

had headed down the river for about a mile, I would have come to this ship right on the Christina River. It has set sail many places around the world. It is really the ship that represents our State, which used to be the colony of New Sweden.

We all get to meet people from different places around the world, and I have been privileged to meet a lot of Swedish Americans. It turns out that there are more Swedish Americans than there are Swedes in Sweden. Let me say that again. There are now more Swedish Americans than there are Swedes in Sweden. There are a bunch of them, and they contribute to our country and certainly to our State in many, many different ways. I work a lot on economic development and always have as Governor and even now, and some of the finest businesspeople I have ever met are Swedes, of Swedish extraction.

I have a funny story, if I could. Every 25 years, the King and Queen of Sweden come to revisit the colony of New Sweden, and we have a big celebration for a couple days right along the banks of this river, the Christina River. By the way, all those years ago, when the first Swedes and Finns came ashore, they named the Christina River after their child Queen, who at the time was—you won't believe it—12 years old, 12 years old. Imagine peaking at the age of 12 and becoming a Queen or a King. Of course, the Christina, that river, is named after her.

I like to point out to women who are named Christina—I tell them that their heritage, their name, actually goes back to all of those years when the first Swedes and Finns came here and helped to settle our country.

Anyway, once every 25 years, the King and Queen of Sweden come to visit us. In 2013, King Carl XVI and Queen Silvia of Sweden came to Delaware for several days. We had a huge celebration on the banks of the Christina River, and I had the privilege of sitting next to the Queen during dinner. It was a big banquet with hundreds of people in black tie. It was a beautiful evening with great music and wonderful speeches. And she and I just had a delightful time talking over dinner.

We talked about the arts. I like films, and I believe the Presiding Officer is a big film buff. One of my early favorite directors is Ingmar Bergman, a Swede, who made great films for many, many years. We talked about his films and the films that actually touched our lives and helped shape our lives. We talked about music. We talked about music.

I said to the Queen of Sweden: Your Highness, I don't know where I got this, but for some reason, I make the connection between you and the singing group ABBA.

Now, Ingmar Bergman is one of the greatest film directors of all time. ABBA, a Swedish singing group, is, I think, maybe the top-selling singing

group in the history of the world. They actually still record from time to time.

But, anyway, I said to Queen Silvia: Is there any connection between ABBA and you and your husband? Is there?

She said: Well, there is.

I said: Well, what is it?

And she said: The night before we were married in Sweden, there was a huge celebration and a concert, an outdoor concert, with tens of thousands of people.

She said: The headline group for the concert was ABBA.

I said: No kidding? Did they sing?

And she said: That was the night they debuted the song "Dancing Queen."

It is, maybe, one of the best pop songs I have ever heard. I won't say that we sat there and hummed a few bars, but maybe we did.

We have a lot in common with the Swedes and the Finns. We share a lot of likes and, really, very much appreciation, if you will, of the arts and of film, including music. We are a country that prides itself on our free enterprise system, but we know how to do it with a heart. So do the Swedes.

Look up the term "no-brainer." You won't find it in the dictionary, but if you look up the term "no-brainer," it would say: this vote today and the issue that is before us.

Why in God's name wouldn't we want the Swedes and Finns to join us together?

LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER is our Congresswoman. We have only one. She is our Congresswoman. In Delaware, she has a saying that she talks about: Sticks tied together can't be broken. Sticks tied together can't be broken.

With one stick—phew—you are going to break it; but if you pile a bunch of them together, you can't break them. The same is true here. The same is true here. The admission of Finland and the admission of Sweden into NATO makes that band of sticks even stronger and that much harder to break.

I am just delighted that we have an issue where there has been a fair amount of dissension in these Halls, and I am delighted that we have something, I think, we can all pretty much—almost all—agree on. It is a good thing, and it will be good for our country. It is going to be good for Sweden, and it is going to be good for Finland. I think it is going to be good for our planet. Those of us who are privileged to live in what used to be the colony of New Sweden couldn't be happier, and we are delighted to celebrate.

To anybody who is listening who says: Well, you know, I have never been to a national park in Delaware, well, we want you to know that we have one and that it is a great one that runs from one end of the State to the other. If you start up north, get off the train and walk about a mile, you will be at what used to be the home place, the starting place, of the colony of New Sweden.

With that, I think I have done enough damage here today. I yield to

the fellow from Alaska. I don't know if he has spent a lot of time on ships or boats. I spent a few years as a Navy guy, but the marines spend a lot of time at sea. They take rides in our boats. We are on the same team. I usually say we wear different uniforms, but we are on the same team.

