

President Truman sat in the reviewing stand at the Ellipse.

That is not bad for their first day back with the regimental colors. It had been only 18 months since the regiment, serving with the 106th Division as an occupation force in Berlin, was caught up in the rushed demobilizations at the end of World War II. But the Army needed an official ceremonial unit in the Nation's Capital, as well as the contingency force as tension built up between the United States and the Soviet Union. So the Army called the 3rd Infantry back into service at Fort Myer, right next to Arlington, and restored "the history formerly belonging" to the legendary regiment. That was due, in no small part, to the regiment's reputation for professionalism, present from its very beginning.

The 3rd Infantry was stood up in 1784, when the Continental Congress created the "First American Regiment." The War for Independence had convinced Congress that, whatever its fear of standing armies, the country needed at least a small professional fighting force to defend it. So the 3rd Infantry started as the lone professional regiment in the early days of our Republic, when our common defense was organized mostly around State militias. To this day, its members continue to display that professionalism by holding themselves to the most exacting standards as the Army's highest profile unit and the official escort to the President.

But the 3rd Infantry's professionalism also had a serious purpose: to defend America. So faithfully has the regiment served the American people that its history and the Nation's history are thoroughly intertwined.

First, it served at posts along the frontier, where it protected American settlements against Indian attacks under the leadership of General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, and it fought the British Imperial Army to a standstill during the War of 1812. Today, members of the regiment wear a buff strap on their left shoulders to commemorate that 18th century heritage.

After the war, peacetime demobilization and reorganization gave the regiment its current name, the 3rd Infantry. Then, during the Mexican War, the 3rd Infantry distinguished itself with bravery, skill, and stamina at every major battle of the war, in places like Palo Alto, Monterrey, and Vera Cruz. Its famed bayonet charge at the Battle of Cerro Gordo is what persuaded the War Department in 1922 to authorize the 3rd Infantry to march with bayonets fixed to their rifles—a privilege still reserved solely to that regiment in the entire U.S. Army. It was because of the 3rd Infantry's valor that General Winfield Scott, the commanding general of the Vera Cruz campaign, granted it the honor of leading the victorious march into Mexico City, during which he turned to his staff as the 3rd Infantry passed in review, and said: "Gentlemen, take off your hats to the Old Guard of the Army." Ever since, the name has stuck.

After the Mexican War came the Civil War, which divided not only our Nation but also our Army. Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, who both fought alongside the Old Guard in Mexico, now faced off against each other. The 3rd Infantry fought every major battle in the war's first 2 years: First Bull Run, Second Bull Run, the Seven Days Battles, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and, finally, Gettysburg. Suffering casualties that exceeded its original strength, the Old Guard ended the war at the Union's mobile headquarters, standing alongside General Grant at the Appomattox courthouse as he accepted General Lee's surrender.

In the days that followed, the vast majority of State volunteers returned home to their families—not the Old Guard. The "regulars," as they were known back then, went straight back to the front, again protecting settlers from Indian raids across the western frontier. They defeated Spanish forces in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. They fought rebel insurgents in the Philippines and then returned to fight Muslim insurgents there, too, in some of the same places where the Islamic State is present today.

They guarded our border with Mexico during World War I. They helped to get the lend-lease program going in the early days of World War II, before deploying to Europe itself. But it was after the Old Guard's reactivation that it assumed the duties for which it is rightly famous today: performing ceremonies and military honor funerals.

For its first 162 years, the Old Guard defended America's frontiers and fought its wars, both at home and abroad. Now these new responsibilities have defined the Old Guard's mission for the last 70 years. The size and structure of the regiment has evolved, just as Arlington National Cemetery itself has grown. The Old Guard's prominence has increased, as it has participated in major internationally televised events, such as the ceremony to inter the unknown soldiers from World War II and the Korean war in 1958 and the state funeral for President Kennedy in 1963. But the essence of the mission has not changed since 1948.

It is this history, this reliability, this steady, sober leadership that the Old Guard has become known for. Their skill and proficiency, their care and attention to detail, their faithfulness and discipline—all of them—set the highest of standards of military conduct and character. Our fellow Americans see all that whenever they visit Arlington. They can imagine it on the battlefield. Then, they have little wonder why our soldiers accomplish such amazing feats of valor. That is why the Old Guard is held in such reverence, and that is why it is fitting to mark this important anniversary.

The Old Guard represents the best of our country, but also the best in ourselves. Freedom isn't free. It requires self-sacrifice and self-discipline. That

is what makes it a noble and, therefore, a fulfilling way of life. For reminding us of that dignity—the dignity that comes with being a free people—the men and women of the Old Guard deserve our deepest thanks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

VENEZUELA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, I spent 4 days in Venezuela. I had never been there before. I was given an opportunity to get a visa to go to the country, and I jumped at the opportunity. Venezuela, of course, on the north end of the South American continent, is a constant source of concern in the United States and the region, and I wanted to see for myself what was happening. No doubt, many are aware that Venezuela has been suffering devastating economic and democratic backsliding, but what I found was a country that is on the edge of collapse, facing overlapping economic, humanitarian, and political crises.

