

some safeguards to prevent fraud. It is common sense. If you are going to take this Federal money for your State, for goodness' sake, put some safeguards in place so you know whoever is receiving the money is going to use the money as intended, that they will meet the deliverable, that they will show their outcomes.

I think it is so interesting in Minnesota, with the spotlight on that State, that Governor Tim Walz has announced he is not going to seek reelection for that job, that he is dropping out of the race. Minnesotans deserve an immediate resignation from him, and we are hearing that he will not do that.

We know that this issue goes far beyond Minnesota. Just last month, California's nonpartisan auditor found that eight State agencies have a high risk of waste, fraud, and abuse. Yet they have taken zero corrective action—no corrective action. Across the board, the State is at risk of losing billions to fraud in food assistance, unemployment benefits, and in the State's Medicaid Program.

In New York, Republican lawmakers are calling for an independent audit of the State's spending following several fraud scandals. In one case, scammers in Brooklyn used two adult daycare facilities to steal—get this—\$68 million in taxpayer money from the State's Medicaid home care program. A State comptroller's office also revealed that the State provided more than \$500 million in Medicaid benefits to out-of-State residents.

If you live in New York and you are getting benefits through the Medicaid program and you find out that a half a billion dollars has been used to provide benefits for people who are not even residents of the State, you ought to be asking questions.

In Illinois, the State's auditor general found that the government paid out more than \$5 billion in fraudulent unemployment insurance. Well, do you know what? They didn't do a thing about it.

Last month, the Trump administration indicted two men outside Chicago who submitted nearly \$300 million in fraudulent claims to Medicare and Medicaid as well as to private insurers.

Then, this week, in Mississippi, a trial started for a man who faces charges from the Justice Department for allegedly participating in a scheme to steal \$77 million in Federal aid intended for needy families. Instead, the scammers spent the money on luxury vehicles, investments, private schools, and more.

While President Trump works to end this abuse of taxpayer dollars, Congress should do everything possible to support his efforts.

This week, I am introducing the Fraud Accountability Act, which would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to explicitly make clear that fraud is a deportable offense. If you come to our country to steal from the American people, you ought to be de-

ported; and if you have somehow gained American citizenship, you should be stripped of it. Every single Member of this Chamber should support this legislation.

The era of rampant fraud is over. Under President Trump, we are going to continue to put the American people first.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO “AIR PLAN APPROVAL; SOUTH DAKOTA; REGIONAL HAZE PLAN FOR THE SECOND IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD”—Motion to Proceed

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 290, S.J. Res. 86.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 290, S.J. Res. 86, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to “Air Plan Approval; South Dakota; Regional Haze Plan for the Second Implementation Period”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, coal is America's dirtiest energy source. Coal pollution from powerplants befools our air, pollutes our water, and leaches into our food. Coal pollution causes acid rain. Coal pollution causes severe health issues, even death.

Between 1990 and 2020, pollution from coal-fired powerplants killed 460,000 Americans—23,000 deaths per year on average. Despite how massive that death toll is, the trend has been in a good direction. Coal plant-caused death rates have decreased in the last 15 years as more and more coal plants have either shut down in favor of cleaner and cheaper energy sources or—often in answer to Clean Air Act programs—adopted broadly available pollution reduction technologies which significantly reduce but do not eliminate the health-harming emissions and pollution.

One such Clean Air Act program, the Regional Haze Program, addresses haze and visibility impairment in national parks and wilderness areas. Unsurprisingly, coal plants are the Nation's most significant source of haze. The same coal pollutants that drive severe health issues and deaths nationwide, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and volatile organic compounds, also drive haze formation. Haze is a pollution marker. The Clean Air Act's regional haze provision requires States to reduce emissions from haze-causing sources

through controls or retirements where necessary to make reasonable progress toward natural visibility conditions.

The EPA provides guidance regulations that help States develop appropriate regional haze plans which are due every 10 to 15 years. The Clean Air Act presumes that additional controls or retirements will be necessary for reasonable progress. They are thus required each time new haze plans are due unless the State can demonstrate that no action would be the reasonable course.

South Dakota took no action in its latest regional haze plan to address haze pollution over the long term. It made no updates to significantly out-of-date controls at its three major emitters—a coal plant, a cement plant, and a lime plant—and it failed to demonstrate that that inaction was reasonable. The Trump EPA approved the plan anyway.

The resulting pollution will blow downwind toward Midwestern and Eastern States. The EPA's approval puts forward a reading of the Clean Air Act that is blatantly at odds with the text, the context, and the purpose of the act, and that encourages the spread of harm to the downwind States from these polluting plants. Well, there is something we can do about it here.

In 1996, Congress enacted the Congressional Review Act to give Congress the opportunity to vote on administrative regulations. During the Biden administration, Republicans in the Senate forced 35 rollcall votes to try to kill rules that sought to protect consumers' public health and public lands—35 to 0. It was an astonishing record. Now that the Trump administration is in power, it has engaged at breakneck speed to tear down the protections of Americans' health and safety and our environment.

