

world's largest navy, is tripling its nuclear arsenal and is conducting a cyber siege of the free world.

Nuclear-armed North Korea is sending ammunition to Moscow and constantly threatens to attack America, South Korea and Japan.

Iran supplies Moscow with kamikaze-drones, has unleashed Hamas and the Houthis, bankrolls Hezbollah, harbors al-Qaida's leader and is building a nuclear bomb.

The impact of war is never limited to the war zone. Putin's war has spawned energy-price spikes, refugee flows and food scarcity around the world. But it exposed his weakness, triggering a 40% devaluing of the ruble, military mutinies, fratricides, mass desertions, mass emigration and anti-regime guerrilla movements. He may not lose his grip on the Kremlin or Crimea, but by his own measure of the war's objectives he has lost.

Putin's war has cemented Moscow's position as Beijing's junior partner, galvanized Ukraine as an independent nation and reinvigorated NATO.

A planned three-day blitzkrieg that devolved into a disaster has given Xi pause as he gazes across the Taiwan Strait. Ukraine's tactics and tenacity have given Taiwan a roadmap for deterring and, if necessary, repelling an invasion.

Indeed, Putin's war reminds us that the world is connected. Just as the defense of West Berlin and South Korea were linked during the Cold War, the defense of Ukraine and Taiwan and Israel, the Baltics and the Philippines, the Red Sea and Black Sea and South China Sea are linked today.

TRIBUTE TO DON FLANNERY

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. President, in a 2012 interview with a national agriculture magazine, Don Flannery, executive director of the Maine Potato Board, was asked what he would like to be the legacy of his long and productive career. His answer was this: "that I was able to make a difference in the Maine potato industry and was able to lead the industry in a positive direction."

Today, as Don retires after 27 years with the board, I am delighted to join his many friends and colleagues in offering my fellow Aroostook County native our thanks for a job well done and our congratulations for a legacy well secured.

Don truly learned the potato industry from the ground up, beginning as a grower with a 250-acre farm. With a degree in agricultural resource economics from the University of Maine, he worked in rural economic development at the local and regional level for 13 years. Armed with that knowledge and experience, Don joined the Maine Potato Board in 1997 as assistant executive director and was promoted to the top position just 5 years later.

Strengthening a vital industry made up of hundreds of growers that employs more than 6,000 hard-working men and women while generating annual sales topping a half-billion dollars is no easy task, but Don has met every challenge. He has been a driving force for many agricultural projects, including the construction of a potato research facility, infrastructure development for two

processing plants, funding to support the State of Maine seed production facility, and expansion into new markets. Working with growers and University of Maine and U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers, Don championed the development of the Caribou Russet, a new disease- and drought-resistant variety designed to thrive in a warming climate.

In the decades that I have worked with Don, I have known no stronger supporter of Maine potato growers. When Washington bureaucrats tried to restrict the use of potatoes in the school breakfast and lunch programs, Don provided the data to prove how nutritious the potato is. When the agricultural research lab at the University of Maine in Orono was threatened with closure, Don helped lead the effort to keep it open. And this year, when Washington tried to reclassify the potato as a grain rather than a vegetable, Don worked with me to block that absurd change.

Don Flannery's leadership has earned the respect and admiration of growers and processors throughout Maine and across the country. His commitment to economic growth has made a positive and lasting difference for the industry and for rural communities. I thank him for his many accomplishments and wish him all the best in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LISA JOHNSON

• Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Lisa Johnson, who has provided exceptional leadership for two decades as president of the Bossier Chamber of Commerce.

Since assuming her role in June 2004, Ms. Johnson's hard work has transformed the chamber, fostering remarkable growth in membership, community presence, advocacy efforts, and military relations. Under her leadership, the Chamber achieved its five-star accreditation from the U.S. Chamber in 2019, a distinction earned by only 3 percent of chambers nationwide. Additionally, it was twice named Louisiana's Chamber of the Year, recognized as a Military Friendly Chamber by *Ventpreneur Magazine*, and honored as the 2018 Louisiana Association of Chamber Executives Chamber of the Year.

