

count postcloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3076.

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

# RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:24 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 8:43 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SMITH).

## POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

### UKRAINE

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, this is the fourth time I have come to the floor of the Senate in the past month to talk about the crisis in Ukraine and to talk about what we can do here in the U.S. Congress to try to help the great people of Ukraine.

Today, I come to the floor to express my solidarity with the courageous people of Ukraine, who, as we speak, are under attack in Kyiv and Kharkiv, and in so many other cities and towns throughout Ukraine.

Russia's attack on Ukraine is a brutal, unprovoked invasion of a democracy—an ally and a sovereign nation. It must not be allowed to stand or it will create a precedent that unravels the international order that has kept the peace in Europe for nearly 80 years.

Earlier today, Senator DURBIN and I organized a meeting of the Ukraine Caucus. We are the cochairs. We had Ambassador Markarova come, who is the Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States. Along with her came a member of the Rada, their Parliament, who happened to be in the United States when the attack began. They spoke with emotion about their country, about what they needed—Stinger missiles, Javelin missiles—to be able to fight against superior Russian air power and Russian tanks.

But they also spoke with compassion about the people of Ukraine, about the sacrifice and the courage that they are showing. From the woman who has never fought before who now has an AK-47 and is defending her family in her apartment building to the President of the Republic, President Zelenskyy, all of them are showing courage in defending their homeland, their way of life, and democracy.

I also just left a briefing that was an opportunity to hear from the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and other American officials about what we are doing as a country and to give us an update on their view as to what is happening in Ukraine.

Just as the conversation with Ambassador Markarova and a member of

the Rada was inspiring to hear about the courage and the resilience of the people of Ukraine, the briefing with our American officials was sobering.

It was encouraging to see America stand up to protect freedom; but also, an understanding that the Russian forces outnumber those in Ukraine—and certainly their equipment, technology, their planes, and their tanks, and their ships are going to make this a very, very difficult battle.

Thankfully, the world is rallying on this side of freedom. That is encouraging and inspiring.

I was in Cleveland, OH, last night at a prayer vigil and then a rally. Over 1,000 people showed up. Many were Ukrainian Americans who live in Northeast Ohio—it is a strong community—but many were not. Many were from other countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, people who have family from Romania, Bulgaria, people from the entire region—including some from Russia—but all standing firmly with the people of Ukraine.

As was said last night at the prayer vigil: Tonight, we are all Ukrainians. Tonight, we are all Ukrainians.

There were also demonstrations and rallies all around the country yesterday. We are told over 40 cities had rallies to support Ukraine and the people of Ukraine.

Last night, I heard stories about family members who are in harm's way. Again, people with their voices choked with emotion were talking about what is going on, what they are hearing from their family members back in Ukraine. One guy who I know told me that his brother-in-law back in Ukraine who, again, has never picked up a weapon before in his life, has joined the military. He is probably about my age. He has joined the military to put his life at risk for his country and for his neighbors.

The people of Ukraine did nothing to cause this invasion—nothing. Their only desire is to live in peace. As Ambassador Markarova said this afternoon: Ukrainians never attack anybody. We just want to live in peace. Allow us to determine our own fate, our own destiny.

That is what Vladimir Putin cannot abide, and that is what we in America and the rest of the free world must support Ukrainians in doing, to allow them to have the future that they choose through a duly elected government. The freedoms and democracy and prosperity that we take for granted so often in this country, they relish.

In 2014, at the Maidan, once again they threw off the shackles of a Russian-backed government. They know what it is like to live under the thumb of Russia, under the thumb of the Soviet Union before that. They don't want to go back. In 2014, they made a conscious decision to go forward, looking to the West, to stand with us.

I was there while the Maidan was still smoldering. The tires were still smoldering. People were still there,

gathered. Even though the Russian-backed government had been removed, they still weren't sure what would happen. Then an election occurred, a democratic election. And a President was elected. And a parliament, a Rada, was elected. And they began to fight for not just the freedom of Ukraine and the democracy in Ukraine but the rule of law to get rid of some of the oligarchical structure that Russia had left, the corruption. And now this, after so much progress. Since 2014, they have fought and fought and fought to be like us. And now this.

