

cost of insulin, prescription drugs; aiding our fellow Americans hurt by natural disasters; outcompeting the Chinese Government; and so much more. All of this would be undermined by a government shutdown. We certainly don't need to go down that road. The Senate has shown that bipartisan compromise is entirely possible even in these divided times.

When the House gavels back into session tomorrow, I implore House Republicans to follow the Senate's example and reject all-or-nothing tactics, to reject unrealistic, extreme demands. Don't let 30 people way out on the extreme dictate what the House does. Instead, the House should work in a bipartisan fashion to keep the government open beyond September 30. The only way we will avoid a shutdown is through bipartisanship in both Houses, and the time is short to get it done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today marks 22 years since terrorists shattered a peaceful morning in New York, Pennsylvania, and here in Washington; 22 years since enemies of America's freedom and leadership killed 2,977 innocent people; 22 years, but the shock of that day and the pain of loss are still every bit as real.

Today, we remember the parents and the children and spouses and siblings who never returned home. We thank the first responders who ran toward danger in service of others. And we honor the servicemembers, intelligence professionals, and law enforcement officers who kept America safe since that awful day. But today is not just about remembering the past.

Year after year, September 11 is a reminder of our commitment to confront growing threats from global terror and to preserve the tools and authorities our national security community need to carry out this essential mission.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. President, on another matter, as I discussed last week, skeptics of American leadership like to hang their hats on the notion that support for Ukraine somehow saps our ability to compete with and deter communist China. This view does not hold up to serious scrutiny.

For one thing, the patina of hawkishness on China is too often just a mask—a mask—for isolationism. If critics of U.S. support for Ukraine disparage the principle that we should oppose adversaries who evade and destroy Western-aligned neighbors, how cred-

ible—how credible—is their commitment to defend Taiwan or other vulnerable allies?

Of course, this isn't a debate about abstract principles or philanthropy. The United States isn't arming Ukraine out of a sense of charity. We are backing a fellow democracy because it is in our direct interest to do so—in our interest to do so.

To rebut one ad hominem accusation in particular, there is nothing "neoconservative" about support for Ukraine. Helping a democratic partner defend its sovereign territory against an unprovoked attack from a common enemy is obviously in America's interest.

Let me stress, we aren't defending Ukraine from aggression. The Ukrainians are doing that. America's two most powerful adversaries have struck up a "friendship without limits." If we fail to help Ukraine stop Russia in its tracks, there is every reason to believe Russia and China will both be emboldened.

Our closest allies and partners in Asia—people with even more to lose from PRC aggression than armchair isolationists here in Washington—understand this fundamental reality.

It is why Taiwan provides humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. It is why the leaders of Japan and South Korea have traveled to Kyiv and pledged billions of dollars in assistance.

Our partners in Europe and Asia are joining us in investing in our military readiness and expanding our defense production capacity. If not for the conflict in Ukraine, it is difficult to imagine any of this happening.

Republicans should welcome Democrats who are finally willing to spend money on our defense industrial base. Such a bipartisan consensus will not survive if we turn our backs on this conflict.

And why would we pull the plug on the transatlantic alliance just when European allies are making credible investments in their own defenses and also coming around to share our concern about Chinese aggression?

Competition with China is a global proposition. And the strength of our closest military and economic allies in Europe affects China's calculus. Beijing would love to see the transatlantic alliance fracture in the wake of America turning our back on our closest trading partner.

If the United States proves we cannot be trusted to back our allies in Europe, why on Earth should our allies in Asia expect different treatment in the face of Chinese aggression?

War in Ukraine has taught the West a crucial lesson about the importance of investment in defense industrial capacity. And as I discussed last week, it has directed billions and billions of dollars toward restocking America's arsenal with American weapons built here by American workers.

This is a fundamental prerequisite for competition with China, and we are

accomplishing it using a tiny fraction of the historically small and insufficient defense budgets President Biden has sent up to Congress.

Put another way, America is making urgent strides in the race to compete with our biggest adversary, China. And in the process, we are helping degrade Russian military strength and encouraging our allies to "Buy American" and invest in their own defense.

