

I also cosponsored an amendment led by Senator UDALL making clear that Congress has not given the executive branch any authority to go to war against Iran.

We also cannot continue to let this President raid national defense funds for his ridiculous and racist border wall effort—remember, the one that the President promised Mexico would pay for. Every dollar diverted has been at the expense of our men and women in uniform, especially hurting our National Guard. This bill does nothing to address that. Even when the Ninth Circuit court ruled last Friday that the money grab was illegal, the Department of Defense informed us on Monday that it would not stop construction of the President's campaign promise. That is why I filed an amendment that would keep the President from transferring defense funds outside of DOD for the wall. We need a robust debate on the proper, effective way to respond to the humanitarian crisis at our border, one approved by Congress.

In addition, I filed an amendment that would disapprove of Russia participating in the G7 or being readmitted into a reconstituted G8. Not only does Russia maintain its occupation of Ukraine, but it has continued its interference in the U.S. and other democratic nations. And just last week, The New York Times reported that Russian intelligence secretly offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants to kill American troops in Afghanistan. Apparently, the White House has known about this for months and did nothing. It is unacceptable. My amendment makes it clear that the U.S. should not support Russia's participation in this international summit.

The FY21 NDAA also doesn't go far enough to address the toxic class of chemicals known as PFAS, which have been linked to serious and devastating illness.

That is why I am pleased to cosponsor Senator SHAHEEN's amendments to designate PFAS as hazardous substances and boost DOD cleanup efforts, provide blood testing for servicemembers and their families, and increase funds to study the impact of PFAS on health. In addition, I support Senator GILLIBRAND's amendment that would extend antidiscrimination protections to our transgender servicemembers who bravely make sacrifices for our country. I also am a cosponsor of Senator SCHATZ amendment to limit the transfer of equipment under to the DOD 1033 program to militarize police forces across the country and provide transparency to the program.

I hope that we may be able to debate all of these important issues during consideration of this bill, all of which will only help improve this legislation and provide for our national defense. In the meantime, I reiterate my thanks to Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED for their work on this bill.

FOURTH OF JULY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, July 4 is a day to recognize our Nation's Declaration of Independence 244 years ago. On this day, we collectively pause to honor the values that make this Nation great.

July 4 is also a day of shared reflection to see how well we have made more tangible the ideals of our founders "to create a more perfect union." As we look across the landscape of our country today, these words ring with even greater resonance. Our Nation and our people face a call to action to continue the fight against racial injustice, an injustice that has limited the freedom of too many for too long.

The collective ideals to which Thomas Jefferson gave voice in the Declaration's promise of "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" still echo through the American experience—from Alexander Hamilton's immigrant dream, birthed before our Nation, to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s July 4, 1965, sermon at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church. As Dr. King said, "If we are going to make the America Dream a reality, we are challenged to work in an action program to get rid of the last vestiges of segregation and discrimination."

America has been and will be a leader in the world. The American people historically have cherished and spearheaded this role. Leadership at any level comes with responsibility, and, in this case, it means we must look to put our own house in order, where we must address domestic injustices.

We must continue our tireless work to create a more perfect union. The struggle will not stop until all men, women, and children can live the American Dream as Dr. King envisioned. To do this, we must continue to assess the true meaning of liberty and freedom. As we begin to acknowledge fundamental elements of our Nation's history, we must recommit to ensuring freedom for all.

Our country's strength lies in the diversity and equality of our people. Through this diversity and through this equality, today we may celebrate the unity described in the very declaration of our Nation's freedom and independence.

On this historic day, we must also celebrate our country's capacity to change. We have overcome monumental challenges before. The majority of our Founders did not comprehend that Black Lives Matter. Today, we work to ensure actions that back up those important words.