Hundreds of innocent Ukrainians—men, women, and children—have already lost their lives in this invasion. Nobody knows the exact number. But we saw footage today on CNN, on FOX, on the networks, of apartment buildings that had been attacked by missiles. We heard from the Ambassador that two five-story apartment buildings had been attacked today, and women and children had lost their lives.

This humanitarian crisis, of course, is pouring refugees into other countries as well. Hundreds of thousands of people have escaped to Poland, mostly women and children. Romania is also taking its share of refugees.

But make no mistake: Ukrainians are fighting. They are fighting back bravely. And they have inflicted great costs already on their Russian invaders.

I commend those brave Ukrainians and Armed Forces who picked up arms against these great odds and have already denied President Putin his initial objective and immediate occupation.

I want to particularly commend the brave leadership of Ukraine President Vladimir Zelenskyy. His defiance in the face of evil is what leads free countries and societies through difficult and dark days like Ukraine is experiencing right now. When it was suggested to him that the West would like to help him to find a way to escape, his response this week was: "I need ammunition, not a ride." "I need ammunition, not a ride."

This has been a rallying cry not only for the people of Ukraine but around the world. Unfortunately, Ukraine is used to this Russian aggression. They have suffered already during an 8-year war on Ukraine since 2014, since the Revolution of Dignity, since the events under Maidan I talked about earlier. Fourteen thousand Ukrainian citizens have lost their lives at the hands of Russian snipers, Russian military, and artillery.

I have been to the front. They call it the line of contact. It is the border now between Ukraine and these so-called occupied territories, the Donbas. "Line of contact" is a euphemism. It makes it sound like there are gloves touching at the contact. It is a line of war, and it has been for 14 years. Again, 14,000 Ukrainians have lost their lives.

I had to wear the helmet and the flak jacket because there were snipers that

day taking pot shots at Ukrainian soldiers. But I saw with those Ukrainian soldiers the patriotism, the nationalism that I knew would lead them to fight; that the miscalculation by President Putin was that, somehow, Russia would be greeted as victors. Some even said that he thought he would be greeted with flowers. Instead, they are being greeted with AK-47s. And having been there on the frontlines, you knew this would happen. These Ukrainians are not going to give up their country.

When President Putin decided to invade Ukraine in 2014 and seize Crimea and come into the Donbas, it was clear that Russia was not a rational actor but one motivated by the irrational dreams of recreating an empire at all costs. The world warned Russia to stand down then, and they refused. And the sanctions were too weak. This time, the world again has warned Vladimir Putin to stand down. Instead, he has ordered airstrikes into the capital city of Kyiv. Now there are reports of Russian military deliberately striking hospitals, kindergartens, and apartment complexes, as I talked about a moment ago.

These are war crimes, and the world is watching. I would say to Russian officials tonight, Russian commanders, there is another way. Stop this atrocity. The world is watching, and the war crimes are being recorded. You can refuse these orders—and you must for the sake of humanity. Why would you want to kill your neighbors in Ukraine who are innocent and just want to have the opportunity to lead their life as they see fit?

These are not just war crimes; they are a clear violation of Russia's international commitments under the Budapest Memorandum, the Minsk agreements, the U.N. Charter, international law—as was the decree issued earlier in February, about 2 weeks ago, by President Putin, which recognized the independence of parts of Ukraine, the Donetsk People's Republic, the Luhansk People's Republic. He did so as a pretext to ordering the Russian military to conduct so-called peace-keeping missions in occupied Ukrainian territories.

We now see that this was one more case of disinformation. The lies and disinformation will continue, as they did today. But they are taking in fewer and fewer people because people can see what is happening. This is the age of digital communications, where people can see videos in realtime of the war crimes being committed.

