

political atmosphere. So our democracy is poisoned, stunned by secret fossil fuel money and threats, and, consequently, failing to listen to plain warnings like those of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

We had better act before the poison has overpowered us, and we had better get the dosages back to safe and normal levels. One good start would be to wake up to the reality of climate change.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL SCOTT GRANT

Mr. JONES. Madam President, one of the great privileges that I have enjoyed as a U.S. Senator and a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee has been the opportunity to get to know and support our men and women in uniform. I have been proud to represent the people of the great State of Alabama, a State where patriotism runs deep and for whom service is a way of life.

Col. Scott Grant, U.S. Air Force, is a perfect example. Colonel Grant retired this summer, and since I was not able to attend his retirement ceremony this past Saturday, I decided I would say here what I wanted to say there, in the hangar in Birmingham, AL, where he had spent the last few years of his career.

Colonel Grant retired as the commander of the 117th Air Refueling Wing, Alabama Air National Guard, Sumpter Smith Joint National Guard Base in Birmingham, AL.

The 117th was the first military installation that I visited after my election in 2017 and swearing-in, in January of 2018. I can tell you, at that first visit, Colonel Grant set a pretty high bar for the future visits I would have to the many other military installations in Alabama, and we have quite a few. He set a high bar for those I would meet later because of his dedication to his unit, to his mission, and to the men and women he commanded.

It was immediately apparent—his dedication and professionalism—and it has guided his every decision in all our interactions over the next 2½ years. Scott's unwavering commitment to excellence earned him the respect of all those who served with him, but his genuine love for the men and women who served under his command earned him their affection. In other words, Col. Scott Grant had and has his priorities in order, and everyone who knew him and met him could see that immediately.

In 2019, the 117th won STRATCOM's Omaha Trophy. The Omaha Trophy is one of the most prestigious awards in the military. It was the first time that an Air National Guard unit had received this prestigious award. Then STRATCOM Commander Gen. John Hyten said: "The Omaha Trophy represents the best of the best in units executing strategic deterrence."

The 117th won in the area of strategic aircraft for their many missions

around the world protecting America. It was an award that the unit and Colonel Grant richly deserved. I was really honored to be present at that awards ceremony, and I can remember, as Brigadier General Stevenson said: "To put it simply, the 117th Air Refueling Wing was the most outstanding in their Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspection and their dedication to the mission itself. As a traditional guard unit, but with a total force, they have accomplished unique tasks and in an innovative way that we absolutely need to meet future challenges that STRATCOM faces." True to form, in his acceptance speech, Scott gave the credit to the men and women in his command.

With 7,000 military flight hours, Scott's deployments have spanned the globe, and his awards and decorations are almost too numerous to list. Here are just a few: the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oakleaf clusters, Air Medal with seven oakleaf clusters, Aerial Achievement Medal with two oakleaf clusters, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor and two oakleaf clusters, Combat Readiness Medal with 10 oakleaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, the Kosovo Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star, the Iraq Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Alabama National Emergency Service Medal and Service Medal with one device, the Alabama Special Service Medal—and the list just goes on and on.

We could be here all night, but I will stop there and just say that, rated as a command pilot and an instructor, Colonel Grant has been described as a pilot's pilot, one from whom you learn something every time you fly with him.

So it is good news for the Air Force. The good-news-bad-news story: The bad news is the retirement from the 117th, but the good news is, in his retirement, Colonel Grant is going to continue training airmen on the KC-135 simulators in Oklahoma.

Scott, you have served your country with honor and distinction, and you are a credit to the State of Alabama and the United States of America. It is my great honor to call you a friend. Thank you.

Congratulations on an outstanding career. Best wishes for clear skies in retirement, and although I did not serve in the military, I salute you, sir.

REMEMBERING ROBERT EDINGTON

Madam President, just a few weeks ago Alabama lost one of its most distinguished and dedicated citizens, and I lost a great friend. Robert Edington, of Mobile, AL, died peacefully on July 26 with his beloved wife of 58 years, Patricia, at his side. I rise today to honor the life and legacy of this patriot; this

public servant; this devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Robert was born in Mobile on November 18, 1929, and Mobile remained in his blood until the day he died. The son of a local judge, Robert earned his undergraduate degree at Rhodes College but came back home for his law degree at the University of Alabama.

