

ensure that we have a strong Administrator at the helm, and that is why I intend to vote to support the nomination this afternoon.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT RISK REVIEW
MODERNIZATION ACT

Madam President, I wish to switch gears to another issue. I have spoken quite a few times recently about U.S. relations with China, both the opportunities and the concerns that we should have. Last week, I held a hearing in the Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness to examine the challenges that U.S. businesses, manufacturers, and service providers face when they are trying to access the Chinese market.

The President spoke about this issue in his State of the Union when he called for reciprocity. In other words, we expect to be treated as well as we treat Chinese investment in the United States when we and our companies invest in China, but that is not happening.

I have also been spending a lot of time looking at the long-term national security implications that China poses to our country, which is why I was proud to join our colleague, the senior Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to recently introduce legislation that will strengthen the process by which the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, otherwise known as CFIUS, weighs national security risks. The CFIUS process was not originally designed, and is now insufficient, to address rapidly evolving technology, as well as the threats to our technological edge, particularly when it comes to dual-use technology that is important for national security reasons. The committee's current jurisdiction and the staffing is both too narrow and inadequate in order to address these evolving threats.

China, in particular, has proven adept at circumventing the current CFIUS process. It exploits gaps and creatively structures business arrangements within the United States to evade scrutiny. That can mean that there would be no scrutiny of those transactions on national security grounds, which is a troubling situation that our bill, the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act, or FIRRMA, is meant to address. The weaponization of trade and the use of coercive industrial policies are tools that China has been using for some time, and it is imperative that we give CFIUS the full authority it needs to ensure that our advantage in the U.S. military know-how and technology are not stolen from us and used against us.

It is important to note, in the wake of some critics' flawed objections, that my bill does not try to address all, or even most, outbound investments. Rather, it addresses a narrow subset—joint ventures where tech-related intellectual property and know-how are transferred. This is a threat to our industrialized base, or jobs, here in

America. If somebody can acquire both the intellectual property and the know-how to make that technology in China, obviously, those are jobs we will not have in the United States.

It is true that these technology transfers are already sometimes covered under current export controls, but the problem is that the harm to our national security is occurring despite those current export controls. So we need to do more. We need to step up to the challenge.

Export controls are not an adequate solution to the situation we are now dealing with because of their inherent limitations. For example, the intellectual property that is at the heart of many of these joint ventures implicates technology that the Commerce Department has, in fact, decontrolled; that is, removed from the relevant export control list.

One last point I need to emphasize is that currently joint ventures are often carefully structured, as I suggested a moment ago, to circumvent this review process. These joint ventures are essentially acquisitions by another name, which is why CFIUS should be able to review them for national securities risks.

Let me be clear, though. Foreign investment is a good thing. These joint ventures are not inherently bad, but we do know that China has used them strategically as a vessel for its activities to try to undermine both our national security edge and jobs in America. Foreign actors know that CFIUS, under normal circumstances, would block their attempt to acquire certain business units outright. So they have been very creative in structuring transactions to obtain the very same industrial capabilities by other means.

To address the national security risks, what we need is an upfront U.S. governmental review, informed by our intelligence assessments, of the foreign partners that are involved. We need to ask whether these foreign partners are affiliated with the Chinese military, for example, or some other potential adversary.

In China, there is no separation between public and private sectors because the Communist Party sits atop the entire Government of China and is basically embedded within all of these Chinese companies. They have an "all of government" strategy focused at beating the United States, economically and militarily.

I believe the opponents of the reforms that I have just talked about are trying to perpetuate the status quo as long as possible—not to protect our national security interests but just the opposite—so they can bolster their bottom line, regardless of its potential negative effects on the rest of our country and on our national security.

We simply cannot afford to wait while China whittles away at our technological advantages. The time to act is now. Our national security demands that CFIUS and export controls be

made to be interlocking and mutually reinforcing, rather than simply relying on export controls to address these national security risks, which would be foolhardy.

If we want our country to retain its technological advantage and remain the top military superpower in the world, enacting this bill is an essential piece of that. After all, if China supplants the United States—it is not only the top economic but military superpower in the world—the repercussions there will be enormous. We simply have not faced that situation where the U.S. Armed Forces were not the most powerful military in the world since before World War II. It is dangerous, as that war pointed out, when you have countries building their military, acting more belligerently, and inviting retaliation. Let's not start now.

The bipartisan bill that Senator FEINSTEIN and I have filed has been endorsed by the White House and is supported by the current Secretaries of Defense, Treasury, and Commerce, as well as the Attorney General of the United States. Let's not hold it up any longer.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR STEPHEN DEL BAGNO

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today, I rise to honor Maj. Stephen Del Bagno, a U.S. Thunderbird pilot who was killed on April 4, 2018, when his F-16 Fighting Falcon crashed at the Nevada Test and Training Range, which is north of Nellis Air Force Base. At just 34, Major Del Bagno's life was cut too short, but his legacy of leadership, commitment to excellence, and service to our country will be preserved by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

I wish to begin by saying that my wife Lynne and I offer our deepest condolences to Major Del Bagno's family and loved ones. We join the Thunderbirds, Nellis Air Force Base, and the Nevada community in mourning this heavy loss.

Major Del Bagno grew up in Valencia, CA, and he graduated from Utah Valley State University. He received his commission when he graduated from Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base in 2007.

Called "Cajun" by his team, he was in his first season with the Thunderbirds. The Thunderbirds are also known as America's Ambassadors in Blue. They are an elite team of highly experienced fighter pilots. In fact, only 325 officers have had the honor of wearing the distinguished Thunderbird patch. They are the best of the best.