I was among those advocating for tougher sanctions upfront, preinvasion, believing that might dissuade Russia from launching a full-scale assault. I cosponsored legislation to do just that and had hoped Congress would pass bipartisan legislation mandating tough financial sanctions, Nord Stream 2 sanctions, assistance to combat cyber attacks, disinformation, in addition to advanced military aid.

I honestly don't know whether it would have kept Vladimir Putin from

making this terrible mistake, but I thought it was something we should have done. We chose not to. And we are where we are. And now, we are seeing not just the United States but the rest of the world step forward with these tough sanctions.

And I congratulate the Biden administration for getting the rest of the world on board, as they have. There is more to do. We have now targeted Russian banks, Russian elites with sanctions, placed limits on high-tech commerce and Russia's ability to do business in dollars. All are welcome. In particular, the Treasury Department's imposition of economic measures that target the core infrastructure of Russia and more than 50 percent of the total banking system in Russia will have a devastating economic effect over time. Already today, they closed down their markets in Russia, their stock market. They are saying that foreign reserve cannot leave the country. So it is already having an impact.

In addition, the administration's announcement that they will sell 250 M1A2 battle tanks to Poland, I commend. I have been pushing for that for some time. These are the best tanks in the world. And Poland wanted them, and it is great we are now delivering those.

We have now deployed more U.S. troops to Germany and Eastern Europe to enhance NATO defenses. That is necessary, in my view. We are not in Ukraine but in the countries around Ukraine to ensure that, should Vladimir Putin expand this war—and who knows whether he will or not—he will meet even stiffer resistance from NATO.

We must make it part of a deliberate, coordinated strategy to enhance the military readiness of our Eastern European allies and do so quickly.

I also applaud the United States working with our European allies—with Australia, with Canada, with South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore on a coordinated export control response. Combined, by the way, these four Asian countries I named account for over 70 percent of the world's semiconductor production. A ban on semiconductors, on chips, would be very costly to Russia's ability to arm and resupply its military. We must be sure this action comes to fruition. This must happen.

However, these are just first steps, in my view. We can and should do more. And I think there is a bipartisan consensus now here on Capitol Hill to do just that. Let me offer a few more suggestions.

I welcome the news from this weekend that we are going to be joined by a number of allies in sanctioning Russia's central bank and cutting off a number of their institutions from the SWIFT financial system. We are still seeing details of these plans. But as of now, it looks like they still have some carve-outs in this plan for certain financial institutions when it comes to

SWIFT. I think it is a better idea to put all of Russia's banks on this sanctioning list.

As for the central bank, I am glad we are getting global cooperation, but who we really need to step up to the plate is China. I am told China holds 14 percent of Russia's finances in reserves. China needs to know that this is a decision point. Will they stand against this tyranny that the global community is standing against or not?

I believe we should also target Russia's trade sector by revoking our permanent normal trade relationship, or PNTR, with Russia. In other words, the United States should no longer give Russia unrestricted access in trade to our country. This would have the effect of raising tariffs on goods from Russia to the rates at which they were before Russia joined the World Trade Organization and received this special status, PNTR, from the U.S. Congress.

When I was U.S. Trade Representative, I helped negotiate this agreement, and it does give them certain privileges with regard to our economy. Free trade with the United States is a privilege, not a right. After Russia joined the WTO in 2012, Congress passed legislation to expand trade between our countries by eliminating tariffs on some of these imports. But as easily as we granted PNTR, Congress can take it away. Invading a sovereign nation, a democracy no less, is certainly grounds for us to take away that privilege. And we have the right to undo it under the WTO rules for national security reasons.

It would not be unprecedented. In 1992, Congress revoked market access for Serbia and Montenegro as a result of their aggression in the wake of the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Today, I will be introducing bipartisan legislation to revoke unrestricted market access for countries who invade their neighbors, period. I call upon our trading partners to invoke their own national security rights at the WTO and similarly take away market access Russia, until this point, has enjoyed in their economies.

This should be ended, this market access, unless and until Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty are as they were prior to the Russian invasion.

