

of Interior Minister, including Francisco Rivas and the chief of Guatemala's Internal Revenue Service, Juan Solorzano Foppa—both were key partners of the Public Ministry and the CICIG. I was equally concerned about attempts last year to reform the Guatemalan penal code in a way that may complicate the prosecution of cases involving illicit financing and commuted sentences for crimes such as extortion, trafficking, and sexual assault. I was truly shocked by President Morales' attempt to expel CICIG commissioner, Ivan Velasquez, from Guatemala. The work of Commissioner Velasquez is highly regarded and attempting to remove him simply sends the wrong message to those interested in Guatemala's fight against impunity.

These developments are deeply concerning as Guatemala is in the process of selecting its next attorney general. It is imperative that the Morales administration ensures a credible and efficient process in which all Guatemalans can have faith. It is equally necessary that the nominating commission responsible for selecting candidates conduct a transparent, merit-based process, guided by international standards. Most importantly, it is essential that President Morales select a person with the best qualifications, professionalism, and impeccable ethical standards to continue advancing an agenda that upholds the independence and impartiality of the institution. Here in the U.S. Senate, we will be following this process closely.

During her visit to Guatemala, Ambassador Nikki Haley reaffirmed U.S. support for CICIG and Commissioner Velasquez, noting that it would be in President Morales' best interest to continue support for the UN body and the commissioner. Ambassador Haley's message builds on ongoing bipartisan efforts, including continued U.S. engagement in Central America's Northern Triangle, steadfast support for CICIG, and ensuring accountability for human rights abuses, when necessary, through the implementation of the Global Magnitsky Act.

Yesterday, I had the chance to meet with Commissioner Velasquez and reaffirm my support for him and CICIG as they carry out their critical work. I remain committed to ensuring that the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Treasury Department use all of our foreign policy tools to help strengthen democratic governance and the rule of law as we continue our support for the Guatemalan government and CICIG.

Guatemala's next attorney general must continue the courageous work of current Attorney General Thelma Aldana and former Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz, whose efforts have been invaluable in the fight against impunity. Failure to do so would undercut the commitment of prosecutors and judges who have done their work with professionalism and adherence to the law and whose efforts have produced tangible results.

Promoting good governance and the rule of law in Guatemala is critical to building a resilient, secure, and prosperous nation for all Guatemalans. Guatemala has taken commendable steps in establishing itself as a leader on these and other critical issues in the hemisphere. It is my sincere belief that committing to these efforts will greatly contribute to overall stability and success to the region, including the United States.

In closing, I urge President Morales to support the work of the Public Ministry and CICIG, so they are able to move forward with their important work without interference. I also encourage President Morales to continue his commitment to transparency and accountability, and to advancing his statement that, "the rule of law should always prevail."

LITHUANIAN AND ESTONIAN CENTENNIALS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus has been without a Republican cochair.

This is a critical time to show solidarity with our Baltic allies, given Russian aggression against Ukraine starting in 2014, following on Russian military intervention in the Republic of Georgia in 2008.

It is also a significant milestone year for all three Baltic countries as they celebrate the 100th anniversary of their statehood. As such, it is important that the Baltic Freedom Caucus have its leadership in place. I have been a member of the Baltic Freedom Caucus for some time, and I have now agreed to be the Republican cochair, along with Senator DURBIN, who is the long-time Democrat cochair.

So, in my new capacity as cochair of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, I would like to offer congratulations first to the Republic of Lithuania, which celebrated 100 years since the establishment of the modern Lithuanian state on February 16.

I say the modern state because Lithuanians trace their country's history to 1253. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania controlled a large amount of territory from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea during medieval times. It later joined with Poland as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Then, with the partitions of Poland starting in the 18th century, it came under the control of the Russian empire.

In the wake of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, on February 16, 1918, representatives of the Lithuanian nation signed the Act of Independence of Lithuania "reestablishing an independent state, based on democratic principles." Lithuania today holds true to those principles. This makes it a natural and close ally of the United States and other freedom-loving nations. In fact, the Lithuanian Government has become a particularly outspoken defender of democratic principles in the face of attacks on those

principles by its large neighbor, Russia.