This is American leadership, and Republicans should be pressing President Biden to show more of it instead of dreaming about American retreat.

VIOLENT CRIME

Mr. President, on one final matter, violent crime in some American cities has grown rampant, even the local media are struggling to keep up.

Last month, a Chicago news crew was filming a story about armed robbery when they themselves became the victims of armed robbery. This is a city where Democrats recently swapped out a mayor who famously refused to let law enforcement do their job for one who called defunding the police a "real political goal."

Unfortunately, millions of Americans live under liberal local leaders who would rather bend the soft-on-crime radicalism than keep their streets safe.

Last year, here in Washington, the U.S. attorney declined—declined—to prosecute 67 percent of the cases brought to him by police. In Los Angeles, the soft-on-crime DA has tasked his department's investigators with escorting staff to and from the office rather than prosecuting the criminals who make them feel so unsafe.

The solution here isn't exactly a mystery. As Washington's former police chief, Robert Contee, put it earlier this year, "We need to keep violent people in jail."

"We need to keep violent people in jail."

But somehow it took intervention from Congress to stop the radical city council from ignoring this lesson and going even softer on crime.

Well, some Democrats know the chief is right. In Minnesota last week, a local liberal official who once supported defunding the police, took to social media to urge her city to finally hold repeat offenders "accountable for their actions" after she was savagely beaten in her own driveway—her own driveway—by carjackers.

Here in Washington, Congresswoman ANGIE CRAIG, who was attacked earlier this year in her own apartment building, has been outspoken that "[w]e have to get these repeat offenders off the streets."

It shouldn't have to be like this. The American people don't deserve to live in fear. In every city and town, they deserve to feel safe in their own streets.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today we take a moment to remember the anniversary of September 11, 2001.

Many people recall vividly that day where they were. I was in this building outside that door and a few steps down the hallway. I can recall seeing, on a small television set, the planes striking the towers in New York. First, we were confused: What is going on here that a plane would strike a building? But when the second one took place, it started to dawn on us that this was no longer an accident; it was by design.

I can recall looking down the Mall toward the Washington Monument and seeing black smoke billowing across the Mall. It took a few minutes to establish what had happened, a plane had crashed into the Pentagon and our Department of Defense, killing the innocent people on the plane and in that building. What we were seeing was the smoke from the fire of that crash.

It wasn't a few moments afterward that someone came to the door and said: Evacuate. Leave the building.

I have been around Capitol Hill for a number of years. I had never heard that before. But we all took it seriously, and we piled out onto what was the lawn between here and the Supreme Court Building. And people gathered. Tourists came up to me and said: Do you work here?

I said: Yes.

They said: Where are we supposed to go? It was a very fundamental question because, at that point, we heard sonic booms from the jets that were being scrambled to protect this building. We assumed it would be the next target. And it might have been were it not for the courage of the passengers and crew on that United Airlines flight that was brought down in Pennsylvania before it could reach Washington, DC.

These are memories we all have and will carry for a lifetime of what had happened 22 years ago.

Now, 22 years later, we are connected by sadness as we reflect on 2,977 lives lost at the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, and that field in Pennsylvania.

But we also remember the care for our communities and the common purpose we found after that tragedy, after the attacks, as our Nation sought to find light amidst the darkness. In our most divided moments, we should look to that as a reminder that America, as a nation, is at its best when we seek unity and humanity over separation and hate.

NATO

Mr. President, I listened carefully to the statements made by my colleague from Kentucky, the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL. I want to join in and make it clear that I agree with virtually every word he spoke concerning our relationship with Ukraine. I do want to add a footnote which he may not have added, and I want to give credit to this President currently serving, Joe Biden, who led the United States' return to NATO after the previous President's administration.

There had been serious questions as to whether NATO, as an alliance,

would even survive under the previous President. President Biden has told Members of the Senate and others that at the first meeting of NATO after he was elected, our allies basically sat down and said: President Biden, is America in for the long haul when it comes to NATO? And even before the Ukraine challenge, he said yes.