I was also glad to see the Germans have reversed their policy of not allowing arms that were originally produced in Germany to be sent to Ukraine. This is a big deal. They are now joining our other allies that have sent weapons in the past and are sending more now.

Germany is allowing another ally, the Netherlands, to send rocket-propelled grenades. I have been critical of Germany. I have been critical of Germany on this very floor—also, when I was at the Munich conference in Germany last week. I wish they had taken these steps sooner, but I commend them for taking these steps now.

We also need to increase shipments of lethal military arms to Ukraine, to the

Baltics, to Poland, Romania—as well as increasing defense spending here at home. This weekend, the administration authorized an additional \$350 million in lethal defensive arms for Ukraine. That is a positive development, and we need to get those weapons there immediately. I understand that some have gone. Others have not. These Javelins and Stingers and other military equipment need to be in Ukraine as soon as possible. The Ambassador told me today they need them badly, and there is absolutely no time to lose.

I understand the administration has also recently requested \$6.4 billion in aid for Ukraine in an emergency supplemental. I don't know if that is enough. With hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees fleeing to Poland and other countries supporting Ukraine, we need to provide these allies with help to deal with this crisis.

I also want to take a hard look at the amount we are spending on arming Ukraine and our allies. Now is the time to provide them with what they need. An aid package should increase our lethal defensive assistance, provide critical support to combat enhanced cyber attacks against Ukraine and disinformation, and prepare for a refugee flow out of Ukraine into Europe.

By the way, we also need to enhance our own tools against cyber security right here in this country. Russia's cyber warfare against America continues, and it could increase. There is legislation actually on the floor this week to do just that, the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act and two other pieces of legislation, FedRAMP and FISMA, our legislation to help protect our critical infrastructure on the private sector side but also protect our sensitive government information, national security data. So we can do something this week by passing that legislation.

Finally, Ukraine and Georgia should be allowed to begin the process to become part of NATO. You may remember it has been 14 years since NATO told Ukraine and Georgia they were in line for NATO membership. It was back in 2008.

I do not believe this invasion would have happened had Ukraine been part of NATO, period. I was told when I promoted this idea over the last several years that we couldn't do it because it would make Russia mad. I don't know what the reason is now.

These two countries, Ukraine and Georgia, along perhaps with Sweden and Finland, if they are interested—I understand the Finnish Parliament is going to take this up tomorrow—could join the so-called MAP process, or Mutual Action Plan, in NATO, laying out the specific roadmap for entry. It is time to put Ukraine on that final track toward NATO membership.

Let me remind everyone that Ukraine is not asking us to fight their wars for them. In fact, the world continues to watch and see images of

Ukrainian forces and regular civilians picking up arms and defending their homeland. They are just asking for enough help to defend themselves.

This is about the fight for freedom, and it is taking place right now at this time in the country of Ukraine. It is taking place in places all around the world. I am told that today there is a move toward more authoritarianism; that more people live under authoritarian regimes than under democratic regimes, based on some analysis; that it is shifting in the wrong direction.

Well, why then would we not stand by Ukraine? Because Ukraine is moving in the right direction. In 2014, they moved from being under the Russian thumb, authoritarianism, to democracy, and now Russia is trying to reverse that. We must stand for freedom. Why? Because it is in our interests.

Ultimately, we are the beacon of hope for opportunity for the rest of the world because of our freedoms here, but they are tenuous, and they depend on the allies around the world who also treasure freedom.

There are two quotes from two U.S. Presidents that come to mind. One is from a Republican and one is from a Democrat. The Democrat is John F. Kennedy. And these are words that he actually never spoke, but he wrote them. And it was from a speech that he was meant to give on the afternoon that he was assassinated in Dallas. He was to say, at this time:

[I]n this country, in this generation, [we] are—by destiny rather than choice—the watchmen on the walls of world freedom.

We are the watchmen on the walls of world freedom.

Senator KENNEDY served in this Chamber. President Kennedy was right. Just as he stood up to the Cuban Missile Crisis, he understood that by destiny rather than choice, it is up to us.

Ronald Reagan famously said that you get “[p]eace through [s]trength.”

