

short, the American people will ultimately have the last word, and the integrity of the Court is at issue.

We are going to carefully review this proposed code of conduct to evaluate whether it complies with our goal that the highest court in the land not languish with the lowest standard of ethics in our Federal Government. But this release today, long overdue, begins a dialogue which could end in restoring the integrity of the Court, and that is long overdue.

TRIBUTE TO LEILA DE LIMA

Madam President, on a separate topic totally unrelated, after nearly 7 years—6 years 8 months 21 days—of being unjustly jailed, former Philippine Senator Leila de Lima was finally released. This is a picture of her waving from the window as she was released.

In a moving interview just after leaving the prison camp, she stood by her defense of democracy, human rights, and truth and reflected on the importance of not succumbing to hate—a reminder of courage and grace.

I welcome her release and urge any and all remaining charges against her be immediately dropped. I look forward to seeing her soon. I hope she can make it to Washington.

Several Senators have followed this case carefully and closely, including the Presiding Officer. We have sent letters. We have encouraged her over the years to be strong, and she was. Senator MARKEY was also involved in this effort, and I want to commend him as well.

You often wonder, when you hear about these unjust jailings in lands far away from the United States, whether there is anything we can do on the floor of the Senate Chamber that can change history.

Today, finally, after 6 years 8 months 21 days, history came around for Leila de Lima, the Senator from the Philippines. She is an extraordinary woman who showed extraordinary courage. I am glad to plead her case before the American people and to plead it to the President of the United States before he met with Filipino leadership.

This is an important thing to remember: that each and every one of us have the power to speak out for those who are otherwise voiceless. She was one, and it ended with good news today.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Madam President, on another topic of urgent importance, 45 days have passed since we narrowly avoided a government shutdown by passing a continuing resolution or CR.

And it is hard to believe that we face the same dilemma again now. So much has happened in the last month, all of which only underscores the importance of funding our government. From the outbreak of war in Israel to the tragic murder of 18 people in Maine in a mass shooting, these last 45 days have shown the importance of illustrating to the world that the United States is a responsive ally and illustrating that we

have a functioning government that rises above partisanship to meet the needs of Americans.

And yet, 45 days after passing the short-term spending bill to keep the government's lights on, here we are again . . . with another government shutdown looming. In order to avoid a shutdown at the end of this week, Congress must pass a bipartisan CR to keep the government open so we can continue to do our jobs and fully fund the government for the next year. At this point, folks are probably tired of hearing the term "government shutdown." But it is not just a political buzzword. It is a quickly approaching reality that would have devastating impacts on our Nation.

Recent reports show that our economy is recovering from the depths of the pandemic. However, a government shutdown would have disastrous effects on it. It has been estimated that the last shutdown in 2013 reduced GDP growth by \$20 billion and the 5-week partial shutdown in 2018 reduced economic output by \$11 billion.

A government shutdown would mean that essential social services would be slowed and federal employees and military service members would go without paychecks for their families as the holidays approach. But more than just hurting those who work for the government, a government shutdown would also hurt every American who relies on the government to get by. It would halt small business loans, stall life-saving medical research, and jeopardize nutrition assistance for low-income women, infants, and children. Further, ahead of one of the busiest travel weekends of the year, a shutdown would cause travel delays, because thousands of air traffic controllers and TSA officers would work without pay.

And as Israel continues to defend itself against Hamas and Ukraine against Russian aggression, a government shutdown would jeopardize America's ability to support our allies and keep Americans safe. It also would hamper our life-saving foreign assistance programs, keeping us from providing food and medicine to those desperately in need, from Gaza and Haiti to the DRC and Sudan.

That is why it is essential that Congress pass another short-term spending bill ahead of the shutdown deadline on November 17. The United States of America must prove to our allies and enemies that we can rise to the occasion when the world needs our leadership most and to our own people that we can keep the lights on to govern. And after we pass a short-term CR, the only path forward to fund the government for the next fiscal year is one of bipartisanship and cross-chamber unity.

For 3 essential weeks during the current short-term funding period, the Republican-led House was without a Speaker. While the House was paralyzed, the Senate was busy negotiating bipartisan funding bills. Two weeks

ago, we passed three spending bills with the support of 82 senators, and we continue to work across the aisle on the remaining bills.

The Republican chaos has finally ended in the House—but while there may be a new Speaker, House Republicans are still plaguing the Chamber with their old problems. Unlike the Senate, the only funding bills they've passed are deeply partisan ones that do not adhere to the budget agreement Congress passed earlier this year.

It is time for *both* parties in *both* Chambers to come together and fund our government. And I sincerely hope that my Republican colleagues in the House will approach that task in good faith—without hard-right proposals and drastic budget cuts that they know Democrats, and the American people, will never support.

