disappointed that we can't move forward as a first step and agree on what we agree on. We disagree on enough. Let's agree on what we agree on. Let's move forward on what we agree on and pass these 27 clinics and start that progress and certainly continue to work on important compromise on the much bigger piece represented by the Sanders bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use leader time for a few minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the junior Senator from Wyoming has come to the floor several times recently talking about the fact that examples he and other Republicans have given dealing with ObamaCare, examples they think are bad, I call lies. That is simply untrue. I have never come to the floor, to my recollection, and said a word about any of the examples Republicans have given regarding ObamaCare and how it is not very good. But I have come to the floor—I think my friend, the junior Senator from Wyoming, must be getting mixed up about what I have said about the Koch brothers and what they have done regarding health care. But it is easy to get mixed up because I think it is hard to separate the Koch brothers from the Republican caucus, anyway.

Mr. President, I have asserted and I will continue to assert that the Koch brothers are trying to buy America, and they are doing it in a number of different ways. They don't believe in Social Security. They don't believe in minimum wage. They don't believe in benefits—unemployment benefits. They don't believe in environmental laws. As you know and read in the paper, they have a chemical plant. They were fined about \$400,000 over the last week or 10 days and ordered to pay about \$50 million to bring it up to standard because it was deleterious to the health of people in the area.

The Koch brothers are running false and misleading ads all around the country against Democratic Senators dealing with health care. Do they care about health care? Of course not. These are false and misleading ads, and they have gone so far as to have actors there pretending they are from the States,

and they not only have done that in one State; they used the same actor in different States. So the record should be very clear. Yes, I have called many, if not most, of the anti-Obama ads by the Koch brothers false and misleading because they are.

VOTE ON COOPER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to a vote on the Cooper nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 84 Ex.]

YEAS—100

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murphy
Ayotte	Graham	Murray
Baldwin	Grassley	Nelson
Barrasso	Hagan	Paul
Begich	Harkin	Portman
Bennet	Hatch	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Heller	Risch
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Coburn	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Lee	Toomey
Corker	Levin	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Markley	Vitter
Cruz	McCain	Walsh
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Fischer	Mikulski	Wyden
Flake	Moran	
Franken	Murkowski	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON HARPOOL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Harpool nomination.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri?

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted “yea.”

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Ayotte	Graham	Murphy
Baldwin	Grassley	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson
Begich	Harkin	Paul
Bennet	Hatch	Portman
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Pryor
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Heller	Reid
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Cornyn	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cruz	Levin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Manchin	Vitter
Durbin	Markley	Walsh
Enzi	McCaskill	Warner
Feinstein	McConnell	Warren
Fischer	Merkley	Whitehouse
Flake	Mikulski	Wicker
Franken	Moran	Wyden

NAYS—5

Coburn	McCain	Shelby
Crapo	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Corker	Menendez
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The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON MCHUGH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the McHugh nomination.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield back time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 86 Ex.]

YEAS—59

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Rockefeller
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Coats	Manchin	Toomey
Collins	Markley	Udall (CO)
Coons	McCain	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—41

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Pryor
Boozman	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hoeven	Roberts
Chambliss	Inhofe	Rubio
Coburn	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johanns	Sessions
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Landrieu	Vitter
Cruz	Lee	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON SMITH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Smith nomination. Who yields time?

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 87 Ex.]

YEAS—69

Alexander	Enzi	Lee
Ayotte	Fischer	Levin
Barrasso	Flake	Manchin
Bennet	Graham	McCain
Blunt	Grassley	McCaskill
Boozman	Hatch	McConnell
Brown	Heitkamp	Moran
Burr	Heller	Murkowski
Carper	Hirono	Murphy
Casey	Hoeven	Nelson
Chambliss	Inhofe	Paul
Coats	Isakson	Portman
Coburn	Johanns	Pryor
Cochran	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Reid
Coons	Kaine	Risch
Corker	King	Roberts
Cornyn	Kirk	Rubio
Crapo	Klobuchar	Scott
Cruz	Landrieu	Sessions
Durbin	Leahy	Shelby

Thune	Vitter	Whitehouse
Toomey	Warner	Wicker

NAYS—31

Baldwin	Hagan	Schumer
Begich	Harkin	Shaheen
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Stabenow
Booker	Markey	Tester
Boxer	Menendez	Udall (CO)
Cantwell	Merkley	Udall (NM)
Cardin	Mikulski	Walsh
Donnelly	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Rockefeller	Wyden
Franken	Sanders	
Gillibrand	Schatz	

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the Westphal nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph William Westphal, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Westphal nomination.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for perhaps more than 2 minutes or such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask my colleagues to recognize they have an opportunity now to support someone who is most deserving for the position of Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His name is Dr. Joseph William Westphal. While he is not an Oklahoma man, in his heart I think he is. He spent most of his time or much of his time in Oklahoma. He is a good personal friend of mine. He actually attended and graduated from the University of Oklahoma. Then he came back and was head of the political science department at Oklahoma State University—kind of an unusual combination.

