

death where there have been, by many reports, over a million casualties.

Last week, Putin launched over 600 drones against civilians in Kyiv on a single night, and the objective was to kill civilians, especially women and children. Not since the Blitz of London in 1940 has a European capital faced such a ruthless campaign of airborne terror that was directed at civilians.

Next to me here is a photograph of the graves of three children from a single family who were killed by Putin's campaign of terror. These kids were among the more than 600 Ukrainian children who were killed recently by Russian strikes. Three graves. Parents, neighbors—everyone knows that their kids could be next.

On this question of the United States coming to the aid of Ukraine, I want to acknowledge the leadership of many of my Republican colleagues, especially Senator MCCONNELL, who stood firmly and immediately in favor of protecting Ukraine and standing up for American principles; Senator WICKER, our Armed Services Committee chair; and others, a few of whom I mentioned.

It was under Republican leadership and support that the Senate passed the Ukraine Invasion War Crimes Deterrence and Accountability Act into law. And that law states explicitly that it is "under the direction of President Putin" that the Russian military has committed war crimes, including targeting of civilians, killing noncombatants, deportation of civilians, and hostage-taking.

Recently, it was reported that the Russians have made some incremental gains in the past few months. But the reality is that the Russian troops are creeping forward at the cost of thousands of Russian casualties. According to some reports, Russia has suffered up to a million casualties in the Ukrainian battlefield.

Putin is completely indifferent to the suffering of his own people and the violence he is inflicting on innocent people in Ukraine. And after the thousands of Iranian drones launched every week by Russia at Ukrainian civilians, they don't really point to military effectiveness. They point to military desperation on the part of Russia.

Ineffective on the battlefield, the Putin war plan is to target civilians and try to wear down Ukraine's morale. But I can tell you, last week, I was on a bipartisan delegation led by Senator ROUNDS and Senator SHAHEEN at the Halifax Security Conference, and we heard directly from Ukrainian members of Parliament. They are fighting. It is hard, but they are not giving up. The question before us is not whether Ukraine will persevere; it is whether the U.S. support will persevere.

I believe—I think many of us in this body believe—that we must stand firm against Putin and his lawless aggression. And if he is successful in Ukraine, he will be emboldened to continue his march through Moldova and America's

Baltic and Nordic allies on Russia's borders: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

Some asked if we can afford to continue to support Ukraine. My view: We can't afford not to. But also, when you look at the economic cost, which is real, it is modest. It is about 0.2 percent of our gross domestic product. Is that such a large amount of money that we can't invest it for the security of our country and our allies in Western Europe, which we fought for in World War II?

The question before this U.S. Senate right now is not whether Ukraine is going to hang in there and fight. They proved again and again that they will hang in and fight. If Ukraine won't falter in that fight, the United States must also persevere.

In addition to us continuing our support, there are three pieces of legislation that we could take up on this floor that would make a significant difference right away: No. 1 is the bill led by Senator GRAHAM and Senator BLUMENTHAL. It has 85 cosponsors, and it would impose sanctions to stop customers like India and China and Brazil from buying Russian oil. And the argument Senator GRAHAM makes that I think is very compelling is, you go after the customers, and you squeeze the finances of the Russian war machine. We have 85 cosponsors. Let's take it up, and let's pass it.

The second bill—the State Sponsor of Terrorism bill designation for Russia—is related to the fact that Russia did something that is absolutely unconscionable: They kidnapped children. Over 20,000 kids have been taken hostage and delivered to other families in the occupied territories and in Russia itself. That is so unimaginable. Let's go at that directly.

Third, let's take up legislation here similar to legislation pending in Europe where Russian assets—about \$5 billion in this country, about \$300 million in the European Union—are seized and are used for the reconstruction of Ukraine since the aggressor, Russia, is the acting party that did all that damage.

I believe we must renew our commitment to the Ukrainian people. I believe we must stay the course. This year, we are celebrating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, when the United States advanced a foreign policy principle that borders cannot be changed by force. We have seen decades of unprecedented prosperity, and we have seen decades without another World War conflagration.

We have an opportunity today to stand up and protect that legacy for this century by recommitting to the Ukrainian people that we will stand in support of that principle, in support of their freedom, and in support of our security.

I yield the floor.

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. 475, Susan Courtwright Rodriguez, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of North Carolina.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Jon A. Husted, John R. Curtis, Tom Cotton, Bernie Moreno, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Markwayne Mullin, Kevin Cramer, Pete Ricketts, Katie Boyd Britt, Tim Sheehy, Jim Banks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Susan Courtwright Rodriguez, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of North Carolina, 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. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 63, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 631 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Banks	Grassley	Moran
Barrasso	Hagerty	Moreno
Blackburn	Hassan	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hirono	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Reed
Capito	Husted	Ricketts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Collins	Johnson	Rosen
Cornyn	Justice	Rounds
Cotton	Kaine	Schmitt
Cramer	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cruz	King	Sheehy
Curtis	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Daines	Lankford	Thune
Durbin	Lee	Tillis
Ernst	Lummis	Tuberville
Fischer	Marshall	Whitehouse
Gallego	McCormick	Wicker
Graham	Moody	Young

NAYS—34

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Schiff
Baldwin	Kim	Schumer
Bennet	Lujan	Slotkin
Blumenthal	Markey	Smith
Blunt Rochester	Merkley	Van Hollen
Booker	Murphy	Warner
Cantwell	Murray	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Ossoff	Warren
Duckworth	Padilla	Welch
Fetterman	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Sanders	
Heinrich	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—3

Coons	McConnell	Shaheen
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). On this vote, the yeas are 63,

and the nays are 34. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO TAYLOR NORDSETH

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Taylor Nordseth, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several weeks.

