

fulfill its constitutional responsibility to hold a trial. We spent more than 2 weeks hearing arguments from both sides—so the American people could judge for themselves—before holding a vote at the conclusion of the presentation of the evidence.

So now I would like to echo the Senator's statement from a few years ago, but with a few small changes. To my Democratic colleagues, our message is a simple one: Republicans want a fair trial that examines the relevant facts.

The message from Leader SCHUMER, at the moment, is that he has no intention of conducting a fair trial, no intention of acting impartially, and no intention of getting to the facts.

It would be completely unprecedented and unjustified for the Senate to shirk its constitutional role as a Court of Impeachment. The House voted to impeach Secretary Mayorkas, and the Senate has a duty to hold a trial. The majority leader should perform his duty and should not impede or ignore that constitutional requirement.

So I urge the majority leader to take his own advice from 2019 and to give the Senate an opportunity to hold a thorough and fair impeachment trial and let the chips fall where they may.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, on Tuesday morning, March 26, I received a phone call early in the morning informing me of a major tragedy in our community.

The Francis Scott Key Bridge is a vital link on the I-95 corridor. It is a bridge that is about a mile and a half long. It goes across the channel that is for the Port of Baltimore, and it is incredibly important to our local economy and to our image. It is iconic to Baltimore.

I was shocked to see the image. There was a video that showed that this bridge—a mile and a half long—came down in a matter of seconds. It was hit by a vessel, the *Dali*. That is a container vessel. It is about the size of the Eiffel Tower, a little less than a thousand feet long, fully contained with containers. Over several thousand were on the *Dali* at the time.

It lost power, and, when you lose power on this type of vessel, you cannot steer. It hit the main support beam of the suspension bridge, and it collapsed almost immediately. Within a minute, it was down.

It was just a tragic sight to see. When we saw this sight, we recognized that there was loss of life. That was our first concern, as to how many people were trapped on that bridge and how many people were at risk of losing their lives.

I want to tell you that there was an immediate Federal response. I am going to show you a picture of what we saw on the morning when we woke up. You saw the bridge before. This is the bridge that came down in a matter of a

minute, less than a minute. This is the *Dali*, fully loaded with containers.

You can see that the bridge is actually lying in part on top of the *Dali* ship, actually entrapping some of the containers. And this is the main channel—the 50-foot main channel—to the Port of Baltimore, completely blocking the Port of Baltimore.

There was an immediate Federal response, and I want to thank President Biden. He initially said that the government would be there to do whatever was needed, whatever we called upon. He called each member of our stakeholders—the Governor, our mayor, Senator VAN HOLLEN, Congressman MFUME, and myself—and pledged the full support of the Federal Government. In a matter of literally hours, the personnel and resources of the Federal Government were deployed to Baltimore.

So I just really want to thank the President, first, for this immediate response, and let me just bring you up to date on some of the facts concerning this tragedy.

We now know that six immigrant workers lost their lives. They were trapped in the water and could not escape. They were on the bridge at the time that it collapsed. They were doing dangerous work—keeping our roads safer, building America. They went to work early that morning to work on the bridge—or late at night—and did not return home.

I need to point out that the first responders saved lives. We have looked at the recordings. In a matter of just a couple of minutes after the pilot broadcast an SOS, basically saying they lost control of the vessel and it was aimed toward the bridge, the first responders went into action. Miraculously, they closed the bridge within those couple of minutes, so that there were no passenger cars on the bridge when it collapsed.

They were able to rescue two of the workers. One was able to escape the bridge by being called off the bridge. The other went into the water and was rescued and had, basically, minor injuries.

But we lost six souls from this tragedy, and our prayers, our thoughts are with those families. We have not yet brought closure to those families. You see, we are still in a recovery mission to locate the remains so the families can bring full closure.

The Port of Baltimore is so critical to our economy. The 50-foot channel that is 700 feet long, which is totally blocked by the bridge collapse, basically shut down the Port of Baltimore.

Now, the Port of Baltimore has been a port of commerce since the 1700s. It is the third largest port in the United States. It is the largest port for roll-on, roll-off of automobiles, of farm equipment, and construction equipment. It moves about \$80 billion—\$80 billion—of import-export products a year. It is estimated that there is between \$100 and \$200 million of cargo moving every day

through the Port of Baltimore. It moves 1.1 million containers a year through the Port of Baltimore.

