

They are slowly, however, turning up the temperature to weaken us and perhaps to lull us into complacency. But this is not the only tactic that Russia has employed in its war against the West. They also have a history of more blatant war crimes.

In 2014, Russia violated its commitments in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum by annexing Crimea, which is part of Ukraine. The Budapest Memorandum, which, again, was dated in 1994, was a treaty signed by Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Under this agreement, Ukraine, which had become newly independent after the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine would dispose of its nuclear arsenal in exchange for an agreement to protect its territorial integrity and independence.

And at the time, Ukraine had the third largest nuclear weapons stockpile in the world. So it was certainly in the interest of the United States and world peace to see Ukraine dispose of that nuclear stockpile.

But then, again, in 2022, Russia violated its commitments under the Budapest Memorandum by launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. These actions are a clear signal to the West that Russia has a history of reneging on its agreements and simply cannot be trusted.

And so the task at hand for the West, including the United States, is to reestablish deterrence of Russia and to make sure that we do everything we can to disincentivize them from continuing this long train of abuses.

And, of course, one of the consequences of rising feelings of insecurity in Europe is that now you have countries like Poland talking about acquiring nuclear weapons. You have the incoming chancellor of Germany saying that perhaps the UK and Germany should share its nuclear weapons with Ukraine.

Now, I had the chance to question the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and I asked whether this threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons made the world a more dangerous place. It seems like an obvious question. But, of course, he confirmed that that would be the case.

So proliferation of nuclear weapons in Europe is a bad thing and something we ought to seek to avoid at all costs. So I know President Trump has a big task in front of him, and I personally will do everything I can to support his efforts.

But we need to reestablish deterrence without seeing nuclear weapons proliferate, which will, in fact, make the world more dangerous and not safer.

As I have said before, and I think is obvious to all of us, we are living in the most dangerous time since World War II. And, certainly, this morning's hearing on the world threat assessment before the leaders of the intelligence community have driven home this reality and confirmed what we already knew.

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DAY

Mr. President, on another related matter, today is the National Medal of Honor Day, where we honor the bravery of our military heroes who have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Last Saturday, I had the chance, along with the Presiding Officer, to attend the grand opening of the Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, TX, where I was moved by, among other things, the words of General Rainey, the head of Army Futures Command, headquartered in Austin, TX. General Rainey reminded us:

Nobody hates war more than the men and women who served in it, but we all hope that when we find ourselves at that moment, the darkest hour of the darkest day when it is our turn to [be] tested, we hope that we will measure up to the courage and valor of these men.

So as we consider the challenges that face not only the United States, but the rest of the free world, I think the words of General Rainey can serve as a reminder in this moment. And while we may have some differences among us about our preferred approaches and tactics, we should all be united in our goal of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, Heaven forbid, another reoccurrence of the world war that my dad fought in many years ago.

And hopefully, to be able to keep our young men and women out of harm's way, rather than to have them exposed to the same dangers that previous generations were exposed to in two world wars in the European continent.

Again, I applaud the efforts of President Trump and Vice President VANCE to do everything possible to wind down the current conflict in Eastern Europe in order to avoid it from morphing into a larger regional or even global conflict.

And I think those of us who believe in a higher power would do well to continue to say our prayers that that ultimately is a successful effort, and I certainly will join in that effort.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Before I yield the floor, I would ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kratsios nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 38, Michael Kratsios, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Mike Crapo, Markwayne Mullin, Joni Ernst, David McCormick, Rick Scott of Florida, Bernie Moreno, Mike Rounds, Tommy

Tuberville, Katie Boyd Britt, Shelley Moore Capito, Jim Justice, John Barrasso, Steve Daines, Jon Husted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Michael Kratsios, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 73, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 138 Ex.]

YEAS—73

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Fischer | Moran |
| Banks | Gallego | Moreno |
| Barrasso | Graham | Mullin |
| Bennet | Grassley | Murkowski |
| Blackburn | Hagerty | Paul |
| Boozman | Hassan | Ricketts |
| Britt | Hawley | Risch |
| Budd | Heinrich | Rosen |
| Cantwell | Hickenlooper | Rounds |
| Capito | Husted | Schmitt |
| Cassidy | Hyde-Smith | Scott (FL) |
| Collins | Johnson | Scott (SC) |
| Coons | Justice | Shaheen |
| Cornyn | Kelly | Sheehy |
| Cortez Masto | Kennedy | Slotkin |
| Cotton | King | Sullivan |
| Cramer | Klobuchar | Thune |
| Crapo | Lankford | Tillis |
| Cruz | Lee | Tuberville |
| Curtis | Lujan | Lummis |
| Daines | Lummis | Warner |
| Duckworth | Marshall | Warnock |
| Durbin | McConnell | Wicker |
| Ernst | McCormick | Young |
| Fetterman | Moody | |

NAYS—25

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|------------|
| Alsobrooks | Merkley | Schumer |
| Blumenthal | Murphy | Smith |
| Blunt Rochester | Murray | Van Hollen |
| Booker | Ossoff | Warren |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Welch |
| Hirono | Reed | Whitehouse |
| Kaine | Sanders | Wyden |
| Kim | Schatz | |
| Markey | Schiff | |

NOT VOTING—2

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Hoeven | Padilla |
|--------|---------|

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 73, the nays are 25.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Michael Kratsios, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:57 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON KRATSIOS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kratsios nomination?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 74, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 139 Ex.]