He served our Nation in the military while on Active Duty with the U.S. Navy from 1951 to 1955. During his active military career as a Navy operations officer, Robert was awarded the Korean Service Medal with two battle stars, the China Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation.

Robert truly loved his service to this country and the U.S. Navy, prompting him to remain with the Navy Active Reserve until 1980, when he retired as commander.

Robert Edington was one of Mobile's most prominent lawyers and community leaders for over 60 years. He served three terms in the Alabama Legislature, first as a State representative from 1962 to 1970 and then in the State senate from 1970 to 1974.

As a member of the Alabama Legislature, he played a pivotal role in establishing the University of South Alabama and the university's college of medicine. He actively furthered the development of Bishop State Community College, one of Alabama's great historically Black colleges and universities, of which I am so proud.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, DC, presented him with their national award for his role in establishing the Alabama Historical Commission.

But his love for the Navy continued on prominent display even as a legislator, authoring the legislation that created the USS Alabama Battleship Commission, bringing the USS *Alabama* home to Mobile following her retirement from Active Duty. He served on that commission from 1963 to 1972 and served as its chairman, but his passion for the battleship and all it stands for never wavered, and he was once again appointed to the battleship commission in the year 2000.

In addition, Robert served as the Alabama President and National Director of the Navy League of the United States, where he supported port visits of Navy vessels for important occasions that included some just fun occasions like the Mardi Gras in Mobile.

Back in his hometown of Mobile, Robert was an active member of the Mobile Bar Association, where at one time he served as the director of the bar's Volunteer Lawyers Program. He was a member of the Mobile Kiwanis Club and the Mobile American Legion.

As Mobile's Consul to Guatemala for 20 years, Robert organized Mobile's first trade mission to Central America, earning him the U.S. Department of Commerce's Achievement Award.

In 2007, Robert's dedication to the community and the city of Mobile was

recognized when he received the Mobilian of the Year Award. In 2008, the following year, he was named the Rhodes College Alumnus of the Year, and in 2012, he received the distinguished honor of being named the Mobile Area Veteran of the Year.

When I think of Robert's great accomplishments, of all of those that we have talked about and listed, he will tell you that his greatest honor was marrying the love of his life, Patricia, in 1962 and having son Sherard, daughter Virginia, and a granddaughter, Courtney. With all that Robert was involved in, he was first and foremost a family man.

I have been blessed to have Robert and Pat Edington as great and dear friends for many, many years. Together, we have toiled in the vineyards of Alabama politics for longer than we can all remember. Robert, at one time, even had his eyes on the U.S. Senate seat. But as devoted as Robert was to the Democratic Party, he was also a man committed to the greater good, to working with anyone to make Mobile, AL, make the State of Alabama, and make America a better place for everyone, leaving a legacy of dedication and commitment to love of God, love of country, love of community, and love of family that is an extraordinary example for others to follow.

Our world, especially in today's climate, needs more Robert Edingtons.

RACISM

Madam President, 57 years ago today, a bomb exploded outside a church in Birmingham, AL. A bomb was placed underneath the steps that led to the sanctuary of the 16th Street Baptist Church.

Four young girls were killed in that blast: Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Denise McNair, and Carole Robertson—killed senselessly simply because of the color of their skin. It was a tough time in America; it was a tough time in Alabama.

I am not going to recount all of what happened at that time. Many of you have heard me speak on it before because it was in 2001 and 2002 that we put the final two perpetrators into prison.

What I have spoken about this summer, though, is how 1963 and 2020 seem to align. The year 1963 in Birmingham started off with police brutality, where peaceful demonstrators who were simply trying to get civil rights for African-American people in this country were accosted with fire hoses and dogs set upon them by the police commissioner "Bull" Connor.

