

U.S. personnel killed over the years by the Iranian regime.

There has been plenty of discussion about where this war fits among U.S. strategic priorities. I hope the administration will be more forthcoming on that very soon.

But some critics want to evaluate the war with Iran without even acknowledging the wider context, as if combating rampant terror and violence from China's leading source of oil and Russia's leading source of attack drones has nothing, somehow, to do with peace in Europe or deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

I have called out this fiction before, and I have urged colleagues and decisionmakers in successive administrations not to overlook the ways our adversaries' threats to America's interests are actually all aligned together.

The PRC is not a neutral observer in the Middle East. Beijing has an interest in the steady flow of cheap Iranian oil to the tune of 1.4 million barrels just last year.

And as Iran's proxy wars, missile program, and nuclear ambitions taxed our attention and resources, the PRC benefited strategically as well as financially from the distraction.

Russia, they are not a disinterested party either. Moscow and Tehran, together, propped up the brutal Assad regime in Syria, allowing them to project power deeper into the Middle East and the Mediterranean. A shadow fleet has continued to help both regimes evade Western sanctions.

And needless to say, Russia's war conquest in Ukraine would look quite different without a steady supply of Iranian attack drones. Iranian drones in Ukrainian skies have already made the connections between America's adversaries crystal clear. But now, public reporting also indicates Russia may be providing intelligence for Iran's attacks all across the Gulf.

The President's all-purpose emissary Steve Witkoff has downplayed these reports and replayed Russia's strenuous denial of any such intelligence sharing. And for the sake of U.S. servicemembers, I certainly hope that is true.

However, unlike Mr. Witkoff, I am not at all inclined to "take the Russians at their word."

Instead, I have warned successive Presidents to take the Russia-Iranian axis more seriously. I urged President Biden to hold Iran to account for underwriting terror and killing Americans. But a disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan emboldened Tehran and Moscow, both.

I supported a national security supplemental, even though I thought President Biden's approach to Russia and Iran was entirely too weak. I did it not only because supporting Ukraine was in our strategic interests but because these funds helped replenish American stockpiles and start restoring our own defense industrial base.

So if the Senate receives a request for supplemental appropriations, I hope

our colleagues who oppose the President's use of force against Iran will still see an overdue opportunity to invest in urgent and strategic defense priorities.

Weakness invites challenge, but our adversaries have sought to weaken and undermine America regardless of who the Commander in Chief is.

I have underscored American's interest in a just and lasting end to Russia's war many times before. But let's say for the sake of argument that you are still inclined to treat the outcome of the largest land war in Europe since 1945 as somebody else's concern.

Well, Russia's support for Iran is not somebody else's concern. Russia is aiding Iranian attacks against Americans. That is very much our concern. If you believe that the U.S. role in the war in Ukraine is as a neutral mediator between equally culpable belligerents, this development might be tough to square; likewise with the fact that Ukraine was the first foreign government to voice unequivocal support of U.S. and Israeli strikes against Iran.

Unlike Moscow, Kyiv is not asking that we just take its word. Let's look at the actions.

Right now—right now—teams of Ukraine's top experts in drone warfare are on the ground in the Gulf helping us—helping American allies in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE—defend against Iranian drone attacks. Many of the Ukrainian systems that Gulf allies are eager to procure were first offered to the United States many months ago.

Unfortunately, until death began to rain from the skies over U.S. facilities in the Gulf 12 days ago, it was my understanding that these discussions had gone nowhere fast.

So administration officials were right to identify Ukraine as the "Silicon Valley of warfare." But other officials have slowed or paused assistance to these same brave innovators and have missed opportunities to apply Ukraine's technology and tactics to our own planning.

The previous administration, too, failed to adapt and harvest Ukraine's lessons.

The past is behind us. To learn from the world's foremost experts in drone warfare, we have to go beyond words. Our security assistance to Ukraine is a critical tool to help end Russia's war on terms favorable to the West. It is an investment in tapping cutting-edge technological and industrial capacity, and the return on investment is totally worth it.

America is stronger, America is more secure when we stand with our friends and stand up to our enemies.