YEAS—74

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Fischer | Moody |
| Banks | Gallego | Moran |
| Barrasso | Graham | Moreno |
| Bennet | Grassley | Mullin |
| Blackburn | Hagerty | Murkowski |
| Boozman | Hassan | Paul |
| Britt | Hawley | Ricketts |
| Budd | Heinrich | Risch |
| Cantwell | Hickenlooper | Rosen |
| Capito | Hoeben | Rounds |
| Cassidy | Husted | Schmitt |
| Collins | Hyde-Smith | Scott (FL) |
| Coons | Johnson | Scott (SC) |
| Cornyn | Justice | Shaheen |
| Cortez Masto | Kelly | Sheehy |
| Cotton | Kennedy | Slotkin |
| Cramer | King | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Klobuchar | Thune |
| Cruz | Lankford | Tillis |
| Curtis | Lee | Tuberville |
| Daines | Lujan | Warner |
| Duckworth | Lummis | Warnock |
| Durbin | Marshall | Wicker |
| Ernst | McConnell | Young |
| Fetterman | McCormick | |

NAYS—25

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|------------|
| Alsbrooks | Merkley | Schumer |
| Blumenthal | Murphy | Smith |
| Blunt Rochester | Murray | Van Hollen |
| Booker | Ossoff | Warren |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Welch |
| Hirono | Reed | Whitehouse |
| Kaine | Sanders | Wyden |
| Kim | Schatz | |
| Markey | Schiff | |

NOT VOTING—1

Padilla

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Bhattacharya nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 44, Jayanta Bhattacharya, of California, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health.

John Thune, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Ashley B. Moody, Ted Budd, Tommy Tuberville, Jim Justice, James Lankford, Steve Daines, Ron Johnson, Josh Hawley, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Marsha Blackburn, David McCormick, Katie Boyd Britt, Todd Young, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Jayanta Bhattacharya, of California, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 140 Ex.]

YEAS—53

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Banks | Graham | Moreno |
| Barrasso | Grassley | Mullin |
| Blackburn | Hagerty | Murkowski |
| Boozman | Hawley | Paul |
| Britt | Hoeben | Ricketts |
| Budd | Husted | Risch |
| Capito | Hyde-Smith | Rounds |
| Cassidy | Johnson | Schmitt |
| Collins | Justice | Scott (FL) |
| Cornyn | Kennedy | Scott (SC) |
| Cotton | Lankford | Sheehy |
| Cramer | Lee | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Lummis | Thune |
| Cruz | Marshall | Tillis |
| Curtis | McConnell | Tuberville |
| Daines | McCormick | Wicker |
| Ernst | Moody | Young |
| Fischer | Moran | |

NAYS—46

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Alsbrooks | Hickenlooper | Sanders |
| Baldwin | Hirono | Schatz |
| Bennet | Kaine | Schiff |
| Blumenthal | Kelly | Schumer |
| Blunt Rochester | Kim | Shaheen |
| Booker | King | Slotkin |
| Cantwell | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Coons | Lujan | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Markey | Warner |
| Duckworth | Merkley | Warnock |
| Durbin | Murphy | Warren |
| Fetterman | Murray | Welch |
| Gallego | Ossoff | Whitehouse |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Wyden |
| Hassan | Reed | |
| Heinrich | Rosen | |

NOT VOTING—1

Padilla

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jayanta Bhattacharya, of California, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, in the last couple of weeks, I have had the opportunity to travel in many parts of our country, and I have been able to talk to folks in Nebraska, in Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona.

What I am hearing from in all of these States and, in fact, all over the country is that our Nation right now faces enormous crises—unprecedented crises in the modern history of our country.

How—right now, at this moment—we respond to these crises will not only impact our lives, it will impact the lives of our kids and future generations, and in terms of climate change, the well-being of the entire planet.

Mr. President, what I have to tell you is that the American people are angry at what is happening here in Washington, DC, and they are prepared to stand up and fight back.

In my view, and what I have heard from many, many people is that they will not accept an oligarchic form of society where a handful of billionaires control our government; where the wealthiest person on Earth, Mr. Musk, is running all over Washington, DC, slashing the Social Security Administration so that our elderly people today are finding it extremely difficult to access the benefits that they paid into; where Mr. Musk and his friends are slashing the Veterans' Administration so that people who put their lives on the line to defend us will not be able to get the healthcare that they are entitled to or get the benefits that they are owed in a timely manner; slashing the Department of Education; slashing USAID.

And why is all of this slashing taking place? It is taking place so that the wealthiest people in this country can receive over \$1 trillion in tax breaks. Now, I don't care if you are a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent. There are very few people in this country who think that you slash programs that working families desperately need in order to give tax breaks to billionaires.

I am the former chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and I have had the honor of meeting with veterans in my own State of Vermont—all over Vermont—but all over the country. These are the men and women who put the uniform of this country on and have been prepared to die to defend our Nation and American democracy.

These veterans and Americans all over our Nation will not accept an authoritarian form of society with a