

One particular event in Bucha stands out. Russian troops intentionally massacred more than 400 civilians, apparently as part of a systematic clearing operation to secure their path to the capital, Kyiv. Russian paratroopers from the 234th Guards Air Assault Regiment interrogated and executed unarmed men of fighting age and killed people who unwittingly crossed their paths, whether it was children fleeing with their families or locals hoping to find groceries or people simply trying to get back home on their bicycles. The victims of this massacre were of all ages and professions. This massacre would be deemed a war crime under international humanitarian law, and because of their systematic and widespread nature, the killings in Bucha could also amount to crimes against humanity.

So the Russian Federation under Vladimir Putin is nothing like the United States or Europe, for that matter. Russia, of course, has its own history, culture, and form of government, and I said earlier, it can be easy for the West to assume, as we have done before, that our values are shared by other countries, but that is most decidedly not the case with Putin's Russia. Putin has made his unwillingness to end this unprovoked and barbaric war as plain as day. He has shown no remorse that his country is nearing 1 million casualties. He clearly doesn't care about the Russian people, who have been sacrificed to his fantasy of an empire restored, and his tolerance for casualties appears without limit.

In fact, Putin has done nothing to justify the hope that he might be persuaded to end this war. To the contrary, despite Putin's declared ceasefire over the Easter holiday, Russia then proceeded to launch attacks into Ukraine that killed innocent civilians. More recently, Russia launched two ballistic missiles and 165 drones, wounding 11 people, including 2 children.

One 54-year-old Kyiv resident, whose car caught fire during the attack, expressed frustration at the lack of progress for peace, saying:

They can't agree on anything, and we are the ones who suffer the consequences.

An 18-year-old student said:

People are just suffering all the time . . . It's still very hard to see our country constantly being destroyed.

President Trump noted in a statement on Truth Social:

There was no reason for Putin to be shooting missiles into civilian areas, cities and towns, over the last few days.

The President went on to suggest that Putin may not actually be trying to stop the war. I agree with President Trump. There is no indication he is trying to stop the war. Vladimir Putin is making a grave mistake in stringing the President of the United States and the rest of the world along while innocent lives are being taken.

In order to achieve peace, President Trump needs a good-faith partner both

in Ukrainian President Zelenskyy and Russian President Putin. Notably, while Zelenskyy has met with the President several times, most recently at the Vatican, Putin has not. Instead of working for peace, Putin recently threatened to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine in order to bring the war, in his own words, "to a logical conclusion with the outcome [that] Russia requires."

How does this relate to President Trump's peace efforts? Well, we should listen to Putin's own words. In a speech he delivered to the Russian Foreign Ministry last year, Putin argued that peace with Ukraine would require a removal of Ukrainian troops from the southern and eastern part of that country, the demilitarization and denuclearization of Ukraine, a neutral and non-NATO Ukraine, and the removal of all Western sanctions.

The hard reality is that Putin sees this conflict not just as a war between Russia and Ukraine but as a war between Russia and the West.

In this same speech, he says the West is primarily at fault for the conflict in the world today and that it was the West that incited a Ukrainian coup in 2014 and further unrest in Eastern Ukraine in 2022, which necessitated Russian military action to liberate the people of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Putin says that the war would have ended long ago, in March 2022, had it not been for the West's supplying Ukraine with weapons and political support and extending the conflict.

Likewise, Putin sees Ukraine's prospective association with NATO or European peacekeeping forces as an inherent extension of Western imperialism, which he cannot tolerate. He even goes as far as to say that Russia could not accept a cease-fire since it would give time for Ukraine to rearm.

Finally, Putin shares a vision for a multipolar world to counter what he perceives as Western imperialism and Russia's efforts to use security and economic agreements toward these ends.

In sum, Putin does not see this negotiation as a means to bringing about an end to the conflict in Ukraine; he sees it as a key piece to a larger war against the West. In essence, this negotiation is much bigger than Russia and Ukraine. We need to listen to what Putin says but also watch what he does as he attempts to stall peace negotiations while attempting to achieve his larger aims.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine just over 3 years ago is an obvious violation of another international agreement that Russia was a party to—the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. Under this agreement, Ukraine willingly gave up its arsenal of nuclear weapons—the third largest in the world—in exchange for security assurances by Russia and other signatories. Russia went on then to violate the Budapest Memorandum in 2014 when it invaded Crimea and annexed the Crimea Peninsula. Then, as

we all know, Russia violated the Memorandum for a second time in February 2022 with its invasion of Ukraine proper.