This is not murky; it is not ambiguous. It is an opportunity for moral clarity and strategic wisdom. No better friend, no worse enemy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wanted to come down and make a few

remarks on a couple of important topics, but I wanted to begin by just letting the American people know—and my constituents back home in Alaska—what just happened here, just a couple of minutes ago, on the Senate floor. We voted again to fund the Department of Homeland Security, and I am down here, like a lot of Senators. By the way, it was a bipartisan Senate vote to fund Homeland Security, but it didn't pass.

And, you know, I have kind of moved through my anger phase more to my sadness phase with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This is the fourth time that we have come down to the Senate floor to vote on a bipartisan, bicameral agreement. The House and the Senate got together several weeks ago—Democrats and Republicans—and agreed to fund the Department of Homeland Security. The House passed the bill—bipartisan, by the way. The agreed-to bill was going to come over here. It did come over here.

And, all of a sudden, my Democratic colleagues on the other side of the aisle—not all of them, Senator FETTERMAN has been voting with us—said: You know what; we are not going to keep that promise. We are going to not fund Homeland Security.

Now, it is really frustrating because they are saying, well, they don't want to do it now because they want to reform ICE. Now, I am a little skeptical of that claim because the White House and Republicans in the Senate have been waiting for weeks for any proposal from the Democrats on their reforming ICE.

The White House and others have put forward: Hey, here is our proposal.

They haven't responded once.

So if they want to reform ICE, they should at least give people in the administration or in the Congress, here on the Republican side, their ideas for reforming ICE. They haven't. It has been weeks.

By the way, the press is not reporting that. I wish they would because it is very bad faith when you are not negotiating at all.

It is one thing to be far apart on "hey, I have this proposal; you have this proposal." They haven't put forward one proposal.

So in the meantime, when we have a very dangerous world out there—we have been briefed in classified hearings that we should anticipate that the Iranian Quds Force, the lead terrorist organization in Iran, is looking for attacks in our homeland. And they won't fund Homeland Security.

Now, one of the things that I am a little concerned about is that this is kind of from the old Biden-Majority Leader SCHUMER playbook to defund the police and have open borders.

Now, what do I mean? We know that, during the Biden administration, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—many of them—and certainly the Biden administration, they had as policies: We are going to defund law enforcement, and we are going to have open borders.

That is what they did. Eleven million people illegally came into our country during the 4 years of Joe Biden.

And they also knew that the American people did not like those policies. I think that was clear in the 2024 election.

But here is the thing: The far left of the Democratic Party is still committed to these policies.

So, essentially, when you look at what is going on right now, it is back to the future. It is defund the police and open borders 2.0.

What am I talking about? Right now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying they will not fund ICE. That is a law enforcement Agency that helps protect us. And they are also saying they will not fund Customs and Border Protection. That is the Agency that controls the border.

It is defund the police, defund law enforcement, and open borders. Once again, they are trying to do it kind of in a backdoor way, but the American people are noticing, and it is a frustration.

You know, the Democratic leader used to oppose shutdowns. As a matter of fact, when we were in the minority here, President Biden was in office, and Senator SCHUMER was the majority leader, we never had one shutdown. Now, the reason was, when we were negotiating things and we got close, but we weren't there yet, and we ran into the deadline of the government shutting down, we would pass what are called short-term continuing resolutions to keep the government open and keep negotiating.

Senator SCHUMER said, in 2019, that defunding DHS, which is what they are doing now, would: hurt TSA, hurt Border Patrol, hurt FBI agents, air traffic controllers, food safety inspectors, Coast Guard members. They deal with our security right now—right now—so if you believe in the security of America, vote yes to fund Homeland Security.

I am quoting Senator SCHUMER. Well, I would agree with his 2019 quote wholeheartedly. Vote yes to fund Homeland Security, keeping our country safe by all those Agencies that he just mentioned.

But now, again, given the far-left-wing tactics and energy in the Democratic Party, anytime—and we saw this in the fall, and we are seeing it right now—that if they don't get their way on an issue, they don't do what we have traditionally done, which is: All right, we are not there yet. Let's compromise. Let's put forward a short-term CR. Let's keep the government open.

They just say: Let's shut down the government.

So that is what we are dealing with. It is a real travesty. It is particularly a travesty for the TSA agents who aren't getting paid, for the Coast Guard agents who aren't getting paid and their families, and for FEMA.