Ms. Johnson's impact extends well beyond the chamber. She is widely acknowledged for her role in connecting people and opportunities throughout Louisiana. Serving on several boards, including the Military Affairs Council, STARBASE, Bossier Office of Community Services, NWLa Military Support Foundation, Step Forward Leadership Council and Workforce Committee, and as an ex-officio member of the Independence Bowl Foundation, Ms. Johnson exemplifies unwavering dedication to community service. Her appoint-

ment as honorary commander for the 96th Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base in 2018 underscores her profound commitment to supporting our military.

Ms. Johnson's leadership and contributions have made her an invaluable asset to Louisiana. On behalf of our State's residents, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Johnson for her tireless dedication and selfless service.

I ask that we unite in honoring and celebrating Ms. Lisa Johnson for her outstanding leadership and profound impact on both the Bossier community and the State of Louisiana.●

TRIBUTE TO JENIFER POWELL

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing Jenifer Powell of Ravalli County for her dedication to sharing Montana's rich and vibrant history with her seventh grade students in the Bitterroot Valley.

Powell has taught at Corvallis Middle School for 5 years, and it is clear the impact she made in that time is profound. Her innovative teaching methods covering Montana's history brings the past to life in her classroom. At the end of the school year, Jenifer's students walk away from her class with a comprehensive and enthusiastic perspective on the culture and heritage that shaped the Treasure State into the Last Best Place.

Recently named the Centennial Bell Montana History Teacher of the Year, Jenifer and her class of seventh graders will ring the Centennial Bell in the State Capitol in Helena on November 8, 2024, at 10:29 a.m., paying homage to the exact date and time that Montana became a State in 1889. Having its statehood for 135 years, Montana has a wealth of history to uncover, and I am glad to see Jenifer's commitment to preserving each piece of our State's unique cultural tapestry in a way that is accessible and exciting to some of our youngest Montanans.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Jenifer Powell for her passion for education and her work to inspire Montana's youth to learn more about the formation of the State they call home. I am confident Jenifer has sparked a lifelong curiosity for Montana history among her students.

Keep up the great work, Jenifer; you make Montana proud.●

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN FLEMING

• Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary educator and champion for our democracy—Exeter, NH's Kevin Fleming, who is retiring from Winnacunnet High School after 45 years of teaching.

Kevin is the kind of teacher everyone wishes that they had when they were a student. Year after year, class after class, Kevin gave each student the care and attention that they needed and helped push them to reach their full

potential. He saw clearly the promise and talents in each student, recognizing gifts that they often did not fully realize they possessed. This was perhaps best exemplified through his years of coaching his school's Granite State Challenge, a televised academic competition between New Hampshire students. Not only did he prepare his students for success in the competition, he also helped build their confidence in their ability to take on hard challenges.

As a social studies teacher, he was committed to giving his students a hands-on education and encouraging them to take seriously their responsibilities as citizens. In New Hampshire, we prize our commitment to civic engagement, embodied in both our citizen legislature and our first in the Nation Presidential primary. A true Granite Stater, Kevin regularly invited elected leaders and political candidates to visit Winnacunnet High School and talk to his students as part of their civic education. I have had the privilege of meeting many of Kevin's students over the years and was honored to speak at their graduation in 2017.

Kevin even brought to his class leaders from across the country, including some of my own colleagues in the Senate, as well as candidates running in New Hampshire's Presidential primary, including President Clinton, President Bush, and Secretary Clinton. These visits from candidates running for offices up and down the ballot gave Kevin's students a remarkable view into public office, unlike any most students receive.

Kevin has also always practiced what he teaches, so his influence goes well beyond the classroom. Aspiring public officials across New Hampshire know that Kevin has deep and lasting experience as a volunteer and that he has valuable advice and counsel to provide, insights that often stem from the questions and concerns he hears from his students. His role as informal adviser is particularly appreciated because he counsels with a light touch, appreciation for the very human challenge represented by any grassroots effort, and a great sense of humor.

Kevin's experience and commitment has also made him a champion for public education in New Hampshire and for encouraging more people to become involved in the democratic process. Particularly in debates around education, Granite Staters respect Kevin's voice and his passion, whether or not they always agree with him. They know—as I know—that he cares deeply about our democracy and is willing to do the hard work of keeping it strong.