To me, that is one of the great truisms of our last couple of decades in this country; that we have to have a strong military if we want to have peace because only by the projection of force can we ensure that we can keep peace around the world.

He also said:

We know only too well that war comes not when the forces of freedom are strong, but when they are weak. It is then that tyrants are tempted.

Think of the situation in Ukraine. It is then that tyrants are tempted.

There is strong bipartisan support now for Ukraine. And this week, we should work hard to ensure that we pass this supplemental appropriations bill we talked about that includes the assistance for Ukraine but also to strengthen our ability to protect against cyber attacks; also to do what we can in terms of trade—cutting off the normal trade status with Russia, tightening up the sanctions on the central bank we talked about.

There is so much more we can and should do. But I find there is no lack of

resolve right now from this Congress in its support for Ukraine and their people—their people who are just choosing a democratic and free future, free from tyranny.

The Ukrainian dream is now under attack by a brutal dictator who wants to remake Europe and disrupt the international order that has kept the peace for nearly 80 years. It is time for this Congress to speak with one voice. Freedom in Eastern Europe depends upon it, but so does global freedom and our freedom. Our allies and our adversaries are watching.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Madam President, first I would like to associate myself with the comments of the Senator from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN. He was eloquent, as always, about a pressing issue—not only the defense budget issues but the heroism of the Ukrainian people and the implications it should have for us in this Chamber this week and beyond.

Thank you, Senator PORTMAN.

Madam President, it is a little after 4 a.m. in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, and President Zelenskyy is still fighting. Ukrainians are still fighting, and Americans need to know their stories. Ukrainians need us to tell their stories.

This story starts, of course, with an unjust, unprovoked invasion. The people of Ukraine posed no threat. They provoked no violence. They lived freely on Russia's southwest border with their iconic wheat fields.

Many of us have been to Ukraine. We made friends there, but we also have Ukrainian American friends back in our States.

Living freely on the southwest border of Russia was enough to provoke the small man—the tyrant of Russia—to hatred. It is bizarre. They lived in freedom. So Putin decided he was threatened.

Vladimir Putin, Russia's desperate Nebuchadnezzar, thought he could crush Ukraine. He thought he could break their spirit. He thought he could put his boot on their neck. He actually thinks that freedom makes people soft; so he thought this would be easy.

He was wrong. Over the last week, Ukrainians have shown us their fighting spirit. They have shown the world their fighting spirit. They are standing firm against onslaught after onslaught, including the relentless targeting of now-civilian populations.

Outmanned and outgunned, the Ukrainian Army is making Putin pay pints of blood for every inch his army advances. The truth is, Putin didn't expect to encounter much resistance. He looked back on his experience in the Donbas, where he took big swaths of territory with a few dozen bullets, and he was convinced that the Ukrainian people would fold in the face of his giant army. He has been caught off guard, and his plans have been set back.

He didn't anticipate the bravery. He didn't anticipate the passion. He didn't

anticipate the heroism. He didn't anticipate the Ukrainian people. He didn't anticipate the way ordinary villagers would stand and rise up against their occupiers, like the one small woman who approached a group of Russian soldiers and began handing them handfuls of sunflower seeds. Why? She told them it was so that flowers—something beautiful—could grow on the places where their bodies rot after they were killed in the Ukraine.

She spoke for all Ukrainians. She spoke for the Kyiv grandmas arming up with AK-47s. She spoke for the grandpas who are having to reenlist in their late years. She spoke for the students now learning how to make Molotov cocktails. She spoke for fathers who have to kiss their children goodbye as they head back to the frontlines of battle. And she is speaking prophetically in advance for the mothers who are going to bury their sons.

The truth is, Putin has been embarrassed over the last 5 or 6 days by the Ukrainians.

Modern tyrants have developed a few strategies to fight truth-telling. The Chinese Communist Party's version is trying to suppress all information—to choke it off, to make sure no one says anything that is true. Others, like in Russia, decide to blast a billion lies through state-run media, hoping that they can just blot out the truth and sow so much confusion and nonsense that people can't find the needle in the haystack that is the truth.