Still, as we reflect on the Nation's founding, we recall our past, honor that which is great, and effect the call we perpetually hear to make our Nation a more perfect union.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I voted against the motion to table Sen-

ator PAUL's amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act not because I support his amendment as written, but because I believe this Senate has a responsibility to fully debate the question of our policy, strategy and plans for Afghanistan. Tabling an amendment cuts off all debate on this important matter. We should not be ducking these decisions. We should confront our policy directly, take stock of where we are, and set a responsible course for the future.

I strongly support ending the war in Afghanistan and the responsible withdrawal of our men and women in uniform. However, I believe that mandating the total unconditional withdrawal on a 1-year timeline will result in the further destabilization of an already volatile region. Unconditional withdrawal divorced from a diplomatic process to achieve political reconciliation between the warring parties will make it harder to achieve a peaceful outcome that serves our national security interests.

Despite my disagreement with much of the substance of the Paul amendment, the Senate should deliberate on these matters, not run away from the discussion. The decision to table the Paul amendment prevented the Senate from performing this essential function.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and as the Senator from the great State of New Mexico, it is my honor to recognize all of the patriotic Americans who have contributed to 75 years of accomplishments and history at White Sands Missile Range, WSMR.

In the final months of America's engagement in World War II and as the Manhattan Project's unprecedented scientific mission achieved its secret goal of harnessing nuclear power, the U.S. Army established the White Sands Proving Ground on July 9, 1945, in New Mexico's Tularosa Basin. Seven days later, the detonation of the first atomic bomb at the Trinity Site ushered in the nuclear era and began what would become three-quarters of a century of major scientific breakthroughs, critical weapons testing and evaluation, and military technology advances.

We must acknowledge the sacrifices New Mexicans have made over the years that contributed to both the establishment and the enduring missions at WSMR. That includes the families whose historic homes and ranches were taken to create WSMR's land base. It includes local residents in the Tularosa Basin who were downwind from the Trinity test and whose lives continue to be impacted. It includes the local communities in southern New Mexico who play a vital role in supporting WSMR's success today.

WSMR is a landmark of technological advances for all branches of the

military. Following World War II, White Sands was where German scientist Werner Von Braun conceived, developed, and tested the long-range V-2 rockets, initiating America's space program. Since then, White Sands has continued to support essential defense and space exploration programs for the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, alongside other important scientific research.

Today's WSMR, which spans 3,200 square miles of the Tularosa Basin, is the Department of Defense's largest, fully-instrumented test range. It provides our Armed Forces, our allies, and defense technology partners with unrivaled terrain for research, testing, evaluation, experimentation, and training that ensures our defense readiness. WSMR executes an average of 5,000 tests each year. These tests, in emerging technologies such as swarming autonomous and unmanned systems, joint integrated air and missile defense, nuclear weapons effects, and space based capabilities, will keep WSMR at the forefront of our national defense for years to come.

As part of the Army Test and Evaluation Command, WSMR is the Army Center of Excellence for Air and Missile Defense Test Bed and Precision Fires Rockets and Missiles. White Sands supports key capabilities in the National Defense Strategy and modernization priorities, including directed energy systems such as laser and high-powered microwave systems, kinetics, electromagnetic pulse, hypersonic and long-range precision fires, U.S. Space Program test support, nuclear weapons effects, and autonomous systems.

While it is a U.S. Army installation stewarded by the Army, WSMR is chartered as a tri-service installation, home to elements of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force. Other organizations conducting operations at WSMR include NASA, National Reconnaissance Office, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Research and Analysis Center, Center for Countermeasures, and Combat Capabilities Development Command (Data and Analysis Center and Army Research Laboratory).

WSMR also hosts the Bataan Memorial Death March each year, a large and growing event that recognizes the heroism and sacrifice of the New Mexicans and others who endured and in many cases lost their lives to the horrors of World War II's Bataan Death March. I have had the distinct honor of joining this incredible event on a few occasions and treasure the valuable lessons it imparts on everyone who participates.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation and congratulations to everyone who works hard every single day at WSMR to keep all of us safe. President John F. Kennedy stated it best, when he stood before your predecessors at WSMR during a visit on June 5, 1963.