On the economic side, Venezuela has so many positive things. It is rich in natural beauty, oil, minerals, and human talent, but it has seen its economy run into the ground by mindless price controls, multiple exchange rates, and gross mismanagement. Inflation is rampant and expected to reach 13,000 percent this year, leading to what some call "a race for survival."

Imagine walking down the main street of Caracas and seeing long lines at every ATM. Why are they there? Because each day, the residents of Venezuela must go to the ATM machine with their credit card or debit card and take out the maximum withdrawal allowed. It is hundreds of thousands of Bolivars, which sound like more money than you could possibly need, but it translates into 20 cents—waiting an hour at an ATM machine for 20 cents' worth of currency so that you can ride the bus back and forth to work. That is what life is like in the capital of Venezuela.

They have universally discredited and arbitrary price controls that are eerily reminiscent of the failed policies in Cuba and the Soviet Union. They have decimated local production and left basic goods unavailable or unaffordable.

I went down the main street in Caracas and saw many shops but no customers. Basic goods were available—shampoo or diapers, for example—but they cost the equivalent of 2 or 3 months of salary. We stopped and did a translation at one store that isn't under price controls, and we found that a pound of hamburger costs \$4, which doesn't sound bad, except that that is the minimum monthly wage in Venezuela—for a pound of hamburger. People waited in long lines.

Rampant inflation—hyperinflation, really—has made actual cash scarce, and near worthless when it can actually be found. I have never visited a country where I never touched their currency. They warned me against it. They said: If you buy things here, as a tourist, you are going to pay 20 times what local people pay. They have exchange rates that are bizarre and change by the minute. These people live with this every single day.

The government of Maduro stages raids into formal grocery stores to impose arbitrary price controls, leaving the owners unable to stock their shelves or run a functioning business. If there is a rumor that there are eggs for sale somewhere in Caracas, there is a rush to that location, and people wait for hours in the hopes that they can buy eggs.

As a result, informal markets are springing up trying to meet the people's demands. Yet even while I walked through these markets, I saw long lines. From the second floor in the back, in the dark, there was a long line waiting. I went to the front to see what they were waiting for. They wanted to buy toilet paper.

Business leaders told me that they are being vilified by the government, forced to sell products below cost and out of markets so the government can be the exclusive seller of imported goods.

Listen to this. They also shared stories of workers fainting on the job from hunger. Of particular concern, one of the largest employers in Venezuela said they decided they had to start bringing fruit to the workplace in the morning so their workers could get something to eat. When they fainted, it was not only dangerous to them but to people around them, and they wanted to keep their workers awake. Only one out of three people in Venezuela eats three meals a day. There are children fainting at school.

The government has run the state oil industry into collapse, treating it as its cash cow and as a way to line their pockets. Currently, there is little or no investment in the oil industry, the national oil industry of Venezuela. There is little or no maintenance, and there is a mass exodus of skilled personnel and engineers. What would an engineer working for a Venezuelan national oil company earn in the course of a year? Dramatically more than most Venezuelans—\$1,700 a year in annual income. What do they earn in other countries in Latin America with the same skills? They would earn an average income of \$85,000 a year. Is it any surprise they are leaving?

It is also no surprise that the country is suffering a heartbreaking humanitarian crisis, one that is notable for malnutrition and a breakdown of basic public health. Brave and dedicated healthcare workers—and I have met some; NGO leaders told me of a shortage of vaccines with outbreaks of measles and diphtheria that haven't been

seen for decades. Malaria is at record levels.

When the public health officials gave me a briefing on the public health crisis of Venezuela, they said that the maternal mortality rate—the death of mothers—is at the level it was 50 years ago, the early 1960s. The same thing is true for infant mortality—that high a level. You have to go to South Sudan, Yemen, or Syria to find comparable public health crises, and those three countries are all at war. Venezuela is at war with itself. In fact, one expert said that the outbreak of measles, diphtheria, and malaria was the worst he had seen, certainly the worst in all of South America.

With Venezuelans flooding into neighboring countries, many of them are spreading diseases that have been cured in so many countries around the world. Basic diabetes, asthma, and HIV treatments are simply not available. For 4 months now, HIV patients have not been given medication.

A staggering number of hospitals cannot perform basic services. Many do not have any capacity to perform a blood test. There are no x ray machines available on a 24/7 basis. Many of them don't have electricity. Some do not even have clean water.