Funding the government is one of the essential parts of this job. It is time to fulfill our basic duties in a way that doesn't disrupt Americans' livelihood and well-being during what should be a joyous time of year. We need to finish the full-year appropriations process. And to do that in a responsible way, we need to keep the government open and operational.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, shortly after President Biden took office, I gave a speech wondering whether this new President Biden's tough-on-Russia rhetoric would be matched by his administration's actions. I wondered about President Biden because the actions of the Obama-Biden administration were dangerously weak.

We all know that when it comes to Russia, weakness is provocative. It encourages aggression. Russians follow the maxim attributed to Lenin:

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

The same is true when dealing with Iran and China. Only 6 months after Russia invaded and occupied portions of the Republic of Georgia, then-Vice President Biden went to Munich to deliver a speech calling for the United States to hit the "reset button" with Russia. When Russia invaded, the Republic of Georgia was westernizing and had gone out of its way to cement close ties with our country.

Georgia even sent soldiers to fight and die alongside American soldiers, but that support from Georgia was quickly forgotten in order to reset relations with Russia. Secretary of State Clinton actually did hit the "reset button" in an embarrassing, chummy ceremony with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

As part of the Obama-Biden reset, the United States unilaterally canceled planned missile defense cooperation with our allies the Czechs and the Poles, and the administration did so on the anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland.

All of these actions then sent the exact wrong message to both Russia and to our allies. No doubt the Obama-Biden administration thought our unilateral show of goodwill would be warmly received and reciprocated by Russia.

Instead, we know that Russia under Putin invaded and occupied Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula and chunks of eastern Ukraine. The Obama-Biden administration responded with angry words but refused to send Ukraine defensive weapons of any kind.

President Obama urged Ukraine not to fight the 2014 Russian invasion. The priority was to avoid escalation. The Obama-Biden administration backed negotiations and a diplomatic solution.

Now, we all know Russia has a history of using negotiations to create frozen conflicts that it can use then to destabilize and control its neighbors. Historically, Russia will snatch a piece of land and then demand a ceasefire and negotiations, allowing it to keep the ill-gotten gains indefinitely. Meanwhile, Russia builds up its next aggression while weakening its target.

The Obama-Biden reset and subsequent Ukraine policy was a disaster for peace and security. In August 2013, the regime of Syrian President Assad used chemical weapons. By doing so, it crossed President Biden's redline—that famous “redline” that he spoke about. When nothing happened, then, the world took notice.

Meanwhile, the Obama-Biden administration sought to strike an Iran nuclear deal at all costs, alienating regional partners and emboldening the Iranian regime.

In June of 2019, President Trump repeated a version of President Obama's redline mistake. At that time, Iran had shot down a U.S. drone, and the U.S. military had prepared a retaliatory strike, as you would expect their defense to do. But President Trump stepped in, calling off the strike, and, then, you know, he publicly announced that he had done so 10 minutes before that attack was supposed to be launched.

President Trump's aborted retaliation then led to further escalation by the Iranian regime, including attacks on U.S. soldiers; that is, until President Trump finally took some solid action, making that bold decision to restore deterrence by killing General Soleimani, as he was plotting further attacks against U.S. forces. Iran responded with a token missile barrage, but the dramatic escalation of the conflict with Iran, predicted by some, fortunately, never materialized. In fact, Iran was deterred.

Then, the Biden administration came into office and began negotiations to resurrect the Iran deal.

Of course, who can ever forget the disastrous withdrawals from Afghanistan? In time, we will learn more about the decisions that lead to such enormous loss of American military equipment to the Taliban, while leaving

many Afghans who worked with our military still under Taliban control—and still today.

Both of these losses sting this very day and influence others to see us as weak or somebody who can't be counted on, as far as our friends are concerned. But there is another loss that is harder to quantify; that is, the loss of the reputation of the United States.

Like it or not, stacked on top of the other expressions of American weakness that I have described, the Afghanistan debacle led to a perception that the United States is weak and unwilling to stand behind its commitments. After the Afghanistan embarrassment, our allies and partners worried that we were no longer reliable. Worse yet, those countries that have long sought America's downfall no longer feared us. Our enemies were emboldened.

According to Russian opposition journalist Mikhail Zygar, in his recent book, the fall of Kabul was a turning point in Putin's mind. Putin became convinced then that he could conquer Kyiv, President Zelenskyy would flee the country, and the United States would do nothing to stop that takeover of Ukraine.

