

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.

He wrote those words on August 8, over 3 months ago. What we have seen since then has been nothing short of barbaric. On September 19, Azerbaijan launched a full-scale invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh. The next day, President Aliyev delivered a televised address from Baku stating and speaking of his “iron fist” and declaring that “Karabakh is Azerbaijan.”

It was a harbinger of things to come. After quickly overwhelming Armenian forces, the Azeri army seized control of the region and forced the local government to capitulate at gunpoint. Azerbaijan pledged to respect the rights of ethnic Armenians, but after decades of violence, repression, and broken promises, those in harm’s way knew better.

Of the estimated 120,000 residents in the region, which we call Artsakh, more than 100,000 fled their ancestral homes. On-the-ground reports of this forced exodus are brutal. Buses were packed to the rim with refugees clinging to the very few items they could carry. Journeys as long as 40 hours were documented on the only mountain road leading into Armenia.

And among the exhausted and suffering Armenian refugees, nearly all were deprived of food and medicine as they hurriedly fled their homes. The Armenian Health Minister announced that some people, including elderly patients, died on the journey, and it is no surprise really when you consider the eyewitness account of a health clinic director in the Armenian border city of Goris.

According to him, most of the patients that they treated at a health clinic on the border were “cases of malnourishment, dehydration, people who’d been unable to take prescriptions because they simply didn’t have access after being on the road for two or three days.”

The clinic treated these patients as well as others suffering from bullet wounds and broken limbs, bruises consistent with beatings, and hundreds of cases of shrapnel injuries, some of which required amputation.

If this is not evidence of human rights abuses, then what is? Make no mistake, this year alone, the Armenian people have suffered through a 10-month siege, a lightning military campaign that killed hundreds of civilians, and the forced departure of tens of thousands of residents from their homes.

These refugees need our help, and they need it now. With temperatures poised to drop during the brutal winter months in the mountainous region, these newly displaced refugees will need food, shelter, warm clothes, and essential services like healthcare.

They will need assistance as they try to pick up the pieces that were shattered in the frantic rush to flee. And they will need long-term support in the midst of a chronic housing crisis in Yerevan that prices many families out of the capital city.

The United States can—and it should—fill this need with clothing and

blankets, energy assistance, and other humanitarian aid.

To those who point to the acute suffering currently going on around the world, particularly in the Middle East, I ask you this: Should we be in the business of picking and choosing which humanitarian crises we respond to?

Whether it is Palestinians being used as human shields by Hamas or Armenians forced to leave the only homes they have ever known, should we ever ignore the human suffering of those crying out for help?

To me, it is a false choice to support aid for refugees in some circumstances but not others. America has to continue to show up for displaced individuals everywhere they are found, especially as we defend human rights wherever they are violated.

Above all, we must continue to press for accountability when it comes to those who violate human rights. Whenever assaults are launched without warning or provocation, whether it is Russia’s unprovoked war in Ukraine, Azerbaijan’s invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh, or Hamas’s barbaric terrorist attack on Israel, we have to stand with our allies as they seek justice for victims in a way that upholds human rights and follows the laws of war.

The eyes of the world are watching as the United States responds to these conflicts. And as we have done so many times before, we must leverage our position as a moral authority for good in order to deliver necessary aid to the affected regions.

As I have said, human rights are a central tenet of our foreign policy. We cannot afford to lose sight of that in this moment, which is why we must continue to raise the plight of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Halls of Congress. This cannot be a forgotten genocide as so many others have been throughout history. We cannot lose sight of the task at hand, which is to stand in the breach and address the Azeri threat before it presses its advantage and seeks to seize more territory. That is right, more territory.

President Aliyev has openly stated he would like to “unite” his country with its exclave in Nakhchivan by cutting through sovereign Armenian territory.

The potential catastrophe that that could set off cannot be overstated. The last thing we need in this region is further conflict between two states that share their borders with Iran and Turkey.

Therefore, I submit to my colleagues that our top priority must be to stand in the breach and address the threats that Armenia continues to face before tensions, again, spiral out of control. We must invoke the language of what has happened here in terms of genocide, vowing to never forget the horrific actions that Azerbaijan carried out in its ruthless campaign.

I, for one, will not stop or rest until a full accounting of Azeri atrocities is

completed. I will continue to oppose any and all military aid to Azerbaijan in light of their horrific human rights record. And the Biden administration should not be using the waiver authority it has to give Azerbaijan U.S. military assistance.

And I will make sure that what happened in Nagorno-Karabakh is never forgotten by the powers that be.

Many of my colleagues will recall a previous instance when the moral line between right and wrong was so clear. It was during our successful effort to recognize the Armenian genocide after more than 100 years of equivocation and denials. That resolution did not come about in a single day. It did not come about in just one Congress. When I was a Member of the House of Representatives, I helped introduce these resolutions every single Congress, and when I came to the Senate, I introduced them every single year as well until it finally passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in December of 2019.

That victory, that long-awaited moment, was the result of years—if not decades—of dogged advocacy until justice was finally achieved.

I will never forget then, and I will never forget now. And in this same spirit, we cannot let this crisis fade from the memory.

In the same way that we remember the millions of Armenians who were ruthlessly slaughtered by the Ottoman Empire, so, too, must we remember the lives lost in Nagorno-Karabakh and the tens of thousands of refugees who have been forced from their homes. We have to stand in solidarity with them today, tomorrow, and every day going forward. We must end our support for the Azeri Government that perpetuated this assault, and we must sanction all those responsible for carrying out these despicable crimes against humanity.

That, I believe, is the task before us in the Senate. It is a goal we must commit to if we are to shine as a beacon of hope for oppressed peoples around the world, to be that moral voice of clarity as it relates to human rights.

You can’t pick and choose, and so this is a moment to make sure that we stand up for those who have had their human rights ultimately denied as a result of the Azeri Government, who were forced out of their historic homes and now face the challenges of a bitter winter.

We can make that bitter winter better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as we all are painfully aware, at home and around the world, America is facing a vast array of security threats. There is war in the Middle East, war in Europe, growing instability and threats of conflict in the Indo-Pacific, and, of course,