

One of the last acts of the Obama administration was to deem election infrastructure critical, which put it in a priority category for assistance to guard against election interference. While appropriate and important, that is the mere beginning of a solution, and we have hardly progressed in the last 14 months.

I recently asked General Curt Scaparrotti, the head of European Command, who is on the frontline of blunting Russian aggression in Europe, whether we had a sufficient whole-of-government to combat such hybrid operations. He responded that we did not have an “effective unification” across the government and affirmed that additional focus was needed immediately because of the nature of the threat.

We need a whole-of-government approach with the weight of the White House behind it. We need an approach that will enable coordination across the different agencies of our government and support effective outreach and collaboration with State and local officials and the private sector, including the media. Given the nature of Russia’s asymmetric aggression, conducted below the level of direct military conflict, we must deploy a range of tools, including cyber; diplomacy; economic sanctions; financial investigations to counter foreign corruption, money laundering, and malign political influence; and strategic communications.

This administration has not effectively employed the nonmilitary tools in its arsenal, and it has been slow to respond in any meaningful way. The administration’s dithering is exemplified in its foot-dragging in utilizing the State Department’s Global Engagement Center to counter Russian propaganda and its delay in implementing sanctions to punish Russia. While recent actions to expel Russian diplomats after the poisoning of the Russian spy and his daughter on British soil and the decision to finally implement sanctions targeted against Putin’s base of power are encouraging, they do not add up to a policy of effective deterrence.

In this regard, I would note that a former senior Defense Department cyber policymaker recently testified to the Armed Services Committee that a standing joint interagency task force is required to bring to bear the right capabilities and resources spread across the government to respond effectively to Russian aggression. Such a task force would utilize expertise from across our government, including the intelligence community, the Department of Defense, the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Treasury Department, and would allow effective coordination and collaboration on policy to counter Russia. The minority staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Russian asymmetric operations in Europe recommended a similar mechanism. I think this is a good way forward, and I intend to continue

to work with my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committees and other committees of jurisdiction on how best to stand up such a capability.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, of which I am a member, has recently issued recommendations to improve election security. The committee urges retaining States’ primacy in running elections and providing them with necessary assistance; creating effective deterrence; improving information sharing on threats; and securing election-related systems. All of these are important steps and should be implemented without delay.

Several of my Senate colleagues have thoughtfully incorporated these recommendations into legislation, the Secure Elections Act, and I strongly support this effort. This bill would improve information sharing between Federal Government and local election agencies, assist States with cyber security preparedness, and support them in replacing outdated and insecure electronic voting machines. I thank Senators KLOBUCHAR, LANKFORD, GRAHAM, COLLINS, and HEINRICH for their work on this bill, and I look forward to working with them on further legislation to protect the institutions that are essential to our democracy.

As I laid out, these operations against our elections are part of a broad pattern of Russian hybrid attacks against us and our allies and partners. As Vice President Biden and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Carpenter reminded us in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*:

More than a decade has passed since Estonia became the first NATO country to see its government institutions and media organizations attacked by hackers based in Russia. In the intervening period, the risk of a far more debilitating attack has increased, but planning for how to defend against it has lagged.

There are countries, such as those in the Baltics, that have been dealing with these Russian threats for far longer than we have and have developed effective approaches for countering them.

Department of Defense National Guard units, which regularly deploy to Eastern Europe and the Baltics, may be uniquely positioned to share information on Russian hybrid attacks with State and local officials and explain procedures they learn from our European partners.

With regard to building credible deterrence—one of the Intelligence Committee’s key recommendations—it does not appear that we have mounted an effective policy against Russia. As DNI Coats testified earlier this year, Russian influence operations in cyber space are intended to achieve “strategic objectives” and will continue unless and until there are clear repercussions for Russia. In February, Lieutenant General Nakasone testified to the Armed Services Committee that the Russians, amongst several other adversaries, don’t fear us and have cal-

culated that, in his words, “not much will happen to them” in retaliation for cyber attacks on America. Cyber Commander Admiral Rogers also testified in February to the Armed Services Committee that Vladimir Putin has concluded there is little price to pay for Russian aggression against the United States, and he has no incentive to stop these hybrid attacks. In outgoing National Security Advisor McMaster’s last remarks, he even admitted “we have failed to impose sufficient costs” on Russia.

