

President Biden also deserves credit—credit that is due him for successfully bringing democracies together against Putin with crushing sanctions and an outpouring of security assistance. Today, President Putin is more isolated than ever before while democracies have rallied together, and this is much to the credit of President Biden. He has done an amazing job.

Here in the United States, we stand unflinchingly with the people of Ukraine. Twenty-one years ago, in the aftermath of 9/11, Americans rallied together after our democracy was attacked here at home. Today, as democracy is under assault, we must come together in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. We should all be together supporting this country's efforts.

When I said the President did an amazing job, here is one thing I was referring to: No one thought that the Europeans would go along with removing parts of the SWIFT system from the Russian financial system; no one thought that we would sanction the Russian Central Bank—two of the most powerful weapons we have, but the Europeans were going to be reluctant. Because President Biden was strong, was patient, was persistent, and didn't let himself get pushed around by would-be critics, that is now happening. Over the next several months—even now, today, but even more so as time goes on—those are going to have severe effects on President Putin.

So he deserves a lot of credit, and I just hope we will all, all of us, come together, just as we did after 9/11 when freedom was under assault in our own country, and rally, united in supporting the President and what he is doing.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. On the Women's Healthcare Protection Act, later today, the Senate is going to vote on a simple yet urgent question: Will this Chamber agree to begin debate on protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare choices?

Across the country, it is a dark, dark time for women's reproductive rights. Last year, we saw the most—the most—abortion restrictions passed by State legislatures in a single year. Some of them were almost vicious—the vigilantism of Texas's law. I call it vicious vigilantism. Many of these new laws are downright extreme, effectively extinguishing women's ability to even exercise their rights at all. The new, extreme restrictions fly largely in the face of public opinion. They also fly in the face of commonsense health practices. Frankly, they fly against common decency itself, and sadly it seems like the Supreme Court is close to drastically restricting this long-established right in the coming months.

So the Senate today is going to take action because abortion has never been more at risk in America. Indeed, this

will be the first time the Senate takes a vote on a stand-alone bill to proactively codify Roe. Let me say that again. This will be the first time that the Senate takes a vote on a stand-alone bill to proactively codify Roe. Every American—every American—deserves to know where his or her Senator stands on an issue as important as the right to choose, and today's vote will do that.

From the moment that Roe was decided in 1973, the most extreme elements of the Republican Party have plotted its demise. The Federalist Society was founded with the intent of cultivating a generation of judges loyal to conservative causes.

Sadly, it seems like the Supreme Court is posed to severely limit abortion rights in the coming months. That is why this bill is essential.

Congress must codify into law what most Americans have long believed—that abortion is a fundamental right and that women's decisions over women's healthcare belong to women, not—to extremist rightwing legislatures.

We must vote in favor to hold a debate on this bill. I will proudly, strongly vote yes. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, on postal, this week, the Senate is also going to keep working to pass long-overdue postal reform to strengthen mail deliveries, take care of our postal workers, and put the post office on a path to long-term stability.

I want to be clear that this bill has enough bipartisan support to ultimately become law. It is the product of weeks and months of good-faith negotiation by my colleagues, especially my friend Senator PETERS. We could have passed postal reform at the end of the last work period were it not for the capricious obstruction from the Senator from Florida. Nevertheless, postal reform remains on the right track, and I expect we will be able to send it to the President's desk very soon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week, Putin again invaded the sov-

ereign territory of a neighboring country. Sadly, it was long clear that attempts to invoke genteel international norms would not move this self-styled czar.

Putin only cares about norms insofar as he wants to rewrite them. He only cares about the peaceful international order insofar as he wants to disrupt it.

Like his Soviet predecessors, Putin has always rejected the postwar order that held up states' sovereignty and territorial integrity as sacrosanct. Putin and Xi of China both want to replace this peaceful order with spheres of influence.

They want to bend other countries to their will and redraw borders by force. Make no mistake, this crisis does not and will not end with Ukraine. And the reason isn't simply that appetites grow with eating. Confrontation with the West is Putin's main objective.

He wants to restore the Russian empire. He said explicitly, he wants NATO rolled back to its 1997 borders. We have a dictator trying to dismember a U.S. partner, trying to decapitate its democratically elected government.

Does anybody really think it stops here? Does anybody think that Europe, or for that matter, Taiwan, will be safe if the world lets this stand?

We will only deter further Russian and Chinese aggression if Putin is made to pay a significant price. Massive and sustained sanctions that undermine his ability to wage war, now and into the future, will be necessary.

But sanctions alone will not suffice. Russia has massive currency reserves. It has options to blunt economic pain and to impose counterattacks on America and our partners, at least in the near term. The sanctions that would hurt Moscow the most would also have a significant impact on our friends in Europe. So there will continue to be resistance to maximalist sanctions.

To date, the Biden administration has sent mixed messages about its own sanctions policy. For months, we heard that prospective sanctions were being drafted to deter Putin's aggression. But last week, the President said he and his advisers never thought sanctions would deter Russia. Now, they are finally imposing sanctions but short of everything that is available.

So to what end exactly? What is the administration's coherent plan? I believe we should have used more of these tools prior to this brutal escalation to deter Putin and to weaken his capacity to wage war. Now, we must use these tools aggressively to impose massive costs for Putin's aggression, to demonstrate to other aggressors that we mean business, and to degrade Putin's longer-term ability to threaten NATO and compete with the West.

But ultimately, sanctions are no substitute for military power. They are no substitute for the steps we must take

to help Ukraine now and to defend ourselves in the future. Moscow and Beijing will only be deterred from aggression if they see concretely that military force cannot achieve their objectives and the cost of military aggression will be too high.