Venezuelans are suffering malnutrition, and it is particularly acute for children, who suffer for a lifetime due to stunted brain development. One expert said that the rates of malnutrition have affected more than 8 percent of the population. In some areas, the percentage of people suffering from malnutrition is as high as 15 percent. You can see it on the streets of Caracas. When you look at the public parks, you see these children—thin limbs, spindly legs and arms, and you think to yourself: These kids are not getting enough to eat.

It is hard to know precisely about all of these statistics because the government has officially stopped collecting and releasing information. They leave it up to private organizations.

What I found particularly cruel is the government's supposed effort to help with hunger. A provision of a monthly food basket was linked to having the right political identification card. Sadly, these food boxes are imported. Someone is making a lot of money in that process, with corrupt middlemen taking a cut at multiple steps along the way, all to provide a politically manipulated lifeline that meets only 7 of the 12 basic food needs.

The regime has also linked these food rations to polling stations during elections, which brings me to the third overlapping crisis, a democratic crisis. Let me acknowledge that Hugo Chavez did, in fact, win his initial terms in democratic elections. He tapped into public disenchantment with the failure of traditional governing parties to address the deep chasms of poverty in Venezuela. He even said "I am not the cause, I am the consequence," referring to his rise to power. But his election,

like that of so many other autocrats at heart, also brought the steady dismantling of the country's democracy, a path followed by the current President.

You see, in Venezuela, political parties that look threatening are arbitrarily banned. Political opponents who appear to be popular are jailed or exiled or just plain disqualified from running for office. Government institutions, like the Venezuelan election commission, are simply political tools of the regime. The rule of law has collapsed.

In 2015, the opposition won a sweeping victory in legislative elections. What happened next? The President of Venezuela, Maduro, installed an illegitimate rubberstamp constituent assembly to usurp the legitimately elected National Assembly. It was his way of stopping his opponents. The supreme court and national election council are stacked with partisan cronies who do whatever the regime asks, regardless of the law.

Now, with the country on the edge of economic collapse, the President has called for a snap election on May 20—more than 6 months before it traditionally would be held. He wants to move quickly, for fear that he might lose. Maduro doesn't want to risk losing even under a rigged system, so he is rushing forward with this election that doesn't even come close to meeting established international standards.

What I found, and bears repeating, is that the critics of the Venezuelan Government regime and their actions are not confined to the United States or Canada. They include Central American countries like Panama and South American countries, which have expressed their displeasure with Maduro's actions, as well as the European Union's displeasure. The parties and candidates still remain arbitrarily banned. There is zero trust in discredited election commissions, and registration and voting processes have been dramatically manipulated.

I met with some of the opposition leaders, and they told me what happens when people try to vote. They have to go through an elaborate process with a machine to register to vote. It is controlled. It takes too much time. It limits the opposition from registering their voters. There is little time for a legitimate campaign, especially with government control of the media. Reputable, long-term election monitors are nowhere to be seen, and none seem to be planned for the actual election, either.

Under these conditions, how can any such election be credible? If President Maduro proceeds with this May 20 election under these circumstances, he is going to find Venezuela further isolated.

Amid these deeply troubling and ominous conditions, I nonetheless met many brave and dedicated Venezuelans who are trying to endure and reverse this horrible situation. Doctors, nurses, civic leaders, business people,

politicians, and so many others are sharing food and medicine, running for office and facing the threat of arrest or exile, documenting human rights abuses in the shrinking media state, trying to run businesses in a broken economy. It is an incredible act of courage each day.

I also met with former political prisoners, political opposition members, and their families who are under constant threat or already under some kind of arrest. I would name them here, but to do so would put them in danger in Venezuela. I was moved by their dedication and humanity.

I am haunted by the comments of one group of young idealists. Over dinner Friday night in Caracas, they talked about the future. They said: If we called the same group of five opposition leaders together a year from now, we would be lucky if three showed up. Two of us will be exiled or jailed between now and then. That is what they face by being political opponents of the current regime. I fear how many of Venezuela's most talented will be sacrificed under these conditions.

The regime is also tragically holding a U.S. citizen, Josh Holt of Utah, on criminal charges. The charges are nonsense. I visited with Josh Holt in his prison. The prison is known locally as hell on earth. Josh and his Venezuelan wife have served 21 months, with no end in sight, and they still haven't gone through the criminal process. He is suffering, and he should be. It is understandable. He is clearly being held as a political hostage. I appealed to the President and every member of the government to release this young man and his Venezuelan wife and her daughter so that they could come back to the United States. Keeping Josh Holt as a political hostage will just isolate the Maduro regime even more. I am one of a bipartisan group of Members in Congress who will continue to push for his immediate release.