I would also like to recognize the Republic of Estonia, which marked 100 years of statehood on February 24. Like the United States, Estonia counts its statehood starting with its declaration of independence. Also like the United States, Estonia had to fight a war against an empire with a much larger army to secure its independence. Actually, Estonia had to fight both the German empire and Bolshevik Russia.

Germany gave up when it lost World War I, and Soviet Russia was pushed back by the new Estonian army, ultimately signing the Treaty of Tartu that recognized the independence of Estonia in perpetuity. More recently, the Estonian army has fought side by side with the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Estonia is one of the few NATO allies that meets its commitment to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense.

I should add that Latvians will celebrate their 100th anniversary of statehood in November, so there will be time to congratulate them in due course, but I should mention that there are many connections between Latvia and Iowa.

Iowa was partnered with Latvia in a civic education exchange program a number of years ago; a prominent Iowan, Chuck Larson, served as Ambassador to Latvia from 2008 to 2009; and we have a Latvian-American community in Iowa.

Some people may have a vague notion that the Baltics are breakaway Soviet republics, but that is not accurate if you know your history. On the eve of World War II, the Soviets and the Nazis signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which contained a secret protocol agreeing to divide up several sovereign countries between them. The Nazis were to get western Poland, and the Soviets claimed the Baltic countries and Finland, eastern Poland, and the part of Romania that is now the Republic of Moldova. Then both totalitarian governments proceeded to take those territories by force, although the Finns only lost part of the Karelia region after repelling the Soviet invasion in the Winter War.

The Soviets organized rigged elections and claimed that the Baltic countries voluntarily joined the Soviet Union. However, the United States never recognized the annexation of these countries, and we continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the three Baltic countries throughout the Cold War.

The Lithuanian Embassy is still in its original location, and during the Soviet occupation, the Estonian representative to the United States became the longest serving member of the Washington diplomatic corps.

In 1989, on the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, citizens of the three Baltic countries formed a human chain connecting the capital cities protesting the continued occupation and highlighting the history of

how it came about, which was officially denied by the Soviet regime.

Vladimir Putin's regime continues to deny that the Baltic countries were illegally occupied and to insist that they ceased to be independent states when they were annexed in 1940.

In 2015, a member of the ruling party in Russia even initiated an inquiry with the Russian Prosecutor General as to the legality of the decision allowing the independence of the Baltic states from the Soviet Union in 1991. That decision was declared illegal. Since the entire 50-year occupation of the Baltic countries was illegal, the legality of a decision by a defunct evil empire is hardly relevant. What is relevant is that the current regime in Russia is continuing the Soviet legacy of rewriting history to fit its agenda. That is a form of political warfare.

Many Americans are now waking up to the fact that the Putin regime is bent on undermining Western democracies.

Well, the Baltic countries have been warning about that for years while leaders of our government were cozying up to Putin and playing around with reset buttons.

Estonia was the subject of a massive propaganda campaign combined with a cyber attack back in 2007 when it moved a Soviet war memorial to a less conspicuous location.

Estonia's experience of weathering a cyber attack and its strong IT sector have made it a cybersecurity expert, and it now hosts the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence.

What Russia is doing now is out of the same KGB playbook it used throughout the Cold War. For instance, the Soviets planted articles in newspapers in the 1980s claiming that the United States created AIDS. They then got other papers to pick it up and echoed the story via its own news agencies. This is exactly what Russia is still doing, only with more modern technology.

We have a lot to learn from all three Baltic countries, where the governments, the media, and the citizens are more sophisticated about identifying and exposing propaganda campaigns. The best response to propaganda is education and exposure—in other words, truth.

The citizens of the three Baltic countries fought back against Soviet distortion of history with historical truth and were able to reclaim their independence.

So today I want to recognize historical truth on the Senate floor and congratulate Lithuania and Estonia on their recent statehood centennials. I look forward to celebrating the upcoming centennial of Latvia in November.

These bastions of Western civilization and Western values in a tough neighborhood are valuable partners in advancing our shared goals of securing democracy and the blessings of liberty for our people.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO EMORY SCHWALL

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, it is an honor and a privilege today to pay tribute to a great Georgian who has dedicated a lifetime of service to our State ahead of his 90th birthday on April 11, 2018.