In the absence of Presidential leadership to set a policy to blunt Russian aggression and send the message to our foreign adversaries that we will not stand for attacks of this nature, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 requires a comprehensive plan from the administration to counter Russian malign influence. That plan is overdue. The Act also requires that the President develop a national cyber policy, including any capabilities that be used to impose costs on adversaries in response to a cyber attack or malicious cyber activity. There is no time to waste, and I urge the administration to deliver these strategies and actually implement them, which would work toward imposing costs on our foreign adversaries.

I intend to return to speak further on these issues, as I believe the American people deserve a comprehensive explanation of the threats that face our democracy. I also intend to work with my colleagues on additional measures to secure our political system and election infrastructure against malign foreign influence.

None of this is to say that States will lose their traditional primacy over elections. Rhode Island is one of the States that is taking this issue very seriously by adopting new technologies to streamline voting and guard voter information.

My State is also working with the Department of Homeland Security to shore up election security, but election security must be a national priority, and the Federal Government must be a reliable partner. I must commend our Secretary of State, Nellie Gorbea, for her great efforts.

One thing remains clear. The Russians attacked our elections process—the heart of our democracy—and are primed to do it again unless the administration provides effective deterrence. This is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue; it is an issue of national security. As the old saying goes, “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” We have no time to waste.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO DIMITRI PHILEMONOF

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today I rise, as I like to do at the end of the week, to talk about somebody in my State who has made a real big difference to Alaska and, in many ways,

to the country. It is a good opportunity for me to come down on the floor and brag a little bit about Alaska, although my State does a really good job of selling itself anyway. It is what we refer to in my office as the Alaskan of the Week.

It is a great opportunity to talk about not just the wonderful things we have in Alaska—the wonderful mountains, oceans, and how beautiful the State is. Right now, the Sun is out again and shining high. The snow is melting. The buds are coming out and birds are coming back. It is a good opportunity for me to talk not just about the natural wonders but the people who make Alaska such a great place.

While it doesn't get as much attention as it deserves, there is an incredibly fascinating and sometimes tragic history of my State. It is a good opportunity for me to talk to my colleagues about that and the people who have worked hard and have been part of that history and have helped to heal some of the scars that have been left from that history.

Along with talking about the beauty of Alaska every week, we talk about someone who has made a difference. This week, I would like to recognize Dimitri Philemonof and all the work he has done over the decades for his community, for his State, and really for his country.

Dimitri was born in 1944 to Erena and Isaac Philemonof on the breathtaking, beautiful St. George Island, one of the two principal islands of the Pribilof Islands in Alaska. Surrounded by the Bering Sea, the Pribilofs are about 750 miles from Anchorage and about 500 miles from the Siberian Coast. The Pribilofs are really one of the Wonders of the World, particularly with the nature that is there—Steller sea lions, walruses, sea otters, and tens of thousands of fur seals. Depending on the season, more than 2.5 million seabirds call the Pribilof Islands their home. The “Galapagos of the North,” it is sometimes called because of this teeming wildlife.

You will also find in the Pribilofs the warmest, most resilient people anywhere in the world. The Pribilofs, as well as the entire Aleutian Island chain, has a storied and, to be honest, sometimes painful history in our country—a history that has shaped Dimitri's life.

First, when Alaska was a colonial possession of Russia, Russian fur seekers decimated the Aleut Native populations on these islands through warfare, disease, and, yes, even slavery. Then, 75 years after the United States purchased Alaska during World War II, Japan invaded and occupied Kiska and Attu, the westernmost islands of Alaska's Aleutian Island chain. A lot of Americans don't know that American territory was invaded and occupied by the Japanese during World War II. It was the first time since the War of 1812 that American soil had been occupied by an enemy. The Japanese dug in and

held these two islands in Alaska until mid-1943, when American forces recaptured Kiska and Attu in a brutal campaign in the cold of Alaska.