So, as you can see, this catastrophic event—yes, it affected the people of Baltimore and our workers, but it also affected the entire nation. Twenty thousand workers are directly dependent upon the Port of Baltimore, and their jobs have been put at risk.

But the supply chains of autos affect auto dealers throughout our Nation. The farm equipment that comes through the Port of Baltimore affects farmers throughout the Nation. The raw materials, the coal, the steel, the aluminum, the iron—and the list goes on and on and on—affect our entire country. In fact, 20 percent of the exported coal from the United States is exported through the Port of Baltimore. So, yes, we have workers who are out of work, and one of our top priorities is to help them during this period of time.

I met, for example, with a truck driver. He has two employees. This is typical. Remember, moving 1.1 million containers—many of those goes by truck. Most of those trucking companies are small businesses.

As the Presiding Officer knows, in the Small Business Committee, we are very concerned about the strength of small businesses during these types of events. I am very pleased that we were able to get the Small Business Administrator to Baltimore, and an emergency declaration was made. But it not only affects small businesses in Baltimore, with this emergency, but also in Pennsylvania, also in Virginia, also in Delaware, also in West Virginia, and also in DC. This is a national issue.

Our next priority is to reopen the channel. This is a vessel that is almost a thousand feet long and is fully loaded. I am going to show you a photo that shows you the challenges that we have.

This is the *Dali*, which you can clearly see. This is the bridge that is lying on top of the *Dali*. It is actually trapping a lot of the containers. This is part of what came down. This is a 4,000-ton piece of the bridge that is on the bow of the ship. That is going to have to be removed.

We have looked at underground photos of what is underneath the channel from the collapsed bridge, and we see a real mess. We see concrete, rebar, steel, all mixed together. And here is the challenge—and I want to give a shout-out to the Army Corps. I want to give a shout-out to the divers who have been under dangerous conditions and have been going down and taking a look at what is in the channel. Once they remove a piece of the bridge, they are going to have to cut it and make it into smaller pieces to be able to remove it. We don't know whether that will cause a shift in the debris.

Our first priority is the safety of the people performing this work. It is like cutting a spring. You could have a reaction. And we have to do surveys

again after each one of the removals. This is very, very difficult work, and it is being done by true professionals. And, again, I thank the Federal Government for providing the experts who are all now in Baltimore, figuring out how to get that channel open.

And we are going to need a replacement bridge. This is a main corridor along the I-95 east coast of the United States, and 30,000 vehicles travel through it a day. So we need to replace that bridge. The bridge was built in 1977, 1.76 miles. It is an engineering marvel of its time for a suspension bridge, and it took 5 years to build. So we have an enormous challenge.

I had the chance to personally visit the site. Actually, I think I took this photo from a Coast Guard vessel. You see it. It is just a horrific site to see the work that is being done.

But I want to give a shout-out to the unified command headed by the Coast Guard. They started the day of the tragedy, and they have been there every day, 24/7, leading a unified command that includes the Army Corps of Engineers, which will do most of the salvage work within the channel itself. The Coast Guard, of course, is keeping everyone safe.

We also have the Department of Defense because we need some of their equipment in order to be able to move the debris.

It includes the Department of Transportation. Secretary Buttigieg was there the day of the incident. I talked to him early in the morning. A few hours later, I was with him at the site. And his team has been there every day, and he has returned to provide relief.

I want to thank him for giving us the emergency relief funds, immediately approved, so we could start doing the work in regards to the traffic problems that we had and starting to plan for the replacement of the bridge. I want to thank him for that. Those emergency funds of \$60 million were desperately needed. We got it immediately thanks to the commitment of the Biden administration.

I want to thank Administrator Guzman, of the Small Business Administration. She was there. I talked to her, I think, a day or two after the episode. She came to Baltimore and had a roundtable discussion to talk to the small businesses as to what they need. They are doing EIDL loans, and they have set up business recovery centers—one in Dundalk and one in Baltimore City—so the businesses can get the help they need on site.

And I was there. I have met with a lot of small business owners. They have lots of questions. They impressed upon me the urgency of their needs and that we need to coordinate our response.