Mr. Emory Schwall is an outstanding Georgia attorney who has practiced law in our State for 68 years. In 1950, at the age of 21, he was admitted to the Georgia Bar after attending the Emory School of Law and graduating from the Woodrow Wilson Law School in Atlanta.

Emory Schwall has served as special assistant attorney general for the State of Georgia representing the insurance commissioner. He is a certified estate planner and mediator, a member of Atlanta Estate Planning Council, the Atlanta Bar Association, the Georgia Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. He also is a member of the Emory Law School Council.

As impressive as Emory Schwall's professional legal career has been, his impact on one of Georgia's finest not-for-profit hospitals is probably one of the areas of work of which he is most proud. The Shepherd Center in Atlanta specializes in medical treatment, research, and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, spine and chronic pain, and other neuromuscular conditions. Founded in 1975, the Shepherd Center is ranked by U.S. News & World Report as among the top 10 rehabilitation hospitals in the Nation, and it has grown from a six-bed rehabilitation unit to a world-renowned, 152-bed hospital that treats more than 8,500 patients each year.

Emory Schwall has been active with the Shepherd Center since its inception, helping it obtain grants and bequests, and he has led capital campaigns and other initiatives that have helped its growth. He served on the original board of directors for the Shepherd Center Foundation. He has also served as vice president and as a director of Shepherd Center, Inc., from 1987 until 2017.

Emory Schwall has also served his church Trinity Presbyterian Church since 1956, not only as a parishioner, but also as a deacon, an elder, and as chair of its finance committee.

An appreciation for the preservation of history led him, as president of the Atlanta Medical Heritage, to donate the Academy of Medicine building, a designated historical landmark in Atlanta, to the Georgia Tech Foundation to ensure funds for the restoration and preservation of the building.

Further, Atlanta's Piedmont Hospital has benefitted from Emory Schwall's generosity and service, including serving as an active member of the Friends of Piedmont Hospital charitable arm.

Emory Schwall also is active with national charitable and civic organiza-

tions such as the American Heart Association and the Arthritis Foundation.

His dedication to service earned him the "Greater Good Award" from the Georgia Planned Giving Council in 2009. This annual award is presented to an individual whose career is currently focused on advising individuals, attorneys, financial planners, insurance counselors, trust officers, accountants, and other financial advisers for obtaining charitable contributions, and a "Greater Good Award" recipient must have served to increase the quantity and quality of planned gifts to charities in Georgia.

Emory Schwall is truly a great Georgian, and I am fortunate to call him my friend. He, along with his wife, the late Peggy McCready Schwall, shared a love of service to others. Their three sons and four grandsons are proud to have such wonderful examples to follow, and as we celebrate his 90th birthday, I hope Emory enjoys many more years in our State and with his family. •

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF BIDDEFORD SAVINGS BANK

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 150th anniversary of Biddeford Saving Bank, a financial leader supporting the success and growth of the communities it serves with six locations spanning Biddeford, Waterboro, Scarborough, and Kennebunk, ME. The bank has been recognized for the support of its employees and exceptional customer service, emphasizing the importance of local involvement through volunteerism and support of charities.

Founded in 1867, Biddeford Savings Bank has promoted teamwork, personal growth, and good performance amongst its employees for 150 years. In addition to supporting their employees, Biddeford Savings Bank values its customers as if they are owners. Biddeford Savings Bank assists first-time homebuyers and works with small businesses to ensure growth and success for local owners. The bank also improves its business practices by developing new banking services for customers.

Biddeford Savings Bank is not only committed to its customers, but also to its neighbors including schools, businesses, and organizations that share their desire to improve the community around them. Over the years, the bank has hosted holiday food and gift drives, as well as musical events to raise money for organizations such as the Community Bicycle Center in Biddeford, ME, and United Way. In January of 2017, the bank sponsored the Atlantic Plunge, a fundraiser hosted by Caring Unlimited, in which participants jumped into the ocean to raise awareness for and support the end of domestic violence in York County. Through local events and sponsorships, Biddeford Savings Bank promotes community engagement for individuals in all financial stages of life. For local