

NORD STREAM 2

Mr. President, I come to the floor today on another matter, and that is to support sanctions on Vladimir Putin and his Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

This body will be voting on that very issue in the next day or so, and I am urging my colleagues to support S. 3436, which is known as Protecting Europe's Energy Security Implementation Act.

Let me just explain why this is so important. And it is important because right now, Vladimir Putin has mobilized close to 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine. They are nearly encircling the country of Ukraine. Our intelligence community has warned of a potential Russian invasion of Ukraine in the next month or so.

So why is this happening? Well, Vladimir Putin has always wanted to control and dominate Ukraine. This is nothing new. He invaded in 2014. He illegally annexed Crimea and continues to occupy Crimea today. Now, he wants more, and he is now also flush with cash. With Joe Biden in the White House and the Democrat energy policies, Vladimir Putin has hit the energy financial jackpot.

You don't have to take my word for it; take it from the Biden administration. Joe Biden's Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs is one of his top Russia experts for our own State Department. She has spent her entire career working on issues related to Russia, Ukraine, and Europe.

Well, in December, she testified before the Foreign Relations Committee. She testified about increasing Russian aggression on the Ukraine border. She said, "Energy is the cash cow that enables these kinds of military deployments."

She said Vladimir Putin "needs the energy to flow as much as the consumers need" it to flow.

But why is that? Well, it is because of Russian energy that Putin is able to pursue these dangerous military ambitions.

The late Senator John McCain, with whom I have traveled on several occasions to Ukraine, used to say, "Russia is a Mafia-run gas company disguised as a country."

Energy is the only successful sector of the Russian economy. Natural gas is what is propping up the Russian military and the entire Putin regime. Vladimir Putin uses energy as a geopolitical weapon, and he knows how to use it.

He uses energy to coerce and to manipulate our allies and our partners in Europe. If they don't do something that Putin wants or they do something that he doesn't like, he can turn off the power and turn off the heat. We just saw an example of this in November, when Russia threatened to cut off gas flows to the small and neighboring country of Moldova. Moldova had to declare a state of emergency.

Well, under Joe Biden's energy policies, Europe will soon be in a state of

energy emergency as well. It is because Europe already gets almost half of its gas imports from Russia. With the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to Germany, the imports will only need to go up, and they will go up.

Under Secretary Victoria Nuland told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "We have been counseling Europe for almost a decade now to reduce its dependence on Russian energy."

A decade. A decade includes the administrations of both President Trump and President Obama. Yet Joe Biden has done everything he can to cripple American energy production.

What happens with that? Well, it makes our allies more dependent on Russia for energy. It gives more power to Putin.

Under Joe Biden, American energy production hasn't really recovered yet to the 2019 levels. This is a direct result of the anti-American energy policies of this White House.

On his first day in office, Joe Biden killed the Keystone XL pipeline. He then blocked new oil and gas leases on Federal lands. We are now producing 1.4 million fewer barrels of oil each day than we were before the pandemic.

We are, in the U.S., now, using more oil imported from Russia than we are using oil from our own home State of Alaska. It is a national disgrace to be dependent more upon Russia for oil than we are from our neighboring State of Alaska.

Joe Biden's National Security Advisor even pleaded with Russia to produce more oil—hard to believe, hard to believe that the National Security Advisor for Joe Biden in the White House would plead with Russia to produce more oil.

Well, the administration actually put the Russian energy request on the White House website. Joe Biden would rather have America buy energy from our enemies than sell energy to our friends.

Joe Biden would rather have European nations dependent on Russian energy than increase American energy production and exports from home here to our allies. It is completely backwards.

Under Joe Biden, American energy production is down and energy prices, as any consumer knows, is way up. American families are caught paying the price for these policies of the Democrats and the Biden administration.

In November, we saw the biggest energy price increase in 10 years. CNBC reports that one in five American families can't afford to pay an energy bill this year. Roughly the same percentage have kept their home at an unhealthy low temperature because they can't afford the cost to heat their home. People who traveled for Christmas just faced some of the highest Christmas Day gasoline prices in history. American families are getting squeezed, and Putin is getting rich.

Joe Biden is against American pipelines, but in May, he gave a green light to Vladimir Putin's pipeline between Russia and Germany. This is a betrayal of American energy workers. It is a betrayal of America's allies in Europe.