And, on this, we are on the same page, and it is great to be here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, it is always good to follow my friend from Delaware, Navy Captain CARPER, who is a Vietnam vet, a naval aviator—the whole works. It is an honor to serve with him on the EPW and other committees. So thank you to my good friend from Delaware.

AMENDMENT NO. 5192

Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 5192 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. SULLIVAN] proposes an amendment numbered 5192.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide a declaration to the Protocol)

In section 2, strike paragraph (6) and insert the following:

(6) SUPPORT FOR 2014 WALES SUMMIT DEFENSE SPENDING BENCHMARK.—The Senate declares that all NATO members should spend a minimum of 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense and 20 percent of their defense budgets on major equipment, including research and development, by 2024, as outlined in the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, after World War II, European leaders looked to the United States to help heal a fractured world and to help provide safety against increasing communist Russian aggression. As Winston Churchill said:

There I sat with the great Russian bear on one side of me with paws outstretched and, on the other side, the great American Buffalo.

Well, the Buffalo prevailed, NATO prevailed, and the world's most successful and enduring military alliance was born.

In 1949, the Senate ratified the NATO treaty by a vote of 82 to 13. President Truman was quoted at the signing ceremony of the NATO treaty by saying:

In this pact, we hope to create a shield against aggression and the fear of aggression . . . For us, war is not inevitable.

He continued:

Men with courage and vision can still determine their own destiny. They can choose slavery or freedom—war or peace. . . . The treaty we are signing here today is evidence of the path they will follow.

That was when President Truman signed the first NATO treaty.

And, indeed, since the formation of NATO, no world wars have broken out, no country that is a signatory of NATO

has been invaded by another country's military forces. In fact, the only time NATO's article V—which is the pillar of the alliance, which states that an attack on one is an attack on all—was invoked was actually after the terrorist attacks on America on 9/11. Our allies came to our help to ensure Afghanistan wouldn't harbor terrorists, and we appreciate that help. We appreciate it deeply from our NATO allies.

NATO, however, is more than just a military alliance. It is a group of countries with shared values and beliefs and a commitment to the principles of democracy. All of this, in addition to the military alliance, is the heritage of NATO.

President Ronald Reagan summed it up succinctly in a speech to our NATO allies in 1983:

What do the Soviets mean by words like democracy, freedom, and peace? Not, I'm sorry to say, what we mean.

Replace the word "Soviet" with "Russia," and the sentiment, unfortunately, holds true today. We see the antithesis of these democratic values and shared beliefs of NATO being played out in real time before us in the streets of Ukraine, where Vladimir Putin is leading a brutal assault on Ukraine—Russia's democratic neighbor—and committing atrocities, horrible atrocities, against the brave people of that country.

As both Presidents Truman and Reagan remarked, members of the NATO alliance are like members of the same house in the same family—the house and the family of democracy.

So, today, the U.S. Senate will welcome the nations of Sweden and Finland into the NATO family. Like any family, we may not agree on everything, but when it is most important, we will have each other's back. That is the essence of NATO and the core reason for its success.

Neither Russia nor any other country will be able to invade Sweden or Finland, now that they have become members of NATO, without its NATO allies coming to their support.

Of course, Finland has experienced the Russian invasion. In 1939, where, without the help from other nations, its greatly outnumbered brave Finnish army fought off over 1 million Russian forces for 3 months. But that won't happen again to Finland. It won't happen to Sweden. They won't be alone now.

We welcome these countries' commitment to freedom and their advanced professional militaries, which will make NATO stronger.

To Finland and Sweden, no longer will you be working with NATO. You will now be working in and part of the greatest defense alliance in history. So welcome to these great countries.

As Churchill once said:

There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them!

I strongly support the inclusion of these two great nations, Sweden and

Finland, into the NATO alliance. Important occasions like this are also an opportunity to reflect on the obligations of membership, not just for these new NATO members but for all NATO members.

And on the heels of the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, the heads of state and representatives of the then-28 member countries who made up NATO attended a very important summit, a NATO summit, in Wales. There, they agreed upon a common goal for all NATO members that they would spend a minimum of 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense by 2024. This 2 percent of GDP NATO defense spending goal has been strongly supported for decades by American administrations, both Republican and Democratic: Presidents Bush, Obama, Trump, and now President Biden.

At the time, in 2014, of the NATO summit in Wales, 10 of the 28 members of NATO met that 2-percent guideline. Now, 8 years later in 2022, of the 30 NATO country members, we only have 8 of those 30 meeting that 2-percent threshold.

