

Kankana-ey Igorot people of the Cordillera region in the Philippines. As an indigenous activist, she has worked for over three decades to protect indigenous rights and as an advocate for women's rights.

As a consequence of the Duterte administration's action, these women suddenly have no home to return to. They cannot risk going back to the Philippines. Still, they are fortunate compared to those targeted leaders who remain in the country. The terrorist list also includes members of indigenous communities in Mindanao who were displaced from their lands in President Duterte's antiterrorism sweep and now live precariously in evacuation camps.

Much of this reportedly has to do with powerful business interests in collusion with corrupt officials in the government. In the recent past, the Philippine Government has fast-tracked priority infrastructure development projects. Some of these projects are reportedly planned to be built on ancestral indigenous lands, despite opposition from indigenous communities and the failure to secure indigenous peoples' free, prior, and informed consent as required by Philippine law and as contained in the 2007 U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous leaders have objected to these projects, insisting that the government respect their rights and obtain their consent for projects that affect them.

The United States has long supported efforts of the Philippine Government and civil society to unlock the country's potential to achieve inclusive, sustainable economic growth. As ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of State and Foreign Operations, I have supported programs to help the Philippines combat poverty, strengthen democratic institutions, enhance maritime security, and protect the rights of its people.

Criminalizing these indigenous rights defenders would reverse progress the country has made and threaten the functioning of civil society which is fundamental to any democracy. Joan Carling, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, and other indigenous leaders and activists who from all indications are guilty of nothing more than defending their territories and cultures do not belong on a "terrorist" list. Instead, the government should be defending their rights and protecting their safety and the safety of other indigenous leaders and human rights activists.

Our own government, the Departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as international financial institutions we support, should ensure that development activities are carried out in accordance with the rights of local communities, including the right of indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent.

We all oppose terrorism wherever it occurs, but our collective approach to

preventing terrorism has too often made the problem worse, especially when the result is the curtailment of basic freedoms. Labeling as "terrorists" political opponents or civil society activists who do not advocate or engage in violence and who, to the contrary, have been threatened and attacked for defending their rights is one example of this, and it is an increasingly common tactic of governments; yet there are few if any ways more likely to cause people to resort to violence than by misusing government power to suppress legitimate dissent. Far from stopping terrorism, adopting such abusive tactics sets back our collective efforts against terrorism.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION AGAINST IMPUNITY IN GUATEMALA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, many of us here are familiar with the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, known as CICIG. The U.S. Congress and Republican and Democratic administrations have supported it for years, and with few exceptions, it is strongly supported by the Guatemalan people. That is because CICIG, working closely with the Office of the Attorney General, has proven what many Guatemalans thought impossible, that even the most powerful government officials who commit major crimes believing they are above the law can be brought to justice.

CICIG was created in December 2006, when the United Nations and Guatemala signed a treaty-level agreement setting up CICIG as an independent body to support the Office of the Attorney General, the National Civilian Police, and other Guatemalan Government institutions in the investigation and prosecution of particularly sensitive and difficult cases. I vividly remember that time, when impunity for even the worst crimes was a virtual certainty in Guatemala.

During more than 35 years of internal armed conflict an estimated 200,000 Guatemalans, mostly rural Mayan villagers, were murdered—the vast majority by the army. Many were rounded up and never seen or heard from again. Thanks largely to the efforts of the Guatemala Forensic Anthropology Foundation, the tortured remains of many hundreds have been found in unmarked mass graves, some on former military bases. Hardly anyone has been punished for those atrocities, and past attempts to investigate and prosecute some of the individuals responsible were stymied.

Even in the years since that dark period, almost anyone, especially those in positions of authority, got away with anything, including assassinations and robbing the public treasury. Today, few crimes involving official corruption and violations of human rights are prosecuted, and even fewer result in conviction and punishment.