People took notice. People took notice when George Wallace stood at the schoolhouse door in June of 1963. People took notice when Medgar Evers was killed that same night. People took notice when Martin Luther King stood on the Mall in Washington, DC, and said he had a dream—he had a dream that one day we would all live in peace and harmony together. It was a dream of hope at that time. It was about a

month later when that bomb exploded and destroyed the dream for so many people, but at the same time, that bomb woke the conscience of America. The horrors of Jim Crow and segregation came home to roost, came down to television sets across this country, and people stood up and made their voices known and said enough is enough—not just for Birmingham in the South, but enough is enough in this country.

We have to make the changes. It woke that conscience of this country, but it also woke a conscience of a President who began to work on the Civil Rights Act. It woke the conscience of a Congress that later passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The conscience was aroused again in 1965 when our friend John Lewis was beaten at the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

The similarities between that and today are striking. We cannot overlook the historic moment we are in today, when once again our conscience is getting the best of us, and we see the images of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery and Jacob Blake.

We also see something else. We see the images of violence. We see looting. We see the images of two police officers in Los Angeles who were brutally—brutally—attacked while just sitting in their car.

What we are seeing is really something that America is not about. It is incumbent upon us all to do something about it—to stand together, to have the discussion, to have the dialogue, to have the frank discussions about what we know is going on in law enforcement but also the violence we see in the streets. It has to stop. We have to make sure that we talk to each other, to have these dialogues.

I have talked about this before, and I will not go on and on tonight, but it is weighing heavily on everyone in this country. I know it. You know it. It is weighing on everyone. For everyone in this country, as we approach the election, it weighs heavier and heavier. Unfortunately, it gets into political discussions and partisan divides on both sides of the aisle. We cannot let that happen.

We have to come together. We have to do what John Lewis talked about and make sure that love conquers hate, however we can do it.

In that regard, I want to display this photograph. It was taken on the morning of the bombing in Birmingham. It is of an incredible stained glass window in the church. If you look closely, you will see that the most significant damage is the face of Christ that was blown out.

That picture had such an emotional impact on people in Birmingham and around the world. To this day, when people see it, it has an emotional impact because it is as if God simply cannot look at what his children are doing to his children.

We need to remember our faith. We need to remember who we are as a

country. We need to remember an image like this. No matter what faith you might believe or even if you don't have a faith, you need to remember this photograph where this stained glass window—the image of Christ—cannot bear to see what is going on. I suspect that in today's world, that image may be replicated somewhere beyond what we can touch.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, earlier today at the White House, President Trump hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Foreign Ministers from the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to sign the Abraham Accords.

These historic agreements began the process of normalizing relationships between the two Gulf countries and the Jewish state. After seven decades of isolation in the region, the Abraham Accords signify Israel's existence is finally being accepted by Arab countries, opening new prospects for greater economic, security, and cultural cooperation that will benefit all—those in the region and all of us around the world.

I commend President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and many others in this administration for facilitating this historic agreement and advancing the cause of peace and prosperity in the region. This came to many of us as a surprise, but it is a welcome surprise. I am very pleased at this development.

Over the past several years, the President and Secretary have cultivated relationships in Jerusalem, Abu Dhabi, and Manama. And for longer than that, Israel and Arab countries have cooperated on important matters but behind closed doors. Capitalizing on a changing Middle East, President Trump and his administration helped shepherd these relationships into the open.

Today's signing is just a beginning for the three countries and the region as a whole. More work, obviously, is to be done, and no agreement can be easily accomplished. But my hope is that more Arab countries will follow the path of publicly recognizing Israel. Eighteen Arab states have yet to make this move, preventing relationships that can benefit the entire region.

Israel's right to exist is unquestionable, and to refuse to recognize this is to deny reality. I, along with so many other Members of this Chamber, have worked to ensure Israel's security and prosperity. With more days like today, we can hope for a region that is secure and prosperous as well for all.

I use this opportunity to commend this accomplishment, and I hope that we are able to bring more peace and stability to this region and to the rest of the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.