I have a chart here. It lays out the 2-percent goal: who is above it, who is below it. It is many other countries besides the ones that are listed there. But the bottom line is, since Wales and that important commitment, there has not been much progress in NATO on this shared goal and commitment.

Now, I am a very strong supporter of NATO and a very strong supporter of the U.S. military, and I want NATO to endure for decades to come. But alliances can't endure if shared commitments and shared burdens are not met. This is particularly true for democratic alliances like NATO. There must be a sense among the citizens of such countries that all are pulling their weight for the collective defense of the alliance, for the collective defense of each other.

So as I mentioned at the outset, I am calling up an amendment to the resolution. My amendment is to make this commitment clear. It is to announce the U.S. Senate's expectation for all NATO members: the United States, existing members, and now new members—expectations on what has already been agreed to by each NATO country and its citizens.

The amendment is simple. It states the following:

The Senate declares that all NATO members should spend a minimum of 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product . . . on defense and 20 percent of their defense budget on major equipment, including research and development, by 2024, as outlined in the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration.

That is it. It is a simple amendment, and I hope it can pass in the next hour by voice vote.

Let me conclude with this: A robust, expanded NATO with Finland and Sweden as new members is needed now more than ever, especially given the brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

We need to fully understand the broader implications of this invasion. We have entered a new era of authoritarian aggression, led by Russia and China's dictators, who are increasingly isolated and dangerous, driven by historical grievances, paranoid about their democratic neighbors, and willing to use military force and other aggressive actions to crush the citizens of such countries. These dangerous dictators, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, are increasingly working together to achieve their aggressive goals.

We must wake up to the fact that this new era of authoritarian aggression will likely be with us for decades. We need to face it with strategic resolve and confidence. The United States has extraordinary advantages relative to the dictatorships of Russia and China, if we are wise enough to utilize and strengthen them: our global network of allies, our lethal military, our world-class supplies of energy and other natural resources, our dynamic economy, and, most important, our democratic values and commitment to liberty.

Xi Jinping and Putin's biggest weakness and vulnerability is that they fear their own people. We should remember this and exploit this in the months and years ahead. NATO, as an alliance, encompasses so many of these powerful comparative advantages: a lethal military, a global network of allies, dynamic economies, and the power of democratic values and the commitment to liberty.

We should all welcome and celebrate the addition of Finland and Sweden to the NATO alliance, but we should also use this moment to recognize the seriousness of the authoritarian threats on the rise all over the world and recommit ourselves, all NATO members, to our obligations of collective defense, moving forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, first of all, I want to applaud the Senator from Alaska for his comments. I agree completely with his statements, and I think his amendment making it clear that we expect the 2 percent to be honored by all member states is something that we all should welcome and agree to.

I thank you for your leadership. I also thank you for how you have articulated the importance of NATO to our national security.

NATO is a transatlantic security partnership that has served our national security interests so well for so many years since the end of World War II.

Today, we are going to have a chance to vote to expand the NATO alliance by adding Finland and Sweden. I hope all my colleagues will support that.

I will point out that Finland already exceeds the 2 percent that Senator

SULLIVAN is talking about, the percentage of their GDP that they are spending on defense. So I think this is another reason why we have countries that we want to add to the alliance. We have 30 strong now. This will even be stronger with Finland and Sweden being added to the NATO alliance.

But what is unique about the two countries that we will have a chance to vote on in a few moments is that they give us added value to our alliance. They make our alliance stronger. It is in our national security interest to include Finland and Sweden. They add value militarily and economically to this alliance.

The geostrategic location of these two countries is critically important to our national security. Just think for a moment about the threats to the Baltic nations that we have seen by Russia—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Think about where Poland has been threatened because of Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

Adding Finland and Sweden will help us round out the security alliance necessary to provide the security that we need. Both of these countries are already committed to interoperability with the NATO alliance. They are already familiar with how NATO's process and procedures are utilized.

So we have two countries that are ready from day one to be active participants in the alliance. They both participate in regular participation and training exercises with NATO and U.S. forces. Both Sweden and Finland have done that. They have contributed troops. Sweden has contributed troops to NATO-led operations in Kosovo, to Afghanistan, to Iraq. So we have countries that have already stepped up to help us in security and now will be a formal part of the security alliance.

They will add, also, a dimension that is important for us in regards to winter warfare. The cold response winter warfare exercises have been participated in. Finland has the arctic capabilities that will be critically important to us as we move forward. So we are adding value to the NATO alliance as well as expanding the number of countries.