We all have States, including especially mine, where disasters happen.

We are still recovering from a big typhoon last fall. The payments going to our State for disaster relief—FEMA is shut down.

And it just doesn't have to happen. It just doesn't have to happen.

We just voted again, in a bipartisan way, to do what the bipartisan agreement with the House and Senate was. Let's fund Homeland Security.

By the way, the reforms for FEMA are in that bill.

There is \$2 million of deescalation training that is really important. There is \$20 million for body cams for ICE. And yet, for whatever reason, they don't want to fund the government during this dangerous time.

I hope that there is a compromise coming forward. The rumor is that after, I think, 5 weeks, our Democrat colleagues are going to finally respond to the White House and Republicans with their ideas. But, again, it is hard to say you want compromise, you want reform on ICE when you haven't put forward anything in almost 2 months. That is not negotiating in good faith.

But I am hopeful. This is too darn important for the safety of our citizens during a dangerous time, for the men and women of the Coast Guard who do such heroic work and who are now not getting a paycheck.

My Democratic colleagues need to quit listening to the far left, come to the middle, and do what we have always done: compromise and vote to fund the government.

CHINA

Mr. President, there is a lot of focus, of course, right now, as there should be, on the Middle East and Iran, and that is important. But I also think it is important to stay focused on the Chinese Communist Party and this dictator who runs it, Xi Jinping, because they are the longest term threat—the biggest threat to our country. There is no doubt about that.

And we need to stay focused on the Chinese Communist Party threat, not just to the United States but to our allies. And this is something that I have been focused on since I came to the Senate.

As a matter of fact, when I came to the Senate, about 11 years ago, I would give speeches on China. And in my first couple of speeches, I was kind of surprised that there wasn't a lot of focus on the Chinese threat, the long-term threat to our Nation. And so I came down here a lot to speak about that.

The good news is that that is all changed. Many of my colleagues—this is actually a very bipartisan issue here in the Senate. I have worked with a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on how we can strengthen our national security, our economic security, as it relates to the biggest threat we have, and that is the Chinese Communist Party.

Now, most of my focus, especially being on the Armed Services Committee, spending 30 years on Active Duty and then the Reserves and the

U.S. Marine Corps—most of my focus has been on the military issues you see here. The President of China, Xi Jinping, is in his camis—kind of look a little ridiculous, in my view, but whatever. They are very focused on their military building.

So my focus has been on military issues, deterrence in the Taiwan Strait, and economic issues, to some degree. But as I have spent time here and I have delved into this challenge—and it is a huge challenge—it is important that we not just focus on those issues.

And the one thing that I think is happening in the Congress right now is a recognition of emerging new technologies that, someday, and maybe even today, might be considered more important than an aircraft carrier, a submarine, or an F-35, because these technologies, in which we are in a race with China in terms of their development, might determine who controls the entire 21st century between the United States and China.

Fortunately, we are starting to focus on these. I am starting to focus on these, and I would say there are three main areas: digital currency and blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, and biotech.

So if you are on the Hill on different committees—and I am on the Commerce Committee as well as Armed Services—we are doing hearings, and we are doing markups. We have established commissions. There is a lot of work, a lot of debate. And, I would say, a lot of it is bipartisan, which I think is good, to focus on these emerging technologies because, in some ways, they are just as important as our military competition with the Chinese Communist Party.

And, in my view, it is becoming increasingly clear that we are in a race with the Chinese Communist Party on who will control these critical technologies and the economic resilience and financial strength and productivity of our economy. And, yes, the national security of our citizens increasingly depends on who wins these races in these critical emerging technology areas.

There are a couple of things related to that that I just want to touch on, and I am going to come down on the floor and speak more and more about where we are on these and what we need to do. But make no mistake, as I dig into these issues deeper, as we get the briefings from the experts, it has become clear that we should not—should not—underestimate the Chinese Communist Party in these areas.

They can compete. They are competing. I think sometimes in the area of technology, we think, well, we are the United States; we are the top dog. But we need to take them very seriously.

And in some areas in these technologies, in subcomponents of these technologies—say, for example, like robotics—I think you can make a good case that the Chinese are already in the lead, and we have to take that very seriously.