Today, we face the consequences of an emboldened Russia and an emboldened Iran. And, two, China is increasingly aggressive in the South China Sea and the Strait of Taiwan. To be sure, our responses are being closely watched by all three of these adversaries: Russia, China, and Iran. This is a critical time when sending more messages of weakness would be very dangerous.

Today, some people—even in my own political party—are reverting to the Obama-era stance, arguing that we cannot afford the actions necessary to deter all three would-be adversaries of our country. I am convinced that we must deter further aggression from our enemies. We must restore credible deterrence before we reach the point where we have to expend much more, both in American blood and American treasure.

Estonia's Prime Minister is in town this week. Remember that little country that was taken over by the Soviet Union in 1940 and, until the early 1990s, was still under their control? Now they are a free nation. We ought to listen to them of what freedom really means.

So I recommend to my colleagues to listen to Prime Minister Kallas, if you have any chance to do that. She has shown remarkable clarity and leadership since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. She often points out:

If Putin wins, or if he even has the view that he has won this war, his appetite will only grow.

Meanwhile, that old impulse to deter ourselves is still evident in this present administration when the U.S. National Security Advisor says he is worried about starting World War III. That is a way of convincing Putin to hang on a little longer.

We should have learned by now that escalation of aggression happens when

the United States demonstrates weakness. Telegraphing that we are afraid to give Ukraine what it needs to win is deeply counterproductive to freedom and, most importantly, to the Ukrainian people, but also encouraging Russia because, remember, for Russians, weakness, not strength, is provocative.

I urge Members of both political parties to discard the failed Obama policies of weakness toward Russia and give Ukraine what it needs today. Reset didn't work, and ignoring Russia's ambitions in that area is harmful for peace around the world and, particularly, for national security. Our national security is tied, through NATO, with Europe.

The more advanced weapons that Ukraine can obtain quickly, the faster that war will be over. When it comes to quick decisions to send needed weapons to Ukraine to defeat Russia, several countries have shown great leadership: the United Kingdom, Poland, and the three Baltic countries, for example.

Now, for sure, yes, the United States has provided many advanced weapons to Ukraine—the most of any country helping Ukraine—but usually only months after they are needed to have the maximum effect that these good weapons provide.

Ukraine didn't get the tanks needed to launch the counteroffensive until after the Russians had months to dig in and fortify their frontlines.

After months of dithering, President Biden finally gave permission for the Dutch and Danish to send their F-16s to Ukraine, but it will still take months to train the pilots.

The United States military would never launch a ground campaign without controlling the skies, but that is what Ukraine has been forced to do without the F-16s. After all the public hemming and hawing, President Biden finally approved sending a version of the ATACMS missiles to Ukraine, but shorter range cluster munitions were the variant that was sent, not the most destructive.

Meanwhile, President Biden is still withholding the long-range versions needed to take out the Russian supply lines in the Crimean Peninsula. Now, I can only assume this is another example of self-deterrence that has proven so misguided a policy of the past.

Ukrainians are making steady progress, but they could be doing it faster and at less cost in American dollars and Ukrainian lives if President Biden would not be so hesitant, as he is, to take bold action.

The United States has spent roughly \$44 billion on military aid to Ukraine. That happens to be roughly 5 percent of the U.S. military's own budget. Ukraine remains in control of roughly 83 percent of its territory, and the U.S. intelligence community believes the war has severely degraded Russia's military power and its ability to threaten NATO allies. That is a victory not just for Ukraine's independence but for our own national security, as it is

tied to the invoking of article 5 of the NATO alliance.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine sent a wake-up call to our military that we need to increase our capacity to produce munitions. We have ramped up production and are already investing in new capacity so we will not be caught flatfooted in any future conflict. I am glad to say this is already in evidence at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in West Burlington in my State. The dedicated workforce in Iowa is cranking out 155-millimeter howitzer shells and a host of other key munitions. Ground was recently broken for \$1.2 billion in upgrades to the Iowa plant, paid out of the Ukraine funding package passed by the Congress.

I know people talk like the money Congress allocated was literally sent over to Ukraine and every dollar was spent within that country, but the reality is that most of the money stayed right here in the United States to produce arms and ammo and to build production capacity.

I am proud that the portion of the Ukraine funding sent to Iowa will help keep the United States the "arsenal of democracy" for years to come.

Ramping up our military production capacity is good news for our U.S. military readiness. It is also good news for Taiwan. The closed production line for the Stinger air defense system has meant Taiwan's orders have gone unfulfilled for years. That Stinger line is now reopening.

I do not believe the United States is incapable of addressing the multiple international challenges we face, and I fear the consequences if we don't face strongly those challenges.