But those that have been credibly investigated and brought to trial are due

to the courageous efforts of CICIG and its commissioner, Ivan Velasquez, a respected Colombian jurist, and the recently retired attorney general, Thelma Aldana, who carried on the tradition of independence and integrity established by her predecessor, Claudia Paz y Paz. These prosecutors have given hope not only to victims who long ago lost faith in Guatemala's dysfunctional justice system, but also to many members of the business community who recognize that, without an independent judiciary and confidence that the rule of law will be enforced, Guatemala will never attract the foreign investment it needs to develop.

Predictably and throughout its history, CICIG has come under attack from those who have enriched themselves at public expense and escaped justice, including for heinous crimes. Fearing prosecution, they have sought to challenge CICIG's legitimacy and impugned the character and conduct of its commissioner. Each time, CICIG has survived, thanks to the support of the international community.

Today, CICIG is once again being attacked, including by some senior officials, who have sought to exploit factual misrepresentations, including those echoed in the Guatemalan and U.S. media, about a troubling case involving members of a Russian family who entered Guatemala with fraudulent passports. This has even resulted in a portion of the funds appropriated by Congress for CICIG to be temporarily blocked from disbursement.

Without recounting the bizarre facts of that case, suffice it to say that not a shred of credible evidence has been presented to support the allegations of abuse of authority leveled at CICIG and in particular at Commissioner Velasquez. That, however, does not appear to matter to those who have long sought an excuse to replace Velasquez with someone who is susceptible to intimidation. The Bitkov case, which has all the makings of a made-for-TV tragedy, should be appropriately resolved in the Guatemalan courts. The family should be treated justly and humanely. But CICIG is not the problem.

It is important to reiterate what the Guatemalan people know: CICIG is an absolutely essential institution that has enabled the office of the attorney general to break through the wall of impunity in ways that would never have been possible without CICIG's support. It is that simple. Without CICIG, there is no reason to believe that any case involving high-ranking officials or members of organized crime networks with the ability to intimidate and bribe prosecutors and judges and threaten or assassinate witnesses will be brought to justice.

It is also a fact that CICIG is only as effective as its commissioner and that, while even those who want to rein in CICIG publicly claim to support it, they make little secret of their goal to get rid of Velasquez.

Commissioner Velasquez is an experienced, courageous jurist with integrity. That is why he was hired for the job, and by all indications, he is guilty of nothing more than doing the job he was hired to do. The more he does so, the more those who fear prosecution will try to find ways to stop him. It is therefore very important at this time that the international community, including the United States, reaffirms its support for Velasquez and the fight against corruption and impunity in Guatemala.

It is noteworthy that the former attorney general has consistently voiced her support for Velasquez because, if anyone should know if there is a grain of truth to the allegations against him, it would be her. She knows from experience the motivations of those who are aligned against CICIG because they have also tried to intimidate her.

In order for CICIG and Commissioner Velasquez to effectively carry out CICIG's mandate through the reminder of its current term that ends in September 2019, he needs the support of the Guatemalan Government, the United Nations, the United States, and other governments that support justice in Guatemala. I commend the Department of State and U.S. Ambassador Arreaga for recognizing what is at stake and for seeking ways to ensure that CICIG and Commissioner Velasquez can carry out their responsibilities transparently and effectively. I also know that a majority of Democrats and Republicans respect Commissioner Velasquez and want CICIG to receive the funds it needs. I am confident that the funds will be released, that CICIG and the role of the Commissioner will be enhanced, and that the cause of justice for the Guatemalan people will be served.

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request relating to the nomination of William R. Evanina, to be Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, PN1548.

During the course of the Judiciary Committee's inquiry into how the Justice Department and FBI handled the Clinton and Russia investigations, committee staff have reviewed text messages between Peter Strzok and Lisa Page. In some of the text messages, an individual named "Evanina" is mentioned in the context of government officials having briefed then Vice President-Elect Pence on national security related issues and planning to brief him a second time. The name was redacted from text messages initially provided to Congress.