If the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is completed, it will double the amount of Russian natural gas flowing into Germany. Putin will be able to manipulate the price and the availability of energy to European nations in the middle of winter. He will be able to hold half of Europe hostage.

Stopping this pipeline should be an area of bipartisan agreement in this body. In fact, it was an area of bipartisan agreement until Joe Biden became President. Even Joe Biden said that he was against the pipeline—well, until he was for it.

Many Democrats voted for the sanctions against the pipeline on more than one occasion, but when Joe Biden flipped, so did they.

Senate Democrats now are running interference for Joe Biden. But Democrats just spent 4 years talking about Russia, Russia, Russia—obsessed with Russia. They spent 4 years going on TV, spreading conspiracy theories, all of which were false.

Yet now, the Democrat caucus is attempting to protect the Kremlin's greatest geopolitical weapon.

For the Democratic Party, this is a return to tradition. Democrats were soft on Russia during the Cold War, soft on Russia under the Obama administration. Hillary Clinton gave the Russians a great big reset button. President Obama was caught in a hot-microphone moment telling the Russian President at the time that he would have more flexibility: Tell Vladimir I will have more flexibility after I am re-elected.

Democrats talk tough—they did under the last administration, that is. But now we are back to the old Democratic playbook. This is the kind of Washington, DC, partisanship the American people hate—the same thing Democrats did with Iran when Barack Obama was in the White House.

An American President must always negotiate from a position of strength. Democrats tend to think if you give Putin or the Ayatollah something they demand, that they will then play nice. That is not how the real world works. Vladimir Putin is cunning, he is opportunistic, and he is aggressive. He sees an opportunity, and he takes it. He can smell weakness. He respects strength, not statements.

The Nord Stream 2 Pipeline from Russia to Germany will be an enormous transfer of wealth from our allies to our enemy. It will make our allies weaker, and, of course, it will make Vladimir Putin stronger. When Putin gets stronger, he gets even more aggressive.

History should not be kind to those who gifted Putin a pipeline, pointed like a gun into the heart of Europe.

This vote to support sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline is our chance

to undo a great mistake, and it may also be our chance to prevent an even greater mistake.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

RECOGNIZING THE NDSU 2022 NCAA DIVISION II CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the 2022 Football Championship Subdivision national champions, the North Dakota State University Bison.

This past weekend, North Dakotans once again filled Toyota Stadium in Frisco, TX, where the NDSU Bison seized their 17th NCAA championship, earning victory over the Montana State University Bobcats by a score of 38 to 10.

I had the opportunity to join Bison Nation in Frisco to cheer on the team, and, as always, the fans created an overwhelming atmosphere of support and team spirit.

At the same time, the Bobcats should come away from the game with pride, having capped off a successful season. The Bison have now won 9 of the past 11 FCS championships—an achievement that goes unmatched in modern collegiate football history.

Further, this victory followed a strong season for the Bison, where they had a 14-win and 1-loss record—a continuation of a decades' worth of excellence and skill. Since 2011, the NDSU Bison have had 149 wins to only 12 losses, which includes a streak of 39 consecutive wins. Such a record stands as a testament to the hard work and dedication of the players and staff, including Head Coach Matt Entz.

Accordingly, I am joining with my colleague Senator CRAMER to introduce a resolution honoring the NDSU Bison's achievements. We congratulate all of the players, coaches, and university leadership, including Athletic Director Matt Larsen, NDSU President Dean Bresciani, and others, on building this tremendously successful program. We recognize the important support of Bison Nation, which helps drive this team to victory year after year.

The NDSU Bison are the pride of North Dakota. Their accomplishments, character, and work ethic represent the very best of our State. We say congratulations again to the national champions, and, as always, we say: Go Bison.

I ask unanimous consent to have the resolution printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RESOLUTION

Congratulating the North Dakota State University Bison football team for winning the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title.