Taylor is a graduate of Worthington Senior High School in Worthington, MN. Currently, she is attending the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, SD, where she is pursuing a degree in communications studies and political science. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Taylor for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO GENE DODARO

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise to acknowledge the service of an extraordinary public servant who is retiring later this month, U.S. Comptroller General Gene L. Dodaro of the Government Accountability Office.

Gene's service to GAO and Congress is truly remarkable, spanning an incredible 52-year career at GAO, with more than half of that time spent leading the agency as Chief Operating Officer, Acting Comptroller General, or since December 2010, Comptroller General. Gene is just the eighth U.S. Comptroller General, and the first to come from within GAO. In these and his other roles working at GAO, he has served Congress by helping us better manage taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse while also improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the critical Federal programs and services our constituents depend on.

I have seen the importance of GAO's work firsthand. Over the years, Gene and the hard-working staff at GAO have assisted my work in overseeing the Committees on Veterans Affairs, Budget, HELP, and Appropriations. I can attest how greatly Congress depends on the expertise of the staff at GAO. And in the case of Gene Dodaro, few have done more to serve this insti-

tution and the American people. I want to thank and commend Gene for his many decades of excellent public service to GAO, the Congress, and the Nation and to wish him and his family all the best in his much-deserved retirement.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Gene for his dedication and service to us and the American people.

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before he became President, a member of Congress, or even a lawyer, Abraham Lincoln was a postal worker. From 1833 to 1836, Lincoln served as the postmaster of New Salem, IL. He walked for miles delivering letters to Illinoisans, and he developed a habit of storing them in his now-famous stovepipe hat. As he traversed the prairies of Sangamon County, he learned about the State that would eventually be known as the Land of Lincoln. Although postmaster was just one of the many jobs Lincoln had during his days in New Salem, it was his first taste of civil service and his introduction to the people of Sangamon County.

But Abraham Lincoln is not the only person whose life has been shaped by the Post Office. For 250 years, the U.S. Post Office has provided essential services that connect Americans, support commerce, and strengthen the foundations of our democracy. Founded during the Second Continental Congress, even before the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Post Office played an indispensable role in the success of our young democracy. Not only was the Post Office crucial in facilitating communication between American revolutionaries, it also strengthened the ties between the 13 Original Colonies, allowing our country to develop into one cohesive Nation. After the Colonies won independence, the Post Office continued to grow, ensuring Americans anywhere could have access to the information necessary to participate in the democratic process.

But as the Post Office grew, there was one glaring gap in its services. People living in rural areas would need to venture to the nearest Post Office to access their mail, which could be located miles away. While Americans living in more populous locations had access to free home delivery for decades, rural Americans were still walking for miles to retrieve their post at the end of the 19th century. In 1896, the U.S. Post Office decided to try a new service in two counties in West Virginia, free rural home delivery. In less than a decade, this experiment was adopted nationwide, and today, millions of rural Americans count on home delivery.

This commitment to equitable, universal delivery is one that is near and dear to my heart as a Senator from Illinois. Across Illinois, especially downstate, we have many rural counties and towns that struggle to attract

the attention of for-profit shipping corporations. For these communities, USPS is often the only option to receive mail and send packages. That is what separates USPS from the rest of America's shipping industry. USPS is not a company; it is a public service. Its employees are public servants. The role USPS plays in connecting Americans is one that is vital for my home State and for many others across the country.

Today, USPS delivers more mail than any other company in the world. There are more than 30,000 Post Offices that serve 169 million homes across the United States. Americans rely on the United States Postal Service to deliver their medications, Social Security checks, and other important correspondence, along with birthday cards from Grandma. The post remains a lifeline for small businesses, who often cannot afford to use large for-profit shipping corporations, as well as for rural Americans. And USPS continues to support our democracy by helping Americans send and receive their mail-in ballots for local, State, and national elections.

On October 9, the Senate passed S. Res. 337, a resolution recognizing the 250th anniversary of the Postal Service of the United States and commending its indispensable role in the success of our Nation. But any recognition of the USPS would be incomplete without acknowledging America's incredible postal workers. Continuing in the tradition of President Lincoln, postal workers ensure that through rain or snow, heatwaves and arctic blasts, Americans receive their essential mail. As we celebrate the U.S. Post Office's anniversary, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to postal workers and letter carriers, both past and present, for their essential service to Illinois and the Nation.

While much has changed since the founding of the U.S. Post Office, its role as an essential pillar of our democracy and community remains the same. Congratulations to this 250-year-old public institution, and here is to many more years of service.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL SUSIE DUNHAM

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Lt. Col. Susie Dunham on her distinguished 22-year career of dedicated service to the Air Force and Air National Guard. Lieutenant Colonel Dunham served as the lead liaison for the National Guard Bureau appropriations and expertly managed engagements with Senate and House Appropriations Committees.

She facilitated seamless communication between military leadership and the U.S. Congress while directly managing correspondence with over 90 congressional offices in the House of Representatives. As the National Guard's primary point of contact for House Appropriators and Budget Committee