Our democracy depends, in part, on people like Kevin—citizens who are willing to work for something bigger than themselves. Kevin and others like him know that citizenship can't be a passive exercise; they understand that our democracy is not sustained on its own and depends on each of us getting

involved, speaking out, becoming better informed, and working to expand our country's promise to more Americans. Beyond that, our democracy depends not only on us, but on future generations assuming the mantle of leadership so that they can safeguard our freedoms for years to come. By educating 45 years' worth of students and instilling in them the importance of civic engagement, Kevin has helped raise future citizen leaders. In short, Kevin Fleming has made our democracy stronger.

For touching the lives of students for nearly half a century, for pushing young people to reach their full potential, and for doing the hard, essential work of keeping our democracy strong, I am honored to recognize Kevin Fleming for everything that he has done, and I congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement. Our State and our country are better places because he chose to teach, both in the classroom and by example.●

TRIBUTE TO MIKE FOLAN

● Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize Mike Folan of Alton as June's Granite Stater of the Month. Mike is honoring the memory of New Hampshire servicemembers through his volunteer efforts at the Wright Museum of World War II in Wolfeboro and through his work as a high school teacher inspiring the next generation to learn about the remarkable sacrifices that Granite Staters who lost their lives on D-Day made. His dedication to these efforts is particularly important now, as we have just marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

During World War II, Mike's father and uncle served in the Navy and the Army, and he grew up hearing from veterans who lived in his neighborhood about what they experienced during the war. Learning about their heroism inspired Mike to study the war and work to honor the legacy of these servicemembers.

At the Wright Museum and at Prospect Mountain High School, Mike has helped Granite Staters of all ages learn more about World War II and its ongoing significance today. As a docent at the Wright Museum for more than 25 years, he helps welcome visitors and answer any questions they may have about World War II or the exhibits. Mike has brought what he has learned at the museum to his work at Prospect Mountain High School, where he has taught social studies for 18 years. Mike first learned at the museum that when servicemembers were killed overseas, they were often buried immediately without much, if any, knowledge of their background or personal history. During the postwar process, a series of documents—called an individual deceased personnel file—was created for each servicemember. Mike ordered the individual deceased personnel files of 10 Granite Staters, including four who

died on D-Day, and gathered 10 students at Prospect Mountain High School who were interested in independently researching the lives of the servicemembers. The students reconstructed the lives of the Granite Staters and honored their memories on the 80th anniversary of D-Day in a presentation at the Wright Museum.

As the daughter of a World War II veteran, I am particularly grateful for Mike's mission to honor the legacy of those who served and keep their memories alive. I had the pleasure of meeting Mike and some of his students earlier this month, after I returned from a bipartisan congressional delegation trip to Normandy to commemorate the anniversary of D-Day. It was inspiring to hear the students' enthusiasm for their projects and what they learned about the war during their studies. The students discussed the connection that they felt to the men whom they studied and were particularly interested to hear that, on our delegation trip, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN and I were able to pay our respects at the grave of Private First Class Raymond Cole, one of the men whom the students studied. It was clear from my conversation with the students that Mike's leadership in creating this research project sparked even deeper appreciation for everything that servicemembers did to win World War II and save the world from Hitler.

Mike's commitment to honoring the lives of Granite Staters who fought for freedom in World War II exemplifies the Granite State spirit of recognizing the courage and sacrifice of those who serve. His dedication to keeping history alive and inspiring new generations to do the same is why I am honored to recognize him as Granite Stater of the Month.●

TRIBUTE TO PAUL LeBLANC

● Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize a Granite Stater whose leadership and innovations have helped make higher education more affordable and accessible to people around the world, Southern New Hampshire University president Paul LeBlanc.

After 20 years of leadership, Paul has now moved on from SNHU, but his legacy of modernizing higher education and making it more accessible will endure far beyond his tenure as president. Under his leadership, SNHU transformed from a small regional school to the largest nonprofit provider of online higher education in the country, growing from 2,500 students to more than 225,000.

As an immigrant and a first-generation college graduate himself, Paul knew as well as anyone that, too often, college is out of reach for many people. Many students have the talent, the drive, and the ambition that is required for college, but simply lack the means. As Paul often says, "Talent is distributed equally throughout the