In June of 2017, Nellis Air Force Base announced that Major Del Bagno was the first F-35 pilot to serve with the Thunderbirds. He served as the team's slot pilot and flew Thunderbird 4. Brigadier General Leavitt, commander of the 57th Nellis Air Force Base, called Major Del Bagno an integral part of that team.

Prior to joining the Thunderbirds, Major Del Bagno was a civilian flight instructor, he was a corporate pilot, he was a skywriter, and he was a banner tow pilot. According to the Thunderbirds, he logged more than 3,500 flight hours in more than 30 different aircraft. That included 1,400 hours as an Air Force pilot.

In his free time, he enjoyed snowboarding, he enjoyed water sports, and he enjoyed spending time with his family.

Major Del Bagno was laid to rest on April 15, 2018, at a memorial service at his alma mater, Saugus High School, in Santa Clarita, CA. More than 1,000 people attended the memorial and joined together to commemorate his life—a true testament to his impact on the community. During the service, his friends, his family, and fellow wingmen offered loving tributes about his skill, his passion for aviation, and pride in being a member of the Air Force.

Ilene Block, a former guidance counselor for the school, told a local television affiliate that Stephen was “always giving back” and said that he often visited the high school to talk to students about his love for flying. His name will soon be added to a wall of heroes at Saugus High School.

Lt. Col. Kevin Walsh, the Thunderbirds’ commander, said that Major Del Bagno “lived to fly and inspire the next generation.” He also said that he will be remembered “as a talented fighter pilot and a great friend.”

Selfless, driven, caring, mentor, an inspiration, a big dude with an even bigger heart, brother—those are the words that Major Del Bagno’s fellow Thunderbirds used to describe him.

In a video tribute from the Thunderbirds, one said:

Cajun—you had this way of immediately making people feel special, interesting, and included. The world needs more of that. And now, your memory is going to inspire all of us to be a little bit more like you. And hopefully we’ll make you proud. We miss you and love you.

The loss of Major Del Bagno is an enormous tragedy that has struck the heart of the Thunderbirds, Nellis Air Force Base, and every life that he touched.

Major Del Bagno’s death is a reminder that we are all forever indebted to the men and women who answer the call to serve this country and stand guard, training and preparing each day for when duty calls.

It is a reminder of what they give up and what they risk when they bravely step up to the plate so that we can remain an extraordinary and free nation.

It is also a reminder of the families, like the Del Bagnos, who have lost a loved one and paid a price beyond measure. They deserve our lasting support.

I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life of Major Del Bagno and his unbounded determination that set him apart. These are the people whose characters embody the

American spirit, the people who truly humble us and inspire us through their unwavering commitment, the people who represent the very best that this country has to offer.

I close with this. In a video honoring Major Del Bagno’s memory, the Thunderbirds talked about how he would spend time teaching kids about flying as a Thunderbird. They said he chose to share his passion with kids. In that same video, there was footage of Major Del Bagno responding to a question about advice for kids who want to be pilots in the Air Force. He talked about the five P’s of success. This is what he said:

Find your passion. Find your purpose. Be persistent in your pursuit. Be personable . . . so humble, credible, and approachable. And then it’ll pay off. People are going to tell you “no” along the way—it’s just a test of your resolve. If you really want it, go out and make that known.

I am confident that Major Del Bagno’s legacy will inspire the next generation of fighter pilots, as well as Nevadans and Americans around the country, for decades to come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONGRATULATING SENATOR DUCKWORTH

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I was on the floor today to first and foremost congratulate Senator DUCKWORTH on the new addition to her family. We were anticipating seeing a new baby, and now we will be able to meet that child right here on the Senate floor.

We do want to commend and salute Senator DUCKWORTH, of course—long before today—on her life of service and remarkable courage and sacrifice, and our Nation owes her a debt of gratitude, not just for this recent news about her resolution but also for her great service to the country.

This resolution is an important step forward for the U.S. Senate in terms of the people who are permitted to be on the floor, and we are glad that we have such consensus to make it possible for the youngest among us to get to the floor.

It is also one way to demonstrate our Nation’s commitment to families and policies that allow children to get off to a strong and smart start to their lives. So many of us have worked on those policies for many years, whether it is making childcare more affordable, paid family leave, flexible work arrangements, or so many other priorities. I hope we can use this oppor-

tunity to continue to work together to benefit our Nation’s children, and we are grateful to be part of that effort.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SYRIA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk about Syria and all of the horrors we have been seeing over not just months but years.

Many people around this Nation, as well as people in the international community—whether they are in refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, or in bombed-out neighborhoods in Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs—so many people across the country and across the world are wondering, what will President Trump do next in Syria? Are we any closer to a resolution of this terrible conflict that will allow the Syrian people to rebuild their lives?

More than 7 years have passed since the Syrian people first began protesting the Assad regime’s brutal rule, and that may be a terrible understatement. The ongoing conflict continues to have an impact on U.S. national security interests. In these 7 years, almost 500,000 Syrians have been killed—half a million Syrians killed—and more than 12 million have been displaced from their homes. Sometimes that means they leave their homes and go to another community or another place within Syria, but of course many—maybe even most—have gone to another country. It is hard to comprehend that because that is a little more than half of the population of Syria. Imagine if half of more than 300 million Americans were forced to leave their homes because of a war, because of bombings, because of the brutality of a regime. That is what has happened in Syria. Half the population has been displaced, and half a million have been killed.

This is a conflict that began rather modestly but courageously. A group of young people scrawled graffiti on the walls of local buildings in protest of their own government’s repressive policies. This was in the context of a movement of young people across the region—meaning the Middle East—standing up against autocratic governance. The Syrian regime cracked down brutally, and of course we all know that the conflict escalated from there.

I remind my colleagues of the genesis of this conflict because so much has happened over the last 7 years, and the