I want to mention one other area: cyber and misinformation. We have two countries that have been very active in being victimized by the misinformation campaign by Russia. Sweden has a Psychological Defence Agency that they created in 2016 that is going to be important for us. As we know, Mr. Putin uses every weapon in his arsenal, including misinformation, in order to try to bring down democratic states. We know that in Sweden's case, they are already taking decisive action to counter the misinformation. Finland has an anti-fake-news initiative, which is actually fascinating. They recognize that Russia is trying to invade their country through misinformation, and they have an active way of defending against it. So, as I said earlier, we have two countries that will add value to the alliance.

The timing here couldn't be better. We have stood up an international resolve to support Ukraine in the invasion by Russia. Expanding NATO at this moment is a clear message to Mr. Putin that we stand with the democratic countries of Europe and we are prepared to expand our NATO alliance to guarantee their protection.

So these two stalwart, democratic nations, Finland and Sweden, have been robust partners to the United States and Europe on countless fronts. They have provided humanitarian aid to many countries in need, including Ukraine during the unprovoked invasion by Russia. Combined, Finland and Sweden provided over \$120 million in military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine between February and June of 2022.

These two nations have also shown a commitment to democratic governance, ranking third and fourth respectively on the global Democracy Index of 2020, according to an economist group. So we have two of the leading democratic states.

Finland and Sweden have proven time and time again that they have the defense capabilities and commitment to democracy in Europe to make them essential NATO allies. The Senate must act now to bolster this global peace and security by voting in favor of Finland and Sweden's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty. I urge my colleagues to do that.

#### AFGHANISTAN

Madam President, I would ask that I be permitted to enter comments about the 1-year anniversary of the fall of Afghanistan, pointing out that the Biden administration has been able to assist in the evacuation of so many American citizens and people who helped our U.S. mission, those who were involved in the democratic reforms in that country, but there is still a mission that we need to participate in to save people.

So I would ask unanimous consent that those comments be printed in a separate part of the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled votes: Senator COLLINS for up to 10 minutes, Senator GRAHAM for up to 5 minutes, Senator BLUNT for up to 5 minutes, Senator ROMNEY for up to 5 minutes, Senator RISCH for up to 5 minutes, Senator PAUL for up to 10 minutes, Senator SULLIVAN for up to 1 minute, and Senator MENEZES for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NATO

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise in strong support of the accession of Finland and Sweden into the NATO alliance.

In May, I visited Helsinki and Stockholm as part of a Senate delegation to

encourage the Finnish and Swedish efforts to join the alliance. Our trip, however, started in Ukraine. There, after a long, secret journey under cover of darkness, our contingent of four Senators met with President Zelenskyy for 2 hours. We discussed the military, humanitarian, economic, and security consequences of Russia's unprovoked, brutal war against Ukraine. I asked President Zelenskyy whether he thought Vladimir Putin's attack on his country had had the opposite effect of what he had intended. For example, the Russian-speaking sections of eastern Ukraine are now embracing their Ukrainian identity, and NATO is more united than ever. President Zelenskyy told me that Putin's war of aggression not only had been the opposite of the easy conquest that Putin had expected but also had strengthened the NATO alliance and the European Union.

(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, one cannot understand how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has upended decades and, in the case of Sweden, centuries of security policy for these countries. For 200 years, Sweden has maintained a policy of neutrality, but, as Swedish Prime Minister Andersson put it to me, "February 24 changed everything." That was the date of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Finland, which shares an 830-mile border with Russia, likewise concluded that Russia's aggression required a dramatic rethinking of its security. To demonstrate the reality on the ground, the Finnish President took us outside of his home and pointed to his right, where Tallinn, Estonia, is only 50 miles away across the Baltic Sea. He then pointed to his left and told us that St. Petersburg, Russia, is only 200 miles away.

Our visits to these leaders came just as the Parliaments of Finland and Sweden were voting to formally request admission into NATO. We assured their leaders that there was strong, bipartisan support in the Senate for their accession and that adding their capabilities to the alliance would improve, would strengthen our collective defense and security.

This is, indeed, an important point. Sweden and Finland will both bring enormous geographic advantages and military capabilities to NATO. Finland is expected to exceed NATO's 2 percent defense spending target this year, and Sweden has committed to meeting that target as soon as possible. Finland has the largest reserve military force in Europe and has recently decided to upgrade its current fleet of American F-18 fighter jets with the fifth-generation F-35. For the past several years, Sweden has been increasing its arms spending, and the country has advanced defense industrial capabilities.

The addition of both of these nations to NATO will bolster deterrence against Russia in the Arctic, Nordic, and Baltic regions.