What happened after Vladimir Putin, the war criminal, invaded Ukraine was that the members of the NATO alliance had to answer a basic question: Would we respond to the challenge?

I think the record is clear. NATO, as an alliance, has never, ever been stronger than it is today. The countries that are part of it have made a commitment not only to their common defense but also to help Ukraine, in any way possible, put an end to this invasion. In fact, if you reflect on what has happened to Vladimir Putin since he invaded Ukraine a little over a year and a half ago, you realize that the world is a lot worse for him.

The NATO alliance is not only strong, it is larger than ever. The accession of Finland and Sweden to join the NATO alliance was a bold, strong move that really gives notice to Vladimir Putin that his future is even more in doubt when it comes to his relationship with the West. I think, now that Sweden and Finland are now a part of NATO, to take a look at the map of Europe is to realize that the Baltic Sea is now a NATO sea with only two minor exceptions, and it means that we are stronger than ever.

I agree with Senator MCCONNELL. We need to stand behind Ukraine and the NATO alliance now more than ever, as people are making sacrifices and giving their lives to the cause of freedom and sovereignty. So I couldn't agree more with his statements.

I do question, when he talks about violence in the streets of Chicago, as to why he never refers to cities in red States that are witnessing the same phenomenon going on today—in fact, even worse than in my city of Chicago that I represent.

We have a crime problem in this country, and we have to deal with it. It is made more difficult and challenging because of the proliferation of guns in America. We are a nation of 320 million people, perhaps, with 400 million guns, and they are moving across State borders with abandon into the hands of people who have no business owning a gun. We could do a lot more about that right here in the Senate.

I still remember that it was a little over a year ago in Highland Park, IL, when a deranged individual went on the roof of a local business, pulled out his weapon, and fired 83 rounds in 60 seconds into a crowd, killing seven innocent people and injuring dozens of others. Why in the world he should ever have had a military assault weapon is beyond me, and it is way beyond anything the Founding Fathers envisioned when they wrote the Second Amendment.

We can do more and should do more to make the streets safer across America. I agree with that part of Senator MCCONNELL's speech, but I wish he would have given us a more complete presentation of the challenge we face.

FDA AND APPROPRIATIONS

Now, Mr. President, on another subject, this weekend marked 2 years, the second anniversary, since the Food and Drug Administration missed a Federal court-ordered date to finish its review of vaping applications, e-cigarette applications that have illegally flooded the market in the United States.

We estimate that during that 2-year period of time when the FDA refused to respond to the Federal court order, approximately 2 million American children may have started vaping; and despite missing this deadline by 2 years, the Food and Drug Administration remains nowhere close to meeting the legal mandate to regulate these addictive e-cigarettes.

You see, under the law, a vaping product is required to apply first to the FDA before entering the market and prove to the Food and Drug Administration that the e-cigarette is, in the law—this is from the law—"appropriate for the protection of public health."

They can't prove that. This has not happened. Instead, tens of thousands of dangerous, highly addictive e-cigarettes have illegally shown up on store shelves without FDA review or approval, and they have hooked a generation of kids. In fact, studies have shown that there are more vaping devices on the market today than 2 years ago when the FDA was ordered by a Federal court to do so. That is unacceptable.

My office recently investigated the FDA's effectiveness in following through even after it issues a denial for a vaping application. So a company comes to the FDA, submits their product. It is supposed to show how it is consistent with public health. It fails to do so. They are told not to sell the product in America.

And what do they do? We found that many FDA-denied e-cigarettes which subsequently received warning letters for continuing to sell in violation of the law still remain available. I just don't understand it. The Food and Drug Administration is cowardly, refusing to use its full arsenal of enforcement tools—fines, injunctions—for even the most flagrant cases. We also found that the FDA has only issued "closeout letters" to 10 percent of the tobacco products that it had warned were violating the law.

The Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, has the authority to decide whether a vaping device or cigarette can be sold. If they decide it cannot be, they tell them: You have got to stop at this point.

How many actually followed the warning and refused to violate the law: 1 out of 10, meaning the Agency has one of the worst records in history of