

to at least the European and American region of the world. It has been successful because we gathered nations—now 31—together in common purpose to fight off anyone who would attack us, to let those who are thinking of attacking us know the heavy price they would pay.

So the message from Vilnius, Lithuania, to Vladimir Putin this week is not a good one for him. The message is that the NATO alliance is bigger, stronger, and more unified than it ever has been in history. In a way, it is kind of a surprise. It wasn't that long ago that the previous President, Donald Trump, raised enough questions among leaders in the world that they wondered if there would be a NATO. Trump, of course, was a close friend—I still can't understand why—of Vladimir Putin's, often finding him so admirable and praising him for his crazy politics. Yet, when it came to the NATO alliance, President Trump was very critical—to the point where, when Joseph Biden became President of the United States and started meeting with world leaders, the first question they asked was, well, what is the position of the United States when it comes to this common security alliance? Biden assured them that it was strong and would continue to be, and he has proven it.

What happened in Lithuania at the NATO summit this week is a tribute to leadership by many people, not the least of whom is our President. He came together and understood that we are stronger when we stand together, and we saw it in Vilnius. The situation that we witnessed yesterday was historic.

My mother was born in that little country of Lithuania many years ago and immigrated to the United States at the age of 2. I have been back many times. My first visit was in 1979 before I was elected to Congress. I am glad I went. It was good for me to see what Lithuania looked like in Soviet times and to see the sharp contrast today with modern Lithuania.

It is just plain historic that a NATO summit would be held in that same former Soviet socialist republic, this year, 2023. The summit was hosted in Lithuania because of that country's extraordinary journey from Soviet tyranny to a thriving democratic voice.

Knowing Putin's tyranny all too well, Lithuania has been an outspoken supporter of Ukraine despite the invasion by Putin, as well as a supporter of the exiled voices from Belarus and Russia and has stood firm against Chinese economic bullying resulting from growing trade with Taiwan.

It brought back to mind what I witnessed over the years. That former Soviet socialist republic was literally the first republic to step forward and say: We are breaking with Moscow. We want our own independence.

They paid a heavy price: pressure, killing, invasion—all of the things which Gorbachev and Soviet leaders

could conjure up to try to stop this little country from succeeding. But they failed. Lithuania is a proud nation now, and I am glad it hosted this NATO summit.

We saw at the summit an amazing array of international leaders, including Asian allies like Australia and South Korea as well as our own President and Secretary of State Tony Blinken. What struck me was the sustained resolve and common purpose in defeating Russia in their war with Ukraine. Our NATO allies, many former captives of the Soviet Union themselves, have enduring memories of war and are determined to not allow Russia's imperial actions of today.

I want to recognize President Joe Biden's clear-eyed vision and leadership in galvanizing and reinvigorating the critical NATO alliance and its support for Ukraine.

The chairs of our journey, the NATO observers from the Senate, were JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire and THOM TILLIS of North Carolina. They did an admirable job, and I was glad to be part of their effort.

We must never forget that NATO was born from the ashes of two horrific wars in Europe, with many newer members eventually joining after decades of Soviet oppression.

Despite Putin's warped paranoia to the contrary, NATO is not a threat to Russia, but it will defend every inch of member territory from Russia or any other such attack. The alliance is still growing, with this summit's newest member, Finland, and now Sweden on the way.

Putin's colossal strategic blunder in Ukraine has cost the lives of more than 100,000 Russian soldiers, and it lowered Russia's standing in the world. Much to his disappointment, Putin's senseless invasion in fact strengthened and expanded the NATO alliance, including along hundreds of miles of Russian border.

There were a few other key summit outcomes—notably, further security guarantees to Ukraine and an easier pathway for Ukraine to ultimately be part of NATO, which I hope it will be.

I believe Ukraine's future rests ultimately within NATO, and, until then, the United States and our allies must continue to support its defense against Russian aggression.

I think Lithuanian President Nausėda argued this well—that the Europeans understand that Ukraine's fight is their fight. That also is my feeling and of most of us here in the Senate of both political parties. Ukraine's fight for democracy and sovereignty is our fight too.