But in the middle of this crisis, these strategies are failing because people are hungry for stories. People need stories. We need stories. The best and the most powerful stories are almost always the true stories. And, right now, Ukraine is retelling an age-old story of good and evil. And the reason their story is so powerful is because they are telling the true story. If we were to stand here tonight—and Senator PORTMAN and I and many others have been in the SCIF today for many, many hours. I have been there four or five times, and most of us have been there the last hour and a half, 2 hours. And if we were to tell every story of Ukrainian bravery, the Senate wouldn't have time to get anything else done this week.

But there is one store that stands out over the course of this last week, since Putin began his unjust invasion. It has given rise for the courageous Ukrainian resistance to find for themselves a new motto, and this is the story of Snake Island.

There is this little island in the Black Sea, near the mouth at the bottom of the Danube Delta. It is called Snake Island, and it is really small, but it is both strategically and symbolically important because it marks the boundary of Ukraine's territorial waters. Ukraine has always stationed a small number of border guards on this island to keep watch.

In 2019, the current President, Zelenskyy, went to this tiny little

piece of rock and he declared: "This island, like the rest of our territory, is Ukrainian land, and we will defend it with all our might."

Nobody in 2019 knew he was speaking prophecy. But, right now, over the course of the last week, the world has seen and the world has heard the story. The world has heard the recording of what those 13 Ukrainian heroes did last Thursday as they sought to defend that little piece of rock because it was symbolically important, as all of Ukraine was, that it is not Russia.

Shortly after Putin ordered his troops to attack Ukraine, two Russian naval vessels approached Snake Island and their intent was to seize it. The Russian commander ordered the Ukrainian border guards that they must surrender. He thought he could intimidate them. But like their commander in chief, the dictator—the liar Putin—he was wrong. They couldn't intimidate these men. So he announced that they needed to surrender or they would be fired upon. The Snake Island guards refused to give an inch. One Ukrainian, after conversing with some of his colleagues a little bit—on a recording many of you may have now heard—decided to turn up the volume and he announced: "Russian warship, idi nahui"—"idi nahui."

Russians decided to open fire on the island, pounding it with heavy ordnance and, eventually, troops would storm the beach and capture the garrison. But that one sentence—"Russian warship, idi nahui"—that is now the rallying cry of the Ukrainian resistance. It was heard this morning when a Georgian gas station on the sea decided that it wouldn't refuel the Russian ship. And when the Russian ship said, "What are you talking about?" they said: No, you are the bad guys.

The Russians said: Why can't we put politics aside? Just let us buy some gas.

These Georgians decided to repeat the new Ukrainian motto back to the gas station and said: Get the hell out of here.

And the gas station pulled away and said: Russian warship, you guys look strong enough. Why don't you row?

That sentence sums up the spirit of countless courageous, brave Ukrainians and what they are doing as they stand in the face of the much larger invading forces.

Snake Island is incomprehensible to a man like Vladimir Putin. He doesn't understand human dignity. He doesn't understand courage. He doesn't understand principle. He is too small. He doesn't understand why people would fight for freedom. This is a man who spent the last 30 years—20 of them now—as the ruler fighting to return Russia to tyranny, fighting to take away the freedom of his people, fighting to take away the liberty and freedom of those on Russia's borders. He doesn't want any of his near neighbors to know freedom. He thinks tyranny is the order of things. And, again, he is wrong.

Unlike Putin, though, our people—the reason so many Americans have been rallying to the Ukrainian cause over the course of the last week—our people fully understand the spirit of Snake Island. We may not know Snake Island geographically, but we understand what is beating in the hearts of the people who now wanted to echo that motto.

We breathe freedom. We believe in the ideas of the Declaration of Independence. We strive to create a more perfect Union here, where everyone is recognized as having been created equal. We often fail in our execution, but it is our aspiration to affirm universal human dignity and the destiny of people to be free, for we believe that every human is created in the image of God, and there is nothing government can do to erase that.