The United States believed that it could ignore World War I and World War II until those wars became so large that we got dragged into those conflicts. Once the United States joined the fight, our participation was decisive but at enormous cost in American lives and American dollars. We learned our lesson after World War II and took action to make sure it wasn't repeated, and it hasn't been repeated. We did that by helping form NATO to keep the peace in Europe for now 70 years.

Putin's Russia is continuing the Russian tradition of imperial conquest and will not stop unless they are stopped. All you have to do is look at what Putin himself has said. In addresses going back to 2008 and a couple of times since then, he said that his goal was to reestablish the old Soviet Union. I guess he put it in the strongest terms when he said that the breakup of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century. So you know he is going to welcome the support he is getting from Iran, and Iran happens to be sending drones to Russia to attack the civilian areas of Ukraine.

Iran also funds and backs Hamas as it inflicts a reign of terror on innocent Israeli citizens. And for all those people who are demonstrating around the

country that you see on TV over the last 4 weekends against what is going on in Israel and Gaza, it seems to me it ought to be pretty clear that there wouldn't be a single killing going on today in that region of the country if Hamas had not invaded Israel. That seems to be forgotten by all the people who are demonstrating. I know they are peacefully demonstrating for the most part, and that is their constitutional right, and I defend that right. But we have Iran involved in this as well because it funds and backs Hamas as it inflicts a reign of terror on innocent civilians.

Iran is firing rockets at U.S. soldiers in the region, resulting in injuries—I guess if you believe the TV reports, about 48 instances of attacks against American soldiers. Thankfully, nobody has been killed at this point, but there have been injuries and some of them very serious injuries, and we have not responded accordingly, showing weakness. Iran respects our weakness and attacks more.

China is backing Russia diplomatically, economically, and with technology that is being used to attack in Ukraine.

So I hope you see this China-Iran-Russia axis against the interests of NATO, against the interests of peace, against the interests of liberty and the independence of countries as something we should take very seriously.

China is deterred also from attacking Taiwan and dominating other neighbors in Asia largely based on its assessment of America's military strength and political will.

So whether it is Russia, Iran, China, it ought to be a concern for all of us. It is just not Russia v. Ukraine. What would China make of the United States throwing in the towel again so quickly? It is pretty clear from history, we must not find out. We know what Russia is up to. We know what China is up to. We know what Iran is up to. We have to make sure they don't succeed.

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. MENENDEZ. Madam 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.

ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, throughout my more than 30 years in Congress, I have pushed our Nation to stand up for human rights around the world. Why?

Because to me it is an essential component of our foreign policy, a hallmark of both Democratic and Republican administrations, and a cornerstone of American leadership on the international stage.

Now, some may ask why I do this in the face of pressing global challenges.

Why speak out for what is right even when it is not popular? It is simple. When we guard against genocide, when we prevent ethnic cleansing, when we speak out against atrocities, we uphold America's standing as a global force for good.

And we recognize that countries that observe the human rights of its people are less likely to create conflict with other countries. However, when the United States fails to carry out this responsibility, when we turn a blind eye in order to suit other interests, then we do irreversible damage to our moral authority and our ability to stand up for human rights worldwide.

Moreover, we allow malign actors like China and Russia, Turkey and Iran to fill the void and expand their influence. What I am describing isn't some hypothetical scenario—no. In fact, it is happening right now.

As I speak on the Senate floor, the ancient Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh has been hollowed out by a brutal Azerbaijani regime, one that is hell-bent on erasing them off of the map. For months, we have seen this humanitarian crisis unfold in slow motion. First, it was the Azeri blockade of the Lachin corridor, a blatant violation of the 2020 ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As the only road in and out of the Karabakh Mountains, Azerbaijan's blockade of Lachin corridor effectively cut off the flow of people, food, medicine, and basic supplies.

It went on for months, even as Russian peacekeeping forces—supposedly there to enforce the ceasefire—stood idly by. In this way, Azerbaijan's Government carried out an intention campaign of suffering and starvation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

With the corridor blocked, shelves cleared out. Fuel shortages prevented ambulances from responding to emergencies. Rolling blackouts kept hospitals from performing basic procedures, and studies found out that 1 out of every 3 deaths in the region was from malnutrition alone, with children waiting in line for bread in order to feed family members who were too weak to leave the house.

By July, the Azeri Government was denying even the Red Cross from access to the region. And in blatant violation of the Geneva Conventions, Azerbaijan began detaining medical patients who were being transported through the corridor for treatment. Make no mistake, the 10-month Lachin corridor blockade was part of a diabolic plot to force the Armenian enclave to submit. That isn't just my firm belief. It is also the conclusion of the former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo.

In a report calling on the global community to recognize the blockade as a genocide, he said:

There are no crematories and no machete attacks. Starvation is the invisible genocide weapon. Without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks.