

chance to interact with officers in a positive way. It also gives police officers a chance to get their fresh perspectives from community members.

On Tuesday, for instance, the cops and firefighters got together for an eating relay at a local barbecue restaurant in Anchorage. Members of the community came out to cheer their favorite police officer and fireman. The proceeds went to Special Olympics Alaska, which is another passion of hers.

Officer Fraize is a great champion of advocating for those with special needs. She and her husband have two daughters: Italia, who is 14 years old, and Gianna, who is 10. Gianna has Down syndrome and, according to Officer Fraize, is the most popular girl in her fourth grade class. That is no surprise.

Officer Fraize is the chair of a local group that advocates for individuals with special needs, and she is also involved in the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run, which is a great event that so many in our community get behind. She was one of 50 police officers in America chosen to carry the torch at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi. She brought the torch home to Alaska, and she is giving it to Special Olympics in Alaska this weekend at the 2019 Alaska Law Enforcement Torch Run and Pledge Drive. This is going to be a great event.

Anchorage Police Chief Justin Doll said:

We are so proud of Officer Fraize's work at the APD, and I believe the rest of Anchorage should be as well. She is the epitome of the public servant ideal that is the foundation of our relationship with the Anchorage community. I am genuinely honored to have her at APD upholding our most cherished traditions of community service.

That is the Anchorage police chief.

We are also proud of all our police officers and first responders in Alaska. We are so grateful for the work they do to keep us safe. We want them to know that we honor their jobs and their commitment to our community. We also honor their families. These are very tough jobs, and it is hard on supportive families when a wife or husband goes off every morning to a job that could involve risking their lives.

We want them to know, not just in Alaska but here in the Senate, we have their backs.

To Officer Fraize, thanks for all that you do. We are so lucky to have officers like you in Alaska, looking out for us. Thank you for being our Alaskan of the Week.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I am going to take this time to speak about Russia. But if I might, following up on the point by the Senator from Alaska, first, I want to applaud the police officer you are honoring this week.

This is National Police Week. I think it is very appropriate that we recognize those who are serving our country and our community as first responders.

I want to mention two police officers specifically, both of whom gave their lives in defense of our community. These law enforcement officers were young, and they went into danger rather than running away from danger. We lost two of our officers last year.

Amy Sorrells Caprio from Baltimore County, my home jurisdiction, a member of the Baltimore County Police Department, died before reaching the age of 30, pursuing a burglary suspect who struck and killed her with the vehicle being operated by the suspect. She leaves behind a husband, parents, and sister. Our prayers are with her.

The second police officer I would like to honor is Mujahid Abdul Mumin Ramzziddin, a 51-year-old police officer from Prince George's County, MD, close to where we are right here. He was off duty, and he observed the need to help a person who was a victim of domestic violence. He went to help that person and was ultimately killed by the perpetrator.

He leaves behind a wife and four children, and our prayers are also with him.

RUSSIA

Mr. President, I rise today to address the continuously abusive nature of the Russian Government in impeding on the human rights of its people and the people across the globe. From interference in democratic processes around the globe to its malign influence in Syria, to its continued aggression against Ukraine, Mr. Putin's regime must be held accountable for its crimes.

As we all know, Vladimir Putin has been openly and willfully attacking democratic institutions and processes to corrode good governance and our values. His tools are drawn from a Soviet-era playbook but are constantly being updated with improvements. He is a pusher—constantly pushing the limits of acceptable international behavior and then going over the line. We cannot overlook the phenomenon that is unfolding across the European continent, the wider region, and now, yes, here in our Western Hemisphere.

Just a few weeks ago, Special Counsel Robert Mueller released to the public a redacted version of his report on Russia's interference in our 2016 Presidential election, revealing another one of Mr. Putin's plots to interfere with and tarnish the democratic process of a strong nation. Special Counsel Mueller described the Russian effort as taking place in a "sweeping and systematic fashion," a premeditated attack by the Kremlin.

Russia's aggression on the international stage continues to grow and is deserving of global condemnation. The United States is just one of many nations targeted by the Putin regime whose democracy was and is systematically targeted and attacked.

It certainly was not the first nation to be targeted. Reflect back to its illegal invasion of Ukraine and subsequent annexation of Crimea. Look at Russia's role in the ongoing hostilities in Eastern Europe. Consider Mr. Putin's role in Syria's civil war and support for dictator Bashar al-Assad. He murdered hundreds of thousands of citizens and assisted in the collapse the country's infrastructure. Russia has shown us time and again its disdain for international laws and norms under Mr. Putin's leadership.

After the trifecta of Russian interference in Ukraine, Syria, and our democratic Presidential election here, I partnered with nine bipartisan colleagues within the first week of the 115th Congress in January of 2017 to introduce the Countering Russian Hostilities Act. It is comprehensive sanctions legislation on Russia in response to its cyber intrusion, aggression, and destabilizing activities in the United States, Ukraine, Syria, and worldwide.

Over time, we learned that Mr. Putin's increasing aggressive behavior abroad is directly related to his need to maintain power at home.

In January of 2018, I released a Foreign Relations Committee Democratic member report that documented Mr. Putin's pattern of asymmetric warfare against democratic institutions, universal values, and the rule of law in Russia and across Europe over the last 20 years. The report details the tools the Russian Government has repeatedly deployed and perfected, as well as its techniques to attack democracies both internally and abroad.

Among many other takeaways, we learned that Mr. Putin will continue to simultaneously step up his attacks on democracies around the world while also acting to maintain power in Russia.

We have also learned that it is ultimately the Russian people who bear the brunt of Mr. Putin's international decisions. We have an obligation to support human rights around the globe, both as individuals and as a nation. Part of that obligation is ensuring that violators of international human rights are held accountable for their actions and are not given the resources they need to continue their nefarious actions.

In an effort to address these obligations, I was fortunate to work closely with the late Senator from Arizona, John McCain, on the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012. As you may know, Sergei Magnitsky was a Moscow-based lawyer who bravely uncovered deep-rooted, high-level corruption in Russia over a decade ago. Like any good lawyer, he reported his discoveries to the authorities. For doing his job, he was arrested, jailed, tortured, and killed in prison. When I learned about Sergei's life and work and the complete violation of basic human rights and rampant impunity that met the perpetrators of these crimes, I was shocked.

Originally, the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act provides that anyone involved in Sergei's imprisonment, torture, or death who has not been brought to justice in Russia would be denied access to our financial system or the ability to travel to our country. The bill also targets those who have abused their power in the country to violate the human rights of anyone in Russia who disagrees with Mr. Putin's corrupt regime.

Senator McCain and I wanted to send a signal to Mr. Putin and his co-conspirators that there will be consequences for their actions and their inactions. The Sergei Magnitsky Act was, is, and will continue to be an effective tool at doing just that.

Senator McCain and I agreed that the United States must lead the world by using the power of our financial and legal institutions to hold human rights abusers and corrupt individuals across the globe accountable for their crimes. That is why we continued to work together to author the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which was signed into law in 2016. Senator McCain and I shared the critically important belief that the value of American leadership in enforcing human rights worldwide transcends party lines.

I might point out that following the U.S. example, other countries have enacted similar laws to make sure we have a blanket protection against those who commit these human rights violations.

In the past year, Global Magnitsky designations have targeted individuals around the world responsible for acts of genocide, violence, and significant corruption. My colleagues and I have called for numerous sanctions under this act, and I am pleased that the administration has acted, particularly issuing Executive order 13818, which expanded Global Magnitsky authorities. Freezing the financial assets of perpetrators and denying them visas to the United States sends a clear message: We will not stand by while individuals are stripped of their freedoms and their rights.

Unfortunately, while the Global Magnitsky legislation has proved hugely successful, we continue to witness human rights violations around the world and, more specifically, at the hands of Mr. Putin.

In recent reports, human rights groups have noted that the number of political prisoners in Russia has risen at a rapid rate over the past few years. Many of these groups are calling on the United States to impose sanctions on more Russian officials to hold them accountable for the inhumane treatment of over 250 reported political prisoners. Unfortunately, this issue of Russian political prisoners has not been the forefront of the U.S.-Russia discussions. That needs to change.

President Trump continues to treat Mr. Putin with the utmost respect, despite the Russian President's holding

almost 300 individuals hostage as political prisoners in Russia.

Most recently, the President has scheduled another formal meeting with Mr. Putin next month during the annual G20 Summit. Of course, Secretary Pompeo just met with Mr. Putin on Tuesday. Human rights must be on the agenda for such talks.

In 2016, a Russian human rights activist and a person who has dissented from Mr. Putin, Vladimir Kara-Murza, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expressing how the United States could help Russian defenders.

He stated:

Our friends in the West often ask how they can be helpful to the cause of human rights and democracy in Russia and the answer to this is very simple. Please stay true to your values. We are not asking for your support. It is our task to fight for democracy and rule of law in our country. The only thing we ask from Western leaders is that they stop supporting Mr. Putin by treating him as a respectable and worthy partner and by allowing Mr. Putin's cronies to use Western countries as havens for their looted wealth.

That is exactly what the Magnitsky Act is all about—to deny that legitimacy.

I ask that we take these words to heart. The threat that Russia poses to our global community has never been more evident. But we must remember the distinction between Mr. Putin's regime and the Russian people. The Russian people are good, freedom-seeking people who want economic security and stability for their families just as we do in the United States. This is an important distinction for us to keep in our minds and our hearts as we continue to pursue effective tools to counter Mr. Putin's threats to the international order and the values we hold so dear.

So as we work to shape U.S. policy and diplomatic strategies toward Russia, I urge my colleagues to keep in mind the aspirations of the Russian human rights defenders who risk their lives in order to advocate for a Russia free of authoritarian and abusive leaders.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, dominant in the news—on which I have expected there to be more coverage—is a matter that I think is of great urgency to the country, global security, and peace—that being the tensions that are rising in the Middle East.

I have heard a few of my colleagues speak on the floor about it today, and I have seen a lot of press report on it,

some of it absurd and some of it on point. I understand some of it. I thought there should have been more information provided to all of the Members. I am pleased to see that more will be available next week when we return. This is an item I have been talking about for a couple of weeks—of the urgent threat, potentially, that now exists from Iran against the United States, particularly in Iraq but throughout the Persian Gulf region.

First, let me talk about the threat. To understand the threat, it is important to understand how Iran operates.

Iran is an Islamic republic, meaning it has a political branch of its government—a President, a Foreign Minister, and a parliamentary body. Then it has a Supreme Leader, who ultimately governs the country. In essence, his commands overrule the political branches. That is why they call him the Supreme Leader. He is a religious figure. As part of that, it has an armed services—an army, a navy, and an air force—that protects the country, theoretically. Then it has an armed forces that is independent of the army, the navy, and the air force, and that is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, IRGC. First of all, it doesn't answer to the President; it doesn't answer to the Foreign Minister; and it doesn't answer to regular army forces. It answers directly to the Supreme Leader. A lot of times, people don't understand this. They ascribe to other countries the attributes of our own.

The President of Iran is not the commander in chief, in reality, of the IRGC. It operates completely separately. By the way, that means that the IRGC—the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—can oftentimes operate and do things that the Foreign Minister, who is the spokesperson for the Iranian Government, may not even know about. Sometimes it does.

The point is that we have to understand that dynamic. It is not the United States. Our attributes should not be assigned to them.

The IRGC has an organization within it. It has a unit called the Quds Force. The Quds Force, led by General Soleimani, is made up of experts and has developed expertise in unconventional warfare and in intelligence activities, primarily abroad. This is the organization, for example, that helped to build all of the IEDs that killed and maimed American servicemen in Iraq. This is the organization behind the Shia militias in Iraq today. This is the organization behind a lot of the efforts that support Hezbollah in Syria and in other parts of the world.

The IRGC's Quds Force is designed to do things that have some level of deniability. The IRGC Quds Force has developed an ability, in the case of conflict with the United States—and we have known this now for the better part of a decade—to attack us using proxies, meaning other groups, in order to escape and have some level of deniability. It will get some group that