President Kennedy said: "What you do here far and away from Washington, far away from our great capitals, far away from so many countries which depend upon us, what you do here, what progress you make, what dedication you demonstrate makes a significant difference to the security of our country and those who depend upon us."

I could not agree more. I wish everyone at WSMR a happy 75th anniversary and will continue to support WSMR's critical work in defense of our great Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT J. HALSTEAD

• Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the career of Robert J. Halstead, or as most of us know him, Bob. To some, this name might sound familiar. He has appeared before Congress on a number of occasions on behalf of the State of Nevada to provide expert witness testimony on nuclear waste storage and transportation. His name graces the archives at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy, and he has been a fierce and dedicated partner in the fight against the Yucca Mountain project.

In 1988, the year after the "screw Nevada bill" recklessly designated Yucca Mountain as the Nation's sole high-level nuclear waste repository site, Bob brought his knowledge of Federal radioactive waste programs and activities to help arm Nevada in its fight against the broken and misguided processes that led to the Yucca Mountain designation. At the time, he may not have known how long of a fight he was signing up for, but Bob never looked back.

He threw himself into helping Nevada, learning every aspect of the complicated and far-fetched license application, analyzing the geography of the site, and leaving no stone unturned when reviewing proposed transportation routes that would ship one of the most dangerous materials known to man across the country to Nevada.

For more than 30 years, he helped guide the State on nuclear transportation matters, poured over environmental impact statements, submitted contentions to the Yucca Mountain application, and represented the State in technical proceedings that involved the proposed repository. These are just a few of the things we have to thank him for.

Since 2011, Bob served as the executive director of the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, always making himself available to assist the Governor. Before coming to the Senate, I had the pleasure of working alongside Bob during my time as the Nevada Attorney General. No matter the day or hour, Bob always made time to review materials and provide well-informed, robust responses not just to me, but to my staff.

It was comforting knowing someone with his exceptional experience was at the helm, guiding the State on an issue that is so important to Nevadans and trying to right the wrongs of the Federal Government's reckless mismanagement of nuclear waste.

Just last year, when the State learned of secret weapons-grade plutonium and mischaracterized waste shipments having been received at the Nevada National Security Site, Bob once again proved how instrumental he is to the State of Nevada. His institutional knowledge of Nevada's nuclear history and depth of experience provided the State with an unmatched resource as it rose to challenge the shipments.

Bob has been a vital contributor and colleague; and as he embarks on his well-deserved retirement, I want to share my deepest appreciation and gratitude for his decades-long commitment to helping Nevadans as they have worked to bring fairness, reason, and science back to the repository site designation process.

It is my understanding that Bob will be returning to his home in Wisconsin, where he will live with his wife, Margaret. Bob is looking forward to having more time with his two grown children and finally having time for one of his favorite past times: fishing.

As he casts a line in one of the many beautiful lakes Wisconsin has to offer, I hope he knows how much the State of Nevada and I appreciate the sacrifices he has made to protect the safety of Nevadans and the time he has dedicated to one of our State's greatest fights.●

TRIBUTE TO JESSICA COCHRAN

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Jessica Cochran of Blaine County for her entrepreneurship and creativity during these challenging times.

The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted so many Montana small business owners and local communities. During these challenging times, it is tougher than ever for new entrepreneurs to open up shop.

Jessica, a sixth grade teacher at Harlem Elementary School, however took the initiative to start up her own ice cream truck business this summer to spread some cheer to her community during these hard times.

Jessica started Bliss Ice Cream, after acquiring and renovating a 1985 Chevy Astro van. Jessica also secured all the necessary permits and licenses as an independent contractor and food vendor for the summer. Owning an ice cream truck has been a dream of hers since a child. She has taken the initiative to purchase all the necessary supplies and decorations for the children of Harlem and the Fort Belknap area.

It is my honor to recognize Jessica for taking the bold initiative to pursue her dream and bring some much needed joy to the children of her community. As a teacher and a new entrepreneur,