"Evanina" most likely refers to the nominee who is and was at that time Acting Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center. The committee needs to more fully understand the meaning of the apparent references to Mr. Evanina in the

Strzok-Page texts and will need to obtain further context from him and the Justice Department in order to do so before I could consent to proceeding to consider his confirmation.

The committee has recently experienced increasing difficulty in obtaining relevant documents and briefings from the Justice Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, ODNI. For example, Deputy Attorney General, DAG, Rod Rosenstein personally assured me that the Senate Judiciary Committee would receive equal access to information provided to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, HPSCI, with regard to any concessions in its negotiations regarding pending subpoenas from that committee. Two weeks ago, the ODNI and the DAG provided a briefing in connection with a pending HPSCI subpoena to which no Senate Judiciary Committee member was invited. Thus far, the committee's attempts to schedule an equivalent briefing have been ignored.

Additionally, beginning November 29, 2017, I made requests for information from the inspector general of the Intelligence Community and ODNI regarding the diffusion of the IC whistleblower program and the highly unusual and problematic termination of the IC IG's former Executive Director for Whistleblowing and Source Protection. In March, having received none of the information I asked for, I formally and publicly objected to the confirmation of the ODNI general counsel nominee. To date, I still have received nothing. Therefore, I also object to Mr. Evanina's confirmation until and unless the ODNI provides a fulsome response to my letters. Additionally, I understand that Mr. Evanina was responsible for developing policies and procedures to address retaliatory security clearance actions pursuant to a statutory directive, but that it is not clear whether such policies and procedures have been implemented. I would like for Mr. Evanina to explain the status of those efforts.

Thus, unfortunately, I must object to any consideration of this nomination. My objection is not intended to question the credentials of Mr. Evanina in any way. However, the executive branch must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Republic of Azerbaijan, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of its declaration of independence on May 28.

The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. The country faced horrific challenges when it was invaded by the Bolsheviks in 1920 and later incorporated into the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War

and the demise of the USSR, Azerbaijan once again achieved its independence on August 30, 1991. Our country recognized Azerbaijan's independence that same year and established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan on February 19, 1992.

Azerbaijan is a key security partner of the United States. For example, Azerbaijani troops have served in Afghanistan since 2002 to assist the United States and our partners in NATO. Additionally, the country supports the United States through the Northern Distribution Network, which allows for the transit of nonlethal supplies through Azerbaijan's territory to our forces in Afghanistan and permits the overflight through its airspace of U.S. military personnel heading to Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan also stands as an example of a secular, Muslim-majority country that has excellent relations with its own Jewish community and has maintained diplomatic relations with our strong ally, Israel, for over 25 years.

Through the Southern Gas Corridor, Azerbaijan will provide energy to our allies in Europe, thus lessening the continent's reliance on Russia for gas.

For this and many other reasons, I commend the Republic of Azerbaijan and its people on this significant anniversary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BICENTENNIAL OF MADISON, NORTH CAROLINA

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate with the citizens of Madison, NC, the town's 200 years of rich history. Named for President James Madison, the town was acquired at auction in June 1818.

In Madison's infancy, tobacco was a high-demand commodity and employer in town due to its location on the Dan and Mayor Rivers, which offer fertile soil for cultivation. By the late 1800s, Madison was home to more than 40 tobacco factories, I reported to have been the largest grower of tobacco in the world at that time. In the early 1900s, Madison reaped the benefits of a growth in the textiles industry when Gem Dandy, Inc., opened for business in town. It remains headquartered there today. Madison gained another employer in the mid-1990s when Remington Arms made Madison home to its headquarters.

Today Madison boasts two historic districts and several landmarks listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

I am proud to offer my congratulations to the citizens of Madison, NC on the occasion of their bicentennial. •

REMEMBERING KATE KENNEDY

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Kate Kennedy, a pioneering and inspiring San Franciscan.