

America and our partners need to pass this crucial test. We must leave no room for doubt about our commitment to democracy in Burma.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we recently passed the 1-year anniversary of President Biden's inauguration. It is a natural time for taking stock of the first year of his Presidency.

In President Biden, we were supposed to get a leader—a leader at home and on the world stage. The grownups, we were told, were back in the room. But the truth of the matter is that President Biden's first year in office has been marked by a lack of leadership more than anything else.

Again and again, President Biden has simply abdicated his responsibilities. Take perhaps the two defining domestic crises of the Biden Presidency: our inflation crisis and our border crisis. In both cases, the response of the President and his administration has by and large been to stick their fingers in their ears and pretend the crises don't exist. Sure, the President or his people make a gesture toward the problem every now and then, but mostly, you would be forgiven for thinking that neither the border crisis nor the inflation crisis was even on the President's radar.

Migrants continue to pour across our southern border in massive numbers, creating a humanitarian, enforcement, and security nightmare. And the President? Well, he appears to believe that if he ignores the problem long enough, it will go away. When he does talk about immigration, it amounts to a green light to the cartels and traffickers to keep leading migrants to our borders. That is why I recently joined more than 100 lawmakers in requesting that the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general investigate the Biden administration's border failures.

Between the President's rhetoric and his failure to take any meaningful action to address the influx of illegal immigration, it is no surprise that we saw more than half a million attempts to cross our southern border illegally in the current fiscal year's first 3 months alone—half a million.

Meanwhile, American families are struggling with the worst inflation in 40 years—40 years. The last time inflation was this bad, “E.T.” was just premiering, and “Return of the Jedi” hadn't even come out yet. American families are struggling with huge increases in the price of the most basic necessities, from food to fuel. And the administration's response? Mostly crickets.

Of course, President Biden hasn't just been largely ignoring this crisis; he actually helped create it. The so-called American Rescue Plan Act the Democrats passed and the President signed into law in March of last year helped produce the sky-high inflation we are experiencing. But instead of addressing the resulting crisis, the President has been focused on passing another massive government spending bill that would almost undoubtedly worsen our inflation problem. Yes, his solution to our inflation crisis is to double down on the strategy that helped produce so much inflation in the first place.

Meanwhile, Americans are wondering if their paychecks will stretch to afford the sharp increases at the grocery store and in gas prices, utility bills, household commodities, and the list goes on.

On the world stage, of course, the defining moment of President Biden's first year was his disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. The President's arbitrary, chaotic withdrawal was a real low point for our country. Thirteen of our military men and women died in a terrorist attack during the evacuation from Kabul. We abandoned thousands of individuals who had worked with us in Afghanistan and whom we had promised to protect and left behind hundreds of American citizens. The President, who was supposed to restore our standing on the world stage, left our allies wondering if our word could be relied on, not to mention the fact that the disastrous withdrawal left our country in a more precarious national security position.

Meanwhile, the President's recent press conference left serious questions as to how well he is likely to handle another pressing national security, and that is the issue in Ukraine. Casually dismissing a possible “minor incursion” into Ukraine's sovereign territory did not inspire confidence in the President's ability to stand up to Russia.

We can't afford missteps and walk backs. Putin is looking to test America and NATO's resolve, looking for any hesitation or division. I hope the President and the majority party will take seriously the threat to Ukraine, utilize any remaining levers of American influence to deter a renewed attack, and, if Putin proceeds, make him immediately realize it was a miscalculation.

Perhaps the biggest thing the President was going to do—the most important way he was going to be a leader—was to pull our country together. That was the defining theme of President Biden's inaugural address.

I quote:

Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this: Bringing America together. Uniting our people. And uniting our nation.

Contrast that speech with the speech that book-ended the other end of his first year, his speech in Georgia on election legislation. We went from a President who wanted to unite our Na-

tion to a President who refers to his political opponents as enemies.