We have no love for strong men and tyrants. We understand the men of Snake Island in a way that Vladimir Putin cannot, for we believe in human dignity. We believe in universal rights. We believe in freedom from oppression. What we love, Vladimir Putin hates.

Today, Ukraine is standing against a dictator who rejects each and every one of the principles that we have affirmed in our credo founding documents. The defenders of Snake Island and, indeed, all the members of the Ukrainian resistance now are looking to add their names to the list of heroes, from the warriors of Thermopylae to the activists who brought down the Iron Curtain. This heroism is timeless.

Loving freedom didn't make Snake Island's defenders weak. Though they were outgunned, they were strong. The Ukrainians are fighting for a reason: love of country, hatred of oppression, and the aim they have to pass on a free Ukraine to their children for generations to come.

This national resistance, expressed so eloquently by these guards of Snake Island, has also come to find itself embodied in another one of the great new heroes on the global stage, and that is President Zelenskyy. Just a few years ago, this man was an actor and a comedian. Now, though, he has shown such bravery that we see his name listed alongside heroes and great statesmen like Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle.

As Russian troops bore down on Kyiv, Zelenskyy could have chosen to flee his country. You might have read some reports that the U.S. State Department allegedly offered to evacuate him and his family. But, instead, Zelenskyy chose that he would stay on the frontlines and lead his people. "The fight is here," he said. "I need ammunition, not a ride."

Putin, meanwhile, is off hiding in a bunker, trembling in fear of his own people. People are marching in the streets to oppose his pointless war, and his only response is to try to choke off their speech and to imprison them.

Zelenskyy, on the other hand, fights shoulder to shoulder with the men and

women who are trying to defend his country. You may have seen him breaking bread with some guys this morning. He has put his life on the line for his country, and he is not backing down, and his bravery has changed the world this week.

We don't know how things are going to unfold over the course of the next weeks and months, but Zelenskyy has changed the trajectory this week of Germany, of Finland, of Sweden, of Switzerland, and of kids all over the 7.8 billion-person planet. Zelenskyy is a symbol, and as a courageous man, he has already changed the world. He is a bigger man than Putin. The whole world knows that. Putin's own army knows that. Even Putin's cronies now know that.

But it is not just the Ukrainians who are going to be burying their dead. Russians are going to be burying many of their sons, as well. Thousands of Russians—many of whom are conscripts—will have died needlessly for Vladimir Putin's lies and his vanity.

Putin told Russian parents that their sons were off on training exercise and that they would be welcomed as heroes at the end of these exercises. He didn't tell them they would be shot, lit on fire, blown to bits. He didn't say these things because he is a liar.

While we applaud the bravery of Ukrainians, we should not overlook the humanity of these Russians who will also die, for the West's battle—freedom's battle—is not with Russian moms who didn't even know their boys were being deployed, women who would not desire to have the dictator Putin send their sons to ruin. Human beings are made in the image of God and are dying, and Vladimir Putin alone bears responsibility.

His evil ambitions are destroying not just Ukrainian bodies and souls but also Russian bodies and souls, and this conflict, this chosen war of aggression by Vladimir Putin, is disgusting, and if he actually cared for anything bigger than his ego, if he actually cared for his people, if he actually cared for his nation, the generations of Russians whom this war is going to impoverish, then he would find an off-ramp now. That is what a bigger man would do.

Ukraine, on the other hand, is not the aggressor here. We are seeing a people fighting for their survival because Putin has given them no other choice, and his thugs will keep on killing innocents until they are expelled from Ukraine's borders.

We obviously don't know how history will unfold here, but we do know that truth is on the Ukrainians' side, and the truth is this: that the boys of Snake Island and President Zelenskyy and the broader Ukrainian national resistance are mounting a defense of freedom unlike anything the West has seen since the end of the Cold War.

And that is why this story of Snake Island matters. It is why Zelenskyy's bravery is so important, not just for

Ukraine but for the whole world. And it is why that little woman's sunflower seeds are so inspired—for ordinary Ukrainians are responding to Putin's aggression with extraordinary heroism.