In Vilnius we also met with Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya. Her husband Sergei was jailed after trying to run in an election against Belarusian strongman Alyaksandr Lukashenka, the last dictator in Europe. So she ran in his place, and probably won. But with Lukashenka refusing to honor the elec-

tion results, she tragically had to flee to neighboring Lithuania.

Her country has become a puppet state of Putin, even allowing Russia to move nuclear weapons into its territory. Countless Belarusians have been jailed for demanding basic freedoms, and yet she and so many others heroically continue their struggle, including some who were fighting to help Ukraine.

This poster shows two jailed Belarusian journalists who worked for Radio Free Europe, which is doing heroic quality journalism in the region: Andrey Kuznechyk and Ihar Losik. Both were jailed by Lukashenka for simply being reporters. They and all the country's political prisoners should be released, period.

I also hope the administration will soon announce a new special envoy for Belarus, and I plan to work with my Senate colleagues to update and strengthen the Belarus Democracy Act.

I want to close with a message to Vladimir Putin from the summit. The NATO alliance is stronger than ever, and we are united in our determination to stop your ruthless invasion of Ukraine.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Madam President, yesterday the Associated Press published a series of articles detailing a range of ethical failures by the Supreme Court of the United States. The reports detailed Justices' involvement in fundraising at colleges and universities, the use of Supreme Court staff members to push sales of books, and donor-funded teaching positions that doubled as all-expense paid vacations.

The Supreme Court is now in recess, at home with their families and traveling on vacation. I wish them many sunny days. But even if the sun is shining, there is still a shadow over the Supreme Court.

For several months now, there has been a steady flow of reports documenting how the members of our Nation's highest Court have failed to live up to the public trust that they have been given.

Justice Clarence Thomas has traveled the world on billionaire Harlan Crow's yacht and private jet. Crow bought the home of Justice Thomas' mother and allowed her to continue living there rent-free. He even paid for the education of Justice Thomas' minor relative. None of this—none of this—was included in Justice Thomas' disclosure forms.

Then we learned that Justice Samuel Alito took an all-expense-paid, luxury fishing trip to Alaska. He traveled there on a private jet of billionaire hedge fund manager Paul Singer, and he stayed at the fishing lodge of conservative donor Robin Arkley. Justice Samuel Alito didn't disclose any of it to the public. In fact, he dismissed one trip on a private jet saying that it didn't really count because, in fact, the seat on the jet would have been empty if he didn't sit in it—what an argument from a Supreme Court Justice.

The solution to the problems we are seeing at the Supreme Court is a simple one. They need, like every other court in America, to adopt an enforceable code of ethics. Every Federal judge in the country is bound by a code of ethical conduct and a set of ethics rules and enforcement mechanisms, except for nine—the nine Justices of the Supreme Court who sit across the street from this building.

I first urged Chief Justice Roberts to adopt a binding, enforceable code of conduct over 11 years ago. Sadly, he didn't accept my suggestion, and he continues to ignore the issue today.

This is the John Roberts Court. It will go down in history as the John Roberts Court. He has the power and, I believe, the moral obligation to straighten up this mess and restore the integrity of this court.

When the Court reconvenes in October, there is a tradition for someone to announce: Oyez, oyez, oyez. This honorable Court—how can they call it an honorable Court in light of these disclosures?

I honestly believe that, before they broke for this vacation period, Justice Roberts would announce reforms that really count and finally start to restore the integrity and reputation of the Court, but so far, nothing.

Next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, will vote on the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act. This bill, introduced by Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island will require the Supreme Court to adopt an enforceable code of conduct, and it will also add new recusal and transparency requirements under Federal law.

The legislation does not distinguish between Justices appointed by a Democratic President or a Republican President. It requires a code of conduct enforceable against all Justices.

I was disappointed to learn today that one of the Republican leaders has publicly come out in opposition to any enforceable code of ethics established by the Judiciary Committee on the U.S. Supreme Court.

What is he thinking?

We live by those standards of disclosure and limitation and enforcement of ethics. Despite our unpopularity in many public opinion polls, think about if this Congress lived by the same standard or lack of standards as the U.S. Supreme Court. By making sure the highest Court in the land doesn't have the lowest ethical standards, our legislation would be the key first step in restoring confidence in the Supreme Court.