That campaign to retake Kiska and Attu resulted in the deaths of about 1,500 American servicemen. More than 600 were missing, and almost 3,500 were wounded in action. It was a major battle of World War II. Less well known is the impact this conflict had on the Aleut peoples of Alaska. As a result of the invasion, nearly 900 Aleut civilian residents of the Pribilof Islands and the Aleutian Islands in Alaska were relocated to temporary internment camps in Southeast Alaska. Among those interned were Dimitri's parents, two of his brothers, and a sister who was born in the camp. Dimitri himself jokes and laughs that, in his words, he was actually “conceived” in the camp.

The treatment of our American citizens—and these are great American citizens. They are patriotic. They serve in the military at higher rates than any other ethnic group in the country. The treatment of these American citizens in these camps is a dark spot in American history that not many Americans are aware of. Camps were basically abandoned buildings. The conditions were awful—crowded, unheated, and unsanitary. Some even died in the camps as a result of these horrendous conditions. These were our citizens in our country.

Yet, like so many Alaskan Natives who were not treated well by our government during this time, Dimitri, nevertheless, signed up when he was of age to serve his country in the military. In the 1960s, he joined the Army and served in the Pathfinder Detachment at Fort Rucker in Alabama. He was an Airborne soldier.

Eventually, Dimitri made his way back to Alaska. He met his wife Victoria and started a family. He is the proud father of five, and he began to work at the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. He is now the President and CEO of the Association.

The association has had numerous accomplishments under his leadership. Since 1985, it has greatly expanded its programs for the people of the Pribilofs and the Aleutians, and its budget has grown from about \$2.5 million to more than \$18 million to fund these important service programs under his leadership.

For years, he did something that was so important that this body was involved here in the Senate. He worked closely with Alaska's congressional delegation at the time—Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Frank Murkowski, and Congressman DON YOUNG—to work on educating the Congress and the Senate about this difficult history during World War II and to help pass legislation entitled the “Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Act,” which compensated surviving Aleut victims of the internment camps. Again, American citizens were sent by their government during the war to in-

ternment camps in Alaska. Not many people know that history.

Dimitri not only knew it, he lived it. His family lived it, but what he did was so powerful. He helped heal it. He helped heal it right here on the floor of the Senate.

He then helped pass the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust to oversee money allocated to rebuild some of the buildings and houses in this part of Alaska that were destroyed during the war—in the fierce battles that raged in my State during World War II that not many Americans are aware of.

That is a great life and service. Dimitri is also an artist helping to preserve Alaska Native culture through his beautiful drawings—particularly of Russian Orthodox Churches in the region—churches he has worked tirelessly to maintain throughout Alaska. These are beautiful churches. He also does an incredible Elvis Presley impersonation.

He is a man of faith, of perseverance, and kindness. As I have mentioned here, and tried to highlight just a little bit of his life, he has devoted his whole life to his people, to my State, and to this great Nation. In May, he will be recognized by his colleagues for 40 years of humanitarian service and for helping heal the wounds of this country that came about during World War II. We thank him for all he has done in his beloved Pribilofs, in Alaska, in America, and on the floor of the Senate.

Dimitri, I want to thank you, once again, and congratulate you on being our Alaskan of the Week.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. President, I want to give a little bit of an update on what has been happening on the Senate floor in the last few days because there is a lot going on. I think sometimes it is important to explain to people watching in the Gallery, people watching on TV, and the people watching back home in Alaska what is happening here.

We had a big vote yesterday. It was a big vote particularly for my State but also for the Presiding Officer's State of Louisiana—any coastal State. It was a vote on the Coast Guard bill yesterday. It was a strong bipartisan vote, but we just missed getting 60 Senators.

To be perfectly honest, it was a disappointment. It was certainly a disappointment to the men and women in the Coast Guard who are serving our country all over not only America but the world—exceptional service.

This body was unable to get the authorization bill that sets the policies and funding and spending for the Coast Guard. That was sad, in my view—a big disappointment. We have principled differences here in the Senate, but we have been working hard on this. We have been working very hard across the aisle.

I chair the Subcommittee on the Coast Guard. We tried to make sure we had plenty of Senators who would support this, so my team and I worked for