I want to give a shout-out also to the Department of Labor, which has been there. They have provided us with displaced worker grants in order to help those who cannot get work so that we can deal with those who have been directly impacted.

Mayor Scott of Baltimore has been one of our true great leaders throughout this. County Executive Olszewski from Baltimore County and County Executive Steuart Pittman from Anne Arundel County—all have been involved in this, along with Senator VAN HOLLEN and Congressman MFUME.

I want to thank our colleagues. Senator SCHUMER was right there at the beginning, saying he is there to help wherever the Senate can.

I want to thank Senator MCCONNELL for his comments, where he said: In situations like this, whether it is a hurricane in Florida or an accident like this, the Federal Government will step up.

Now, the result of this has been that we have provided support for the families of the victims who lost their lives. We have met with the workers—the ILA workers—and we are trying to make sure they can get through this period of time.

We have met with small business owners.

The engineers here have been unbelievable. The Army Corps has been here 24/7. They have opened two alternative channels—one 14 feet, one 11 feet. That gets just a minimal amount of traffic through. But they are working on the northern part of the channel—that is not where the *Dali* is, but the other side of the channel—to open a 35-foot channel by the end of this month. If we can do that, that will return about 75 percent of the business to the Port of Baltimore, which will be extremely important for our economy. By the end of May, the engineers believe they can have the entire 50-foot channel opened.

In the meantime, we have improved Tradepoint Atlantic. Tradepoint Atlantic is not affected by the bridge. We were able to secure a grant for Tradepoint Atlantic in 2020 to help prepare it as a port facility. Those funds were reallocated in a matter of days from the accident so they could use it to pave 10 acres of property for roll-on/roll-off cargo that would normally go to a port inside of the bridge that will be now offloaded and can be done immediately.

The bridge. We already started with the design of the bridge. It may take some time. Remember, it took 5 years to build this originally. It may take more time before we can get that done. We need your support. We are going to need our colleagues to help us through this.

In Minnesota, the full-cost legislation was passed in a matter of days. We are going to be coming to Congress asking for some help in regard to the funding to make sure that 100 percent of it is paid for by the Federal Government. We recognize that when you have a catastrophic event like this, that we come together as a nation. We have done it in the past, and we are going to ask for help this time.

I know that there is going to be third-party liabilities. We hope there are moneys that can be recovered from

those responsible for this tragedy—in insurance proceeds, et cetera. Those funds will go to reimburse the taxpayers. We are going to be aggressive getting every dollar we can. But it cannot delay the opening of the channel and rebuilding of the bridge. We have to make sure that is done as properly as possible. Right now, traffic is detoured. It is a mess through that area. We have to get that bridge replaced.

The story of the Francis Scott Key Bridge does not end here. We will rebuild the bridge. In the 70 years that bridge has been open, the capacity has grown. Cargo capacity has grown in our region by 3,000 percent. The Port of Baltimore will remain strong and we will, as Governor Moore said, be “Maryland tough” and “Baltimore strong.”

I want to thank my colleagues for their understanding of this tragedy and their support as we move forward to open the Baltimore channel and to rebuild the bridge.

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. WICKER. 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.

ISRAEL

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, in 1948, President Truman recognized the State of Israel on behalf of the United States. He clearly called for the world “to accord the State of Israel the right of self-defense.”

In the decades since, American leaders have stood by Israel. Our support has been reliable, spanning Presidential administrations and congressional terms. It has been bipartisan. President Eisenhower continued President Truman’s promise to stand with Israel, establishing a bipartisan tradition cemented by Presidents from Kennedy to Reagan, from Clinton to Trump.

In America, voters regularly select new parties to lead our country. Administrations come and go. Congresses come and go. That volatility makes it all the more profound that we have always kept our solemn promise to stand with our allies.

It has now been 75 years since President Truman made this vow. For those many decades, Israel’s position has always been and will be to live peacefully in its ancestral land alongside its Arab and largely Muslim neighbors.

Slowly, often grudgingly, other nations in that region have come around to that position.

Egypt agreed to peace with Israel in 1979. Jordan has been a longtime U.S. partner and has lived in peace with Israel since 1994. Recently, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain agreed to partnership with Israel in the Abraham Accords.