Whereas, the North Dakota State University (referred to in this preamble as "NDSU") Bison football team won the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the "NCAA") Division I Football Championship Subdivision

(referred to in this preamble as the "FCS") title game in Frisco, TX, on January 8, 2022, in a well-fought victory over the Montana State University Bobcats by a score of 38 to 10;

Whereas, including the 2022 NCAA Division I FCS title, the NDSU Bison football team has won 17 national football championships;

Whereas, the NDSU Bison football team has won 9 of the last 11 NCAA Division I FCS titles, an achievement that continues to be unmatched in modern collegiate football history;

Whereas, the NDSU Bison have displayed tremendous resilience and skill since 2011, with 149 wins to only 12 losses, including a streak of 39 consecutive wins;

Whereas, head coach Matt Entz and his staff led the NDSU Bison football team to a dominant season and a second championship in his 3 years as head coach at NDSU, continuing the NDSU Bison football program's culture of excellence;

Whereas, thousands of Bison fans once again attended the championship game in Frisco, TX, reflecting the tremendous pride and dedication of Bison Nation, which has supported and helped drive the achievement of the NDSU Bison football team; and

Whereas, the 2022 NCAA Division I FCS title was a victory for both the NDSU Bison football team and the entire State of North Dakota: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the North Dakota State University Bison football team for winning the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I FCS title;

(2) commends the players, coaches, and staff of the North Dakota State University Bison football team for—

(A) their tireless work and dedication; and
(B) fostering a continued tradition of excellence;

(3) congratulates North Dakota State University President Dean Bresciani, North Dakota State University Athletic Director Matt Larsen, and all the faculty and staff of North Dakota State University for creating an environment that emphasizes excellence in both academics and athletics; and

(4) recognizes the students, alumni, fans, and all of Bison Nation for supporting the North Dakota State University Bison football team so well during its successful quest to bring home yet another NCAA Division I FCS trophy for North Dakota State University.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, before I turn to my colleague Senator CRAMER, I want to mention that I was at the national championship game. It was just fantastic.

As I say, Bison Nation, which is all our Bison fans from North Dakota and across the country, and the coaches, the staff, President Bresciani, and, of course, these great student athletes who had such a wonderful game—it was a great show. They turned out in force in Frisco, TX. We are starting to call Frisco Fargo South, which is actually the name of one of the high schools up in Fargo, which is kind of fun. But our fans travelled down there so well, filled the stadium, and they did once again. It was just a wonderful atmosphere. It was on national television, so they performed on a national stage, and people from across the country got to watch a wonderful game.

But leading up to that game, in the semifinals, they played James Madison University, which has a tremendous

football program as well. That was on a Friday night, and it was the Friday night where we were last here several weeks ago voting until about 2 o'clock in the morning.

The reason I bring up the story is because we must have had—you were there, Mr. President—we must have had like north of 20 votes at least. So we started early in the evening and went until 2 in the morning or thereabouts.

But the semifinal game between the North Dakota State University Bison and the James Madison Dukes was on television that Friday evening, so between votes, we were going into the cloakroom, and we had it on television there. So between votes, all the Senators—at least in the Republican cloakroom—we had it on, and we were watching the game.

It was a lot of fun and helped, you know, with the long evening, but it really demonstrated how this program has done so much in terms of for the State and NDSU and really providing an awareness nationwide of these great student athletes we have, because all of our colleagues got to see them, and they commented on not just the caliber of the football that our team played—it was a hard-fought game. James Madison has a wonderful program as well; again, really just a class operation. So the Bison won in a hard-fought game.

But the other thing that was fun—we have a dome. We call it the Bison Dome. Go figure. And remember that Bison is B-I-S-O-N, but it is a Z, not an S, when you say it properly. But they showed all the fans having fun and the noise in the dome, which makes it so hard to come up and play North Dakota State on our home field in our dome. Everybody, of course, is dressed in green and gold. But what an incredible sports atmosphere.

For anyone who likes collegiate athletics, this is one of the most iconic, greatest venues in the country. Again, it is Bison Nation. It is the fans. It is everybody—the coaching staff, President Bresciani, his whole team, the staff and faculty, and, of course, most of all, the student athletes.

I know the Presiding Officer, coming from Michigan, knows what great sports teams are all about.

Their commitment, their hard work, their passion, their support of Bison Nation—all these things just make it a joyous and wonderful thing.

I can't say enough about these young people, the commitment they made and the hard work that they do. Many of them may actually end up in the professional ranks. So they are playing at an extremely high level. They are just wonderful young people, and I can't say enough great things about them.

Once again, now 9 out of the last 11 years, national champs—again, congratulations and go, Bison.

With that, I would like to turn to my colleague Senator CRAMER.