If Russia were unwilling to honor the commitments enshrined in the Budapest Memorandum in 2014 and 2022, how, then, can Ukraine or the rest of the world, for that matter, be assured that they will honor a peace agreement brokered in 2025?

And, once again, Putin is threatening nuclear war if he does not receive the guarantees of a further demilitarized Ukraine.

But if he thinks these threats are an effective method of intimidating the United States and President Trump, he is mistaken. President Trump has made very clear that he will not allow Russia to continue doing what he calls "tapping us along."

Putin may well have been able to dupe Obama. He may have been able to intimidate Biden. But any attempt to fool or strong-arm President Trump will not succeed. If Putin thinks he is going to pull the wool over his eyes or box him into a corner, Putin is in for a very rude shock.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### TRIBUTE TO EDAN ALEXANDER

Mr. SCHUMER. First, Madam President, today, we have heard some very good news: Edan Alexander, an American Israeli and New Jersey native, has finally been freed from Hamas's brutal captivity and reunited with his family.

I first met Edan's parents, Adi and Yael, right after October 7—a few days after—when Edan was taken hostage by Hamas. For the last 583 days, Adi and Yael have fought tirelessly for Edan's release. Today, that work pays off as they finally get to hug their son again.

Edan's release gives me more hope and motivation to keep pushing for the release of all 58 hostages in Hamas's captivity, including the remains of four New Yorkers brutally murdered by Hamas: Omer Neutra, Itay Chen, Gad Haggai, and Judi Weinstein. They were brutally killed, but their remains should be sent back. But, of course, Hamas, as brutal as they are, doesn't do that yet.

As the President departs to the Middle East, I call on him and his administration to use the full weight of U.S. diplomatic power to get a deal to bring all of the hostages home.

I will continue working as long as it takes to finally bring every last hostage—including the remains of hostages no longer with us—home at last.

#### QATAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now on Qatar, yesterday, reports came

out that the royal family of Qatar is set to gift Donald Trump a luxury 747 for him to use as his own Air Force One.

Without a shred of shame, Donald Trump will lecture families about putting up with higher prices that he himself triggered and then accept a \$400 million private jet from the Qatari royal family. His shameless self-enrichment is without equal in American history. You cannot think of another President who has been so brazen, so selfish, and so destructive of the norms of what America is about.

In truth, though, the news of the Qatari Air Force is just one tip of the iceberg. For months, Qatar and other Gulf State nationals have spent billions on deals with the Trump organizations to buy the President.

Donald Trump is using his office to enrich himself and his family. This isn't a question. This is a fact with incredible supporting data to prove it. He is putting America's national security at risk to enrich himself.

Just as concerning as the very gift are the national security implications that surround it. The deeply chilling part of this bribe and national security betrayal from the President is just how blatant and erroneous he is doing it, almost daring Republicans to stand up to him and defend our country—daring Republicans.

So where are our Republican friends with this kind of egregious, grubby, awful enrichment? Silence and total obedience.

#### TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on tariffs, early this morning, it was reported that Donald Trump caved to Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party, with virtually nothing to show for American workers. Donald Trump has changed his mind, once again, on his tariffs, with a new "deal" with China to pause most tariffs for 90 days.

Sadly, it looks like China has, once again, gotten the better of Donald Trump. They hardly had to give up a thing.

It is another example of Donald Trump's chaos. Trump has one policy for his tariffs on one day and a different policy the next day. One day, he is pretending to be a tough guy with China. The next day he is caving to China and getting little, if anything, in return. Who knows what Trump's tariff policy will be in 90 days?

If I were a businessperson, I wouldn't count on what he is doing or what he says today that probably won't be in effect in the next week or the next 3 weeks.

Even under this "deal," tariffs are still significantly higher than they were before Trump's "Liberation Day." Businesses will continue to struggle. Supply chains will continue to experience chaos, strain, and unpredictability.