“We can see each other not as adversaries but as neighbors,” the President said in his inaugural address. “We can treat each other with dignity and respect.” In his Georgia speech, by contrast, the President's political opponents became not only adversaries but enemies and racists, all for the crime of disagreeing with the President's vision of election reform.

The President's complete condemnation of half the country was striking. I lost track of the number of people he implied were racist. The President assumed bad faith on the part of those who disagree with him. Missing from his speech was any shred of recognition that perhaps Americans of good will can disagree on election legislation. No, if you disagree with the President, you are a racist. Like Hillary Clinton before him, it is clear that President Biden conceives of a large portion of the American people as deplorables. The President repeatedly referred to justice in his Georgia speech. Perhaps he should consider the profound injustice of baselessly suggesting half the country is racist.

In his inaugural address, the President said, “We must reject a culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.” I have been profoundly disappointed to see the President and many of my Democrat colleagues manipulate the facts about State election bills to support their desire for a Federal takeover of elections.

Manipulated facts were a hallmark of the President's speech in Georgia, as he tried to twist a mainstream election law into Jim Crow 2.0. His attempts were particularly ironic given that the State he was complaining about offers greater opportunities to vote than are offered by the President's home State of Delaware.

Days later, at a press conference marking his first year in office, the President laid the groundwork for future division and disunity by suggesting that the 2022 elections could be illegitimate if Democrats' election legislation doesn't get passed; that is, I assume, if Democrats don't win. It was yet another profoundly disappointing remark from a President who was supposed to take the lead in bringing this country together.

One year into the Biden Presidency, it has become clear that the President of the inaugural address—the President whose whole soul was committed to uniting our Nation—has long ago disappeared. The President has not only failed to unite the country, but, as his ugly and divisive speech in Georgia made clear, he has come to regard anyone who opposes his policies with active hostility and contempt.

Just 1 year—1 year—after dedicating himself to uniting our country, the President is dividing Americans into supporters and enemies. “We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative

versus liberal," the President said in his inaugural address. It is too bad the President's actions have not matched his words.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UKRAINE DEMOCRACY DEFENSE LEND-LEASE ACT OF 2022

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the former leader of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Lenin, once said:

You probe with bayonets: If you find mush, you push. If you find steel, you withdraw.

Well, apparently, the current Russian President subscribes to this same point of view. President Putin has made no secret of his desire to restore the former Soviet Union. In 2005, he declared:

The [demise] of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.

"The [demise] of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century," he said in 2005. He went on to say:

As for the Russian people, it became a genuine tragedy. Tens of millions of our fellow citizens and countrymen found themselves beyond the fringes of Russian territory.

So perhaps we should not have been surprised when, in 2008, Russia invaded Georgia—that is, the country of Georgia. Then, when it came to a global response, the Russian President found mush, so he pushed. In 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine for the first time since the end of the Cold War, taking its Crimea region. Once again, President Putin found mush, so he pushed.

Today, more than 100,000 Russian troops are massed along the Ukrainian border. An invasion could happen at any moment. This impending crisis raises a fundamental question for the freedom-loving countries of the world: Will President Putin be met with mush or steel? Will the anticipated cost of an invasion in terms of blood, treasure, and reputation become so high that he backs down or will a muted global response encourage his lust for empire?

In times like these, the civilized world looks to the United States for leadership. Ours may no longer be a unipolar world, with the rise of China and the dreams of empire of the Russian Federation, but our country remains a beacon of freedom, strength, and democracy that serves as an example for the rest of the world.

So the question the world is asking is, Will America still lead? Will we accept our responsibilities under treaties like that of the North Atlantic Treaty, which formed NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization? To be sure, Ukraine is not yet a member of NATO,

but will we and the other members allow Putin to dictate membership in the multilateral, rules-based order represented by NATO by threats and force? Will we aid a democracy like Ukraine in its self-defense? These are questions that lie before us, and so far, the Biden administration's response has been less than reassuring.