Lastly, I want to note that every time I go on one of these trips overseas, including to some of the most far-flung corners of the globe, I am always moved by the group of talented Americans working for us and representing us; those are the men and women in our Embassies, without exception. Under the Charge d'Affaires, Todd Robinson, our Embassy team in Caracas is a point of great pride and outstanding public service. The conditions under which they are forced to operate are extraordinarily stressful.

There was some small hope that negotiations led by the Vatican and regional leaders or most recently hosted in the Dominican Republic could lead to some kind of path forward between the Venezuelan Government and the opposition before it is too late, but all of these have failed. Some hoped years ago that a group known as the Boston Group—American and Venezuelan elected officials—might be the beginning of a dialogue and might be continued to this day, but it is increasingly

difficult to see that possibility. I met some of the Venezuelan Boston Group members. Several of them are deeply committed to this administration currently in power. Many of them talk about changes that need to be made in Venezuela. I haven't given up hope completely that there may be some voices that can move this country back to a civilized status.

Let me be clear in my concluding message to the Venezuelan Government, specifically, a message that they should proceed with an election that meets the following basic standards: All political prisoners must be released, and all candidates and parties must be allowed to compete. There must be at least 6 months for a legitimate campaign. The national election council should be restructured and led by a credible group of professionals on an evenly divided partisan basis so that it isn't loaded for one party or another. There must be no linking of food with voting or political party affiliation. The National Assembly must have its powers restored. Credible international and local election monitors must be allowed to observe preelection and actual election processes, with full accreditation and access. Going forward otherwise will only bring more suffering to the people of Venezuela and more isolation to their nation.

Republicans and Democrats don't agree on much these days, certainly not here in Washington on Capitol Hill, but we do agree that Venezuela and the consequences of President Maduro's regime continue to lead that nation down a negative path, a path of suffering.

I yield the floor.

CHINA AND TRADE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I preface my remarks today about China with a recent article from *The Economist*, dated March 1, 2018, which, I think, does a very good job of crystalizing what the hopes and aspirations that we in the West had for China and what the reality has turned out to be.

It points out that in March 2000, Bill Clinton divided the American opinion on China into two camps. The first, he said, was of the optimists, and the second was of the hawks and the pessimists. The optimists, as it describes it, have an eye on the future and can see China becoming the next great capitalist tiger with the biggest market in the world. That was the optimistic view. *The Economist* writes that the hawks and pessimists, who were stuck in the past, saw China as stubbornly remaining as the world's last, great Communist dragon and a threat to stability in Asia.

As this article points out, it was not an either/or. It called it a both/and. It concludes that the China of Xi Jinping is a great mercantilist dragon that is under strict Communist Party control and that it is using the power of its vast markets to cow and co-opt capitalist rivals to bend and break the rules-based order and to push America to the periphery of the Asia-Pacific re-

gion. It calls this one of the starkest reversals in modern geopolitics.

Indeed, the administration's national security strategy that President Trump rolled out just a couple of months ago states that China challenges American power, influence, and interests. It points out again that the hopes and aspirations of the optimists appear to have been dashed. Instead, we have one of the starkest reversals in modern geopolitics. This leads me to the subject I want to at least start talking about because it does relate to China.

Today, in the Subcommittee on International Trade, within the Senate Finance Committee, which I happen to chair, we are convening a hearing on trade issues and China. The core issue my colleagues and I will examine involves challenges to U.S. businesses, manufacturers, and service providers who are trying to get access to the Chinese market—a market that represents the second largest economy in the world. China, of course, has almost unfettered access to the United States. There are important protections in place, like the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which does look at some of those investments to make sure our national security interests are not compromised.

By and large, China has open access to the United States and the U.S. market. China is the United States' largest merchandise trading partner and the third largest export market for U.S. goods abroad. Although the legitimate flow of goods and services between the United States and China has increased over the years and is, in many respects, a positive thing, statistics alone do not capture the whole story, hence the preface that I gave about *The Economist's* view of what has changed in China.

Unfortunately, while Chinese companies largely enjoy open access to U.S. markets and an economy that is receptive to foreign investment, U.S. companies are not afforded reciprocity in this regard. In his State of the Union Message, the President made that point, which is that in our trading relationships, we expect reciprocity—in other words, to treat our trading partners the same way they treat us—hopefully, to everybody's advantage.

U.S. companies that seek to do business in China often encounter—I would say always encounter—a protectionist system, one that employs predatory tactics and promotes domestic industries over foreign competitors, many of which receive State subsidies. In many cases, China has used trade as a weapon and coerced U.S. companies to enter into joint ventures or other business arrangements that require a company to hand over its key technology and know-how—the so-called secret sauce of its business—in order to gain market access.

This practice has already begun to erode America's technological advantage and undermine our defense industrial base, which is something that