Joe Westphal is one who has had a career in academia—and I don't really care that much about that, except for his two exposures in Oklahoma—but he also was the chancellor at the University of Maine, he taught public policy as the adjunct professor at Georgetown University, and he has been a Capitol Hill professional staff member for a long time. He actually was on the House Budget Committee for a long period of time. He was also a special assistant to our Senator THAD COCHRAN, although this has been some time ago.

In the executive branch, Joe served as the Army assistant secretary, then the Acting Secretary of the Army—that was 2001—and then as the 30th Under Secretary of the Army for the past 5 years.

As I say, he is a good friend of mine. What is different about him is, there are a lot of people who have a career, have a background in academia, but then there are the ones who have shown they also have a heart—they have a reason for what they are doing and they have a love for using the position they hold to help other people, and that is what Joe Westphal has done for a long period of time.

When Joe was Under Secretary—I think he was actually Acting Secretary of the Army—we were together in southern Oklahoma at Fort Sill. Fort Sill is outside of Lawton, OK, in the southwestern part of the State, and we had two schools down there, one called Geronimo and the other was Sheridan. Not Sheraton, like the hotel chain, but the Sheridan Indians, and we all know who Geronimo is. These were old schools. They are public schools, but the roofs leaked, and they had been around for a long period of time. The majority of the kids who went to school there are the sons and daughters of our military people. And because of his heart, for them, we went down together and we looked at this and saw something could be done to help these kids. So we put together—and he did through the Army—using it, perfectly legitimately, for the percentage of the population in the school who were actually the sons and daughters of military people, and we built a school that is now a model for schools and establishments that are in conjunction with large cities. It is something that now a lot of kids are very happy as they graduate from the Freedom Elementary School at Fort Sill, OK. Oklahoma has at this school 1,000 servicemember children. So we replaced the old one for them.

I also remember when we had a request—and I am sure the Chair knows, because he has made requests of the bureaucracy before, and sometimes it takes longer than it would be otherwise, longer than it should take—because we had a need in my State of Oklahoma for a museum to have an old Huey helicopter that had been used in the military many years ago. We tried everything we could to get that done, and one phone call from this guy named Dr. Joseph William Westphal, and it was done.

I probably shouldn't say this to my Democratic friends over here, but I have been such a good friend of his, I was afraid to express myself for fear President Obama might change his mind. But nonetheless he is now up for confirmation—I understand we are going to do that by voice vote—and I can't imagine anyone wouldn't take advantage of the opportunity to vote for Dr. Joseph Westphal to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Is there further debate?

If not, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Joseph W. Westphal to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

REMEMBERING KATE PUZEY

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the fifth anniversary of the tragic murder of a Georgia citizen who volunteered for the Peace Corps, who traveled to West Africa to the nation of Benin and lost her life. She lost her life because she did the right thing—she reported the abuse of children in a village school where she taught.

The reason I have recently returned from Benin is that I have taken this case on as a personal passion, to see to it that justice and some closure comes to the family of this wonderful young lady. Her name was Kate Puzey. Kate Puzey was top of her class, valedictorian, outstanding student, and she wanted to go out and save the world, to help the world and fulfill the dream John Kennedy professed in 1961 when he created the Peace Corps.

So Kate Puzey went to Benin and she found that one of the village natives in the village where she was teaching was abusing children in the school where she was teaching. In this very remote area, she took the only communication mechanism she had to report the violation of these children to the appropriate authorities in Cotonou, Benin. Unfortunately, because those communications were not secure, a relative of the person she reported notified the person she had reported that he had been reported. That night, in her hut in the Nation of Benin, her throat was cut and she died. She died because she did the right thing.

This Senate, 2 years ago, joined me and Senator BOXER in passing the Peace Corps Protection Act, which is now named the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act. This provides a mechanism and a way where Peace Corps volunteers can report violations or trauma of a sexual nature, gender-based violence, or any other type of violence against themselves or in any other place where they might be as a servant of the Peace Corps. Because of that, there are now ombudsmen and ways and mechanisms where