We should be in awe of what our friends are accomplishing. Make no mistake though, war is not an abstraction. Our 21st century jargon about kinetic action and lethal force tries to paper over a reality as old as Cain and Abel. War is young men and young women struggling for a last gasp of air while their blood soaks into the mud.

War is started by the old but usually waged by the young, and no one in their right mind would ever wish for war, for it is ugly. But the cause can be necessary, and, in this case, the Ukrainian cause is just. Their war for their country, for their freedom, and for their kids' futures is just. The Ukrainians are willing to shed their blood for their cause, but, as importantly, they are willing to soak the streets with the blood of Russians, who have been sent by the comfortable tyrant Putin, who sends his people to die pointlessly far from home while he consumes the billions that he has stolen from those same people.

Let's be steely-eyed about the coming days and weeks, because things tonight, at 4:30 in the morning, in Ukraine, are ugly, and they are going to get much, much worse. But Ukraine's heroes, despite of the dark nights that are ahead—their heroes—deserve our reverence. While it is ugly in Ukraine, their stories need to be told around the world by free people who believe in human dignity, for there is a great pantheon of freedom fighters across time, men and women who have died fighting tyrants, and we should tell their story. We must celebrate their cause, and we should arm them with as many Javelins and Stingers and rifles as they can possibly use.

We should ship them rations and ammo, and we should share actionable intelligence in realtime with them so they can try to repel the invading force, for as long as they are fighting tyrants, America stands with them and America will arm them, and I am convinced that this Senate will rise to the call to arm these Ukrainian freedom fighters in memory of those boys from Snake Island and all those who are joining their throng.

Glory to Ukraine. Glory to her heroes. America stands with you.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

##### WOMEN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, 49 years ago, the Supreme Court issued its landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade*. By an overwhelming, 7-2 vote, the Justices declared that a woman's choice to have an abortion is a constitutionally protected right.

For nearly five decades, the Supreme Court's holding in *Roe v. Wade* has en-

sured that millions of Americans can access their essential, reproductive healthcare rights. But today, *Roe v. Wade* is hanging by a thin thread. A majority of the current conservative Court appears poised to overturn *Roe* at the first opportunity. It is up to Congress to safeguard the protections guaranteed under *Roe v. Wade* by passing the Women's Health Protection Act, also known as WHPA.

For decades, abortion opponents have waged a relentless assault on women's right to choose. And for decades, the Supreme Court—even with conservative majorities—has protected the core principles of *Roe*. But the tides are turning rapidly.

In December, the Justices heard oral arguments in the case of a Mississippi law banning nearly all abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. Because the Mississippi law is clearly unconstitutional under *Roe* and its progeny, it was blocked by lower courts. But this Supreme Court, with its far-right majority, granted review anyway. And in their questioning, several conservative Justices seemed ready to overturn *Roe*.

This threat to women's health and freedom is unprecedented. In the words of U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, who argued before the Supreme Court on behalf of the Federal Government: "The Court has never revoked a right that is so fundamental to so many Americans and so central to their ability to participate fully and equally in society."

Even without the threat from the Supreme Court, the right of women to control their reproductive health and lives is under attack. Last year, lawmakers in 47 States introduced more than 560 laws imposing new restrictions on reproductive rights.

In the face of this unprecedented assault on reproductive rights, Congress must step up and pass WHPA. WHPA would protect the right to access reproductive healthcare, free from medically unnecessary restrictions, no matter where you live.

I commend Senator BLUMENTHAL—the lead sponsor—and all of my colleagues who support this important and necessary measure, and I hope we will have bipartisan support in passing it.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

##### WOMEN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Women's Health Protection Act and pleased to submit my remarks regarding this critical legislation. I regret that I am unable to attend the full Senate vote on this bill today due to a death in the family.

The Women's Health Protection Act would guarantee the right to an abortion. The bill would allow a patient to access an abortion and ensure providers are able to deliver those services