In the immediate term, we must ensure the Ukrainians can adequately defend themselves and impose costs on Russia that prove prohibitive. The administration brags about giving \$650 million to Ukraine last year, but the manner in which it did so deserves scrutiny.

When Putin built up forces along Ukraine's border last spring, the Biden administration delayed an arms assistance package, literally, for months.

A headline from last June read: "White House freezes Ukraine military package that includes lethal weapons."

Even as Putin began directly threatening Ukraine last fall, an assistance package languished for weeks at the White House before it was approved. This weekend, the administration rushed to announce another \$350 million in military assistance. For which weapons? On what timeline? And how will the weapons reach the brave Ukrainians who have lost ground?

So Congress must use its oversight tools to ensure we are providing Ukraine the weapons it needs as quickly as possible. The same goes for helping to shore up our NATO allies' defenses along the eastern flank. And we need to identify what shortfalls, red-tape, and limiting factors have slowed our assistance, so we are better prepared to help the next partner in need.

As I have warned repeatedly, we cannot afford to move at the speed of bureaucracy.

Beyond the immediate crisis in Ukraine, American Presidents, beginning with President Biden, must recommit our Nation to the longer-term challenges that we face. Seventy-two years ago, Harry Truman led the West in rebuffing the Communist assault in South Korea, as well as contesting Soviet domination over Europe.

America made sure NATO would not be a toothless political alliance, but rather a capable military fighting force. This meant sustained investment in American and allied military strength. Defense funding was the precondition for impactful diplomacy that kept the Cold War from going hot.

Now, it is this President's job to seriously meet the growing threats posed by Russia and China. The United States and our allies and partners must understand that the core of our competition with Russia and China is the military dimension.

President Biden's first budget proposed to actually cut defense spending in real terms. Congress had to take bipartisan action to beef up the NDAA to correct his error. Clearly, more investment is needed. Congress must keep strengthening defense capabilities as we work on appropriations.

But President Biden must lead by example. The President's next budget re-

quest must include at least a 5-percent increase in defense spending above inflation.

Russia and China have prioritized military modernization literally for decades.

They have invested in specific tools like long-range aerial defenses and hypersonic weapons that are designed to push the U.S. and our allies further away from the fight.

We are actually behind in this competition. We are actually behind. Hypersonic weapons, nuclear force modernization, power projection, global presence—these things cost money. It is a small price to pay for keeping security threats off of our shores. I have criticized NATO allies who failed to contribute fully to our collective security, but I am a strong supporter of the transatlantic alliance. I am encouraged by how our partners have responded, however belatedly, to the growing threat posed to our collective security.

For example, special praise to the courageous decision by Chancellor Scholz this weekend to seek an emergency appropriation of 100 billion euros for the German military. This effectively doubles Germany's military budget this year—doubles Germany's military budget this year.

He wants Germany to fulfill its pledge to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense. He wants to build liquefied natural gas terminals and make other energy investments to finally dial down Germany's dependence on Russia.

If our wary European friends are finally shaking off their slumber and getting serious, then certainly the United States of America can do the same.

President Biden must lead the charge and lead it now.

ABORTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now, on an entirely different matter, with a cascade of major crises testing our country, Senate Democrats are prioritizing a show vote on mandating 9 months of abortion on demand across America.

Senate Democrats want to go on record supporting the radical and massively unpopular proposition that we should have functionally no restrictions on abortion whatsoever. Democrats already have the United States, one of just seven nations in the entire world that allows elective abortions after 20 weeks. This radical fringe policy places us in company like China and North Korea.

But now, Senate Democrats want to go even further than Chairman Xi and Kim Jong-Un. Ninety-one percent of Americans support some restrictions on abortion during the third trimester. The public overwhelmingly disagrees with Democrats' extreme obsession on this issue.

But yet again, our colleagues wish to demonstrate that the radical left fringe runs today's Democratic Party.

As the world prays for Ukraine and debates consequences for Putin, as American families contend with violent crime, open borders, and runaway inflation, Washington Democrats want to spend their time arguing for unlimited abortion on demand.

So I want to thank the majority leader for making it so clear where his party's priorities lie.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES M. INHOFE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now, on yet another matter, last week, our distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Oklahoma, the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, announced he will retire from the Senate at the end of this Congress. By this autumn, Senator JIM INHOFE will have been a stalwart champion for Oklahomans and a hugely impactful Senator for 28 years. He has led crucial committees, shaped major legislation, and helped keep the needs and concerns of middle America at the forefront of this institution and its work.

The fruits of Jim's labors are apparent across his beloved home State and our whole country. Most recently, atop the Armed Services Committee, he has been a remarkable advocate for fellow veterans, for today's servicemembers, and for the needs of our national security.

We will have much more to say about Senator INHOFE's storied service as we move through the remainder of this year and this Congress. But for now, I just want to congratulate our colleague, his wife Kay, and their 20 kids and grandkids on a well-earned retirement, to which they are now looking forward.

And I am very glad to have the Senator's wisdom and leadership to call upon for 10 more months, especially at a time such as this.

REMEMBERING RICHARD C. BLUM

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, on one final matter, I was saddened to hear this morning that Richard Blum, the husband of my friend and colleague Senator FEINSTEIN, has passed away following his fight with cancer.

For 30 years, Elaine and I have been privileged to cross paths with DIANNE and Dick in a number of ways, both professional and personal. It was always a great pleasure to break bread together, compare notes, and catch up.

Our colleague's very loving husband was, simply put, a fascinating person. He was highly successful, adventuresome, brave, and curious. For years, he moved seamlessly between such things as creating major value in the highest ranks of the private sector and studying Tibetan Buddhism. His passion for the Himalayas led him to befriend both the Dalai Lama and Sir Edmund Hillary. I understand he even made his own attempt on Mount Everest.

Dick's appetites for adventure, for philanthropy, for civic engagement,