Again, this is only a 90-day pause. As I said before, it is impossible to predict

what will happen next, even within the 90-day period, because Trump changes his mind so quickly. Whatever seems good in front of him at the moment, he goes for.

First, he is mad at China and puts in the tariffs. Then he gets lots of blowback and backs off.

Where will he be tomorrow? Who the heck knows. But businesses can't count on reliability, only on chaos.

Donald Trump's trade war is a lose-lose-lose for American families and businesses, leaving them with increased costs and more chaos.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on drug pricing, a few hours ago, Donald Trump signed a new Executive order he claims will "almost immediately" bring down the costs of prescription drugs. Americans should hold their applause because Donald Trump's announcement is little more than a photo op masquerading at reform, just as he said he would bring down costs on day one, and it didn't happen—the same thing here. "Almost immediately"? Give me a break.

In case Donald Trump has forgotten, this announcement is like what he already tried to do in 2020, with little success. So Americans are right to be skeptical until they actually see their prescription drug costs go down more.

Donald Trump can say he is doing an Executive order, but we all know the odds are overwhelming that that Executive order will fail.

The real way to make drug price reform happen is to do what Democrats do and what Donald Trump is loath to do: Roll up your sleeves and do the hard work of passing legislation. That is what we did. That is why insulin is \$35 for senior citizens. That is why 20 of the most widely used drugs' prices have plummeted, because we negotiated with Medicare. That is why no family pays more than \$2,000 total for all their prescription drugs. We worked hard, we legislated, and we got prices down.

Donald Trump does a photo op, says it is going to come down immediately, but, obviously, this is a half-baked political stunt that is unlikely to bring any meaningful change.

Today's announcement is so typical of Donald Trump's Presidency: He promises a golden age, but, in reality, Americans get fool's gold.

#### BUDGET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, Republicans released the text of their plan to eviscerate Medicaid while cutting taxes for the ultrarich. The bill is as toxic as we all feared.

With a straight face, Republicans are telling the American people that they want to cut taxes for the ultrarich by trillions of dollars and pay for it with the biggest cuts to Medicaid ever—the biggest cuts to Medicaid ever. If this

bill becomes law, nearly 14 million Americans will lose their health insurance—again, the biggest cut to Medicaid in American history, 14 million losing their health insurance.

Hospital after hospital will have to lay off tens of thousands of workers. Many of them may be forced to close, particularly in rural areas.

Republicans promised for months they would protect Medicaid, but now Americans know the truth: Republicans never intended to keep that promise, and this confirms it.

Almost 14 million Americans lose insurance. Millions more see their premiums go up. Hospitals from one end of America to the other will close. Thousands will lose their jobs. Millions will lose their access to healthcare. Kids will suffer. Seniors suffer. Healthcare workers will lose their jobs. Americans with disabilities get hurt. And rural Americans are left to fend for themselves.

Hospitals and nursing homes will shutter. States will scramble with their budgets. And American families are left out to dry.

And why? Tax cuts for the billionaires. That is what happens when Project 2025 takes over the Republican mainstream.

But the cruelty doesn't stop there. Later today, we also expect Republicans to unveil their plan to cut SNAP, which feeds about 40 million Americans in need. If the reports are to be believed, Republicans plan to cut Federal food assistance by hundreds of billions. If the reports are to be believed, that is what the Republicans plan to do.

Kids will go hungry. Parents will suffer.

I just got back from Buffalo and Albany in Upstate New York, meeting with food banks and religious leaders and church leaders who are on the frontlines of the fight against hunger. The priests and nuns I met with spoke of the obligation Scripture imparts on us to feed the hungry and to give drink to the thirsty. But right now, Republicans want to rob the least of our neighbors to make it better for those at the top.

SNAP should not be a partisan issue. It should not be a political issue. It is a moral question: Are we going to let kids, veterans, senior citizens, and others go hungry? This is about taking care of the most vulnerable in society, especially the children, making sure every child in America is afforded basic dignity.

If a kid goes to bed hungry, they can't learn the next morning in school. They can't get along with their friends. They are off to an awful start.

So SNAP has been one of the great things that America has done until now, in a bipartisan way—but not with these MAGA people running the show and not with the Republicans here in the Senate and in the House being supine to what they know is wrong and vicious and mean and counter-productive.