Last year, the administration waived sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, giving Russia the green light to continue its monopoly on the energy supply to Europe along with its ability, because of that monopoly, to weaponize energy to an even greater extent.

The administration's response led to a poorly planned and even more poorly executed exodus from Afghanistan, leaving Afghans vulnerable and at the mercy of the Taliban and leaving our friends and allies around the world aghast at the manner in which that exit occurred.

Then, a couple of weeks ago, President Biden suggested that minor incursions—minor incursions—by Russia into Ukraine may be tolerated—a line that he would later, thankfully, walk back.

President Biden has given our allies multiple reasons to doubt the resolve and credibility of the United States as that leader of the free world. Whether out of naivete or idealism or just error of judgment, it doesn't change the fact that President Biden has repeatedly projected a lack of decisiveness and weakness, and Putin, you had better believe, has taken notice.

As it stands today, the international response to Russian aggression is disjointed and disorganized at best. France is all in on diplomacy. The United Kingdom is offering clear but limited military assistance. Germany, unfortunately, seems to support appeasement. The United States and the rest of the world are waiting for President Biden to step up to the challenge.

I believe we have a responsibility to stand with Ukraine and help its people defend its sovereignty and its democracy. Now, that doesn't mean having American troops on the ground, but there are other ways we can help Ukraine defend itself and raise the costs of a threatened Russian invasion into their country. Forceful language and threats of sanctions may be important, but they are clearly not enough. We need to take concrete steps to minimize the likelihood of a Russian attack and ensure that Ukraine, as I said, has the resources they need in order to defend themselves in the event of an invasion.

There is a historical parallel. During World War II, President Roosevelt recognized how critical it was for the United States to support Great Britain even at a time when the American people were isolationists and when America's official policy was neutrality toward the war in Europe. President Roosevelt recognized it was important to do what we could to support Great

Britain during its hour of need, when it was literally hanging on by a thread, because it lacked the resources it needed to protect its people and fend off German forces. So President Roosevelt vowed to transform the United States into what he called the arsenal of democracy and worked with Congress to devise a creative solution that later became known as the Lend-Lease Act. This legislation, signed into law in March of 1941, allowed the United States to supply our allies with weapons, ships, aircraft—any materiel they needed in order to mount their defense at a critical time in the war in Europe.

Later that year, Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister, said the bill "must be regarded without question as the most unsordid act in the whole of recorded history." Now, Winston Churchill certainly had a way with words, and when he calls it an unsordid act, I guess today we would say it was the most selfless and unselfish act in the whole of recorded history by the United States of America.

The circumstances today are not those of March of 1941. There is no mistake about that. Yet, if you look back at the historical parallels—at the circumstances in 1939, when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia for similar reasons for which Putin is claiming he has a right to invade Ukraine—they are chilling. If we had stood up to Germany then, we might have avoided a global calamity and prevented the loss of millions of innocent lives.

So what best to inform our actions today but the experience of the past, to correct our mistakes, and to duplicate the successful efforts in World War II or at other times in our history. The lessons of the past must inform the present, and I believe we still have a duty to lead when it comes to protecting democracies and freedom-loving countries around the world.

Once again, America can now become that arsenal of democracy for Ukraine. To that end, I have introduced bipartisan legislation called the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act to ensure that Ukrainian forces have the resources they need to deter and defend against Russian aggression.

I am proud to have worked with senior members of the Armed Services Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee—people like Senators CARDIN, WICKER, SHAHEEN, GRAHAM, BLUMENTHAL, SULLIVAN, and HASSAN—on this legislation, which will give the administration and give President Biden more flexibility and more efficiency when it comes to being that arsenal of democracy for Ukraine.

As it stands today, the President of the United States has a menu of options to support our friends and allies in times of conflict. In some cases, like the loan of equipment, the United States could eventually retain end use. In others, this would make clear we would support grants or emergency aid where we would not recover the funding or assets sent to our allies. This