The markup will be next week. I sincerely hope that, before that time, Chief Justice Roberts will step up and accept the responsibility for his Supreme Court to establish credible standards of integrity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

(The remarks of Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. CARPER pertaining

to the introduction of S. 2274 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CARPER. I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Nebraska.

CHINA

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, last week, we celebrated the birth of our Nation. The first Americans took long, dangerous journeys across the Atlantic Ocean in search of better lives, far away from a regime that stripped away their God-given rights and their freedoms all too often.

Our Founders fought a revolution against absolute power. They chafed against the control of the British Empire. Americans united against encroachments on liberty and emerged victorious, just as we have done many times since then from Great Britain to the Soviet Union.

As we look back on our history, we should consider our future as well. The United States faces a threat environment growing more dangerous by the day. Authoritarian adversaries, including China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, are accelerating their efforts to chip away at global stability and undermine America's national security.

A couple of weeks ago, a radio host asked me an important question: What is the point of modernizing our nuclear deterrents? Don't we already have the capabilities we need to defend ourselves? And, if we build up a stronger arsenal of nuclear weapons, doesn't that just increase the risk of nuclear war?

My answer was related to the history I have just discussed: From the Revolutionary War to the world wars to the Cold War, Americans have prioritized a strong national defense and the tools we need to achieve that when we are faced with existential threats. The character of war changed after the advent of nuclear weapons. And during the Cold War, the United States recognized that we needed to have a strong nuclear deterrent to preserve the hard-fought peace that we had won. We worked overtime to ensure that our Commander in Chief had every option to deter and, if necessary, to fight back against threats.

We were successful. We deterred the Soviet Union from using its nuclear weapons destructively because its leaders knew we could hit back harder with a push of a button. It is comparable to a game of chess: You are never going to make a move that leaves your king threatened on all sides. If the Soviet Union had deployed a nuclear weapon, it would have quickly been surrounded on all sides by a retaliatory strike Moscow knew it might not survive.

A diverse and effective nuclear deterrent gives our country the ability to say: Checkmate. Not today. And it makes other nations think hard about what moves they might make. In other words, it deters authoritarian regimes from attacking the United States and attacking our allies.

During the Cold War, we prioritized the production of nuclear weapons and delivery systems because we recognized their essential role in deterring nuclear conflict. We must return to that mindset if we want to get ahead of today's looming national security challenges.

Our adversaries understand this. Earlier this year, the U.S. Strategic Command—STRATCOM—publicly confirmed that China possesses more intercontinental ballistic missile launchers than we do here in the United States. China is on track to triple—to triple—its nuclear arsenal by 2035. That is just a decade away. Stated plainly, one of the most ominous authoritarian regimes in modern history is building a nuclear force that is fundamentally altering global deterrence dynamics, and they are doing it at a pace faster than anyone imagined.

As our adversaries race to expand their nuclear arsenals, what are we doing here in our country? Well, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, our Nation has sidelined our nuclear enterprise. We have underinvested in the modernization of our nuclear triad.

That word "triad" refers to the three military fronts of land, sea, and air. The land-based leg of the triad is comprised of our intercontinental ballistic missile fleet. The sea-based leg of the triad refers to our ballistic missile submarines, and the air-based leg of the triad refers to our bomber fleet and certain fighter aircraft.

A full triad expands the number of options that our Commander in Chief has at his disposal. Each leg of that triad presents unique advantages. Military planners need diverse capabilities to ensure that our Nation can act decisively in any scenario. If we can strike from anywhere at any time, our adversaries will hesitate before taking aggressive action.

The problem is that we have been too slow to replace and upgrade those systems. As former STRATCOM Commander Admiral Richard testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee last year, we have "submarines [that were] built in the '80s and '90s, an air-launched cruise missile built in the '80s, intercontinental ballistic missiles built in the '70s, a bomber built in the '60s—part of our nuclear command and control that predates the internet, and a nuclear weapons complex that dates back to the Manhattan Project."

Our nuclear deterrent only serves to deter our adversaries so that no one will ever use a nuclear weapon if that deterrent that we have is safe, reliable, and effective. To ensure it remains so in the future, it must be modernized. Underinvesting is a huge mistake, and we need to tip the scales back in our favor by bringing our systems rapidly into the 21st century. The good news is that there is big bipartisan support for modernization.

I am the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, and