I know it is an uphill struggle in our polluter-funded Congress and particularly with this polluter-controlled Trump administration, but I nevertheless urge support for this commonsense Congressional Review Act resolution and hope that we can make it a brighter day as well as a clearer day for the downwind States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

VENEZUELA

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor and talk about a couple of things.

Earlier today, we had a classified briefing on the situation in Venezuela. I have to say that I am very impressed and thankful for the expertise, the resources, and the work that was done by the men and women on the ground. It was truly an extraordinary operation that couldn't have been done by any other nation other than the United States.

As for those who were injured, I understand they are recovering and that some have been released from the hospital. I hope they heal up safely and

that they know that we are eternally grateful for their bringing a transnational criminal to justice—hopefully so—as he goes through our court system.

NATO

Mr. President, I am also here to talk about what I think is amateurish behavior with respect to the treatment of our NATO allies. It has to start with an interview that I saw with one of the President's senior policy advisers, Stephen Miller, on CNN, a couple of nights ago.

Mr. Miller said that the U.S. Government—“obviously, Greenland should be part of the United States.”

That is absurd. We have to go back and take a look at the relationship to Greenland.

Why am I coming to the floor, a Senator from North Carolina? Because since 2018, I have been the Republican leader for the Senate NATO Observer Group. I have gone to every NATO conference. I have gone to the security conference. I have met with almost all of the leaders of the countries that are part of the 32-nation coalition known as NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Now, let's talk about why I think it was an amateurish comment and something that a Deputy Chief of Staff and senior policy adviser should not have taken the position on.

No. 1, he doesn't speak for the U.S. Government. He speaks for the President of the United States, and on that basis, he can. But when he says that the U.S. Government thinks that Greenland should be a part of NATO, he should talk to people like me who have an election certificate and a vote in the U.S. Senate, because I know what he either doesn't know or he should know, and if he did know, I can't imagine why he would make the comments that he did the other night in a television interview.

Let me give you some facts about Denmark, for example. Denmark, which has responsibility for Greenland—although, Greenland is an autonomous territory under NATO. It is a part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

But let's talk about Denmark for a minute. Denmark was one of NATO's most disproportionately high contributors in Afghanistan, relative to its population, size, and force structure.

What do I mean there? There has been one time in the 75-year history of NATO that the NATO allies responded to the article 5 commitment, which means when one of our NATO allies is attacked, we go there to defend them. It has been exercised one time in the history of the alliance to come to the aid of the United States and the War on Terror in Afghanistan.

Since their first mission began, more than 18,000 Danish soldiers have deployed to Afghanistan with American and British forces. Throughout their deployments in Afghanistan, 43 of their soldiers lost their lives fighting alongside American soldiers, defending our

freedom and holding the Taliban and al-Qaida responsible for the events of September 11.

Forty-three soldiers losing their lives—there are only about five or six NATO countries who lost more. And what is remarkable about this is this is a country of about 6 million people. On a per capita basis, Denmark suffered over six times the fatality rate of Germany and more than three times the fatality rate of France, matching or exceeding the losses of much larger allies with far greater resources.

So despite its small military, Denmark has deployed forces to some of the most dangerous, kinetic combat zones, particularly Helmand Province, fighting alongside UK units at the height of the insurgency. Danish forces accepted frontline combat roles—some lost their lives as a result of it—not low-risk symbolic missions.

For a small democracy, sustaining this level of risk over more than a decade reflects a serious commitment to NATO and a serious commitment to the safety and security of the United States.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this specific language and the list of NATO countries who came to the aid of our U.S. Marines be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Key takeaway: Denmark was one of NATO's most disproportionate contributors to Afghanistan relative to its size, population, and force structure.

Since their first mission began, more than 18,000 Danish soldiers have deployed to Afghanistan with American and British Forces. Throughout their deployments in Afghanistan, 43 soldiers were killed in action.

That is among the highest per-capita losses in the Alliance (second only to Estonia).

On a per-capita basis, Denmark suffered over six times the fatality rate of Germany and more than three times that of France, matching or exceeding losses of much larger Allies with far greater resources.

Despite its small military, Denmark deployed forces to some of the most kinetic combat zones, particularly Helmand Province, fighting alongside UK units at the height of the insurgency. Danish forces accepted front-line combat roles, not low-risk or symbolic missions.

For a small democracy, sustaining this level of risk over more than a decade reflects serious Alliance resolve.

Casualties (by current NATO members):

United States: 2,461; United Kingdom: 457; Canada: 159; France: 90; Germany: 62; Italy: 53; Poland: 44; Denmark: 43; Spain: 35; Romania: 27; Netherlands: 25; Turkey: 15; Czech Republic: 14; Norway: 10; Estonia: 9; Hungary: 7; Sweden: 5 (partner at the time); Latvia: 4; Slovakia: 3; Finland: 2 (partner at the time); Portugal: 2; Albania: 2; Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Montenegro: 1 each; Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Slovenia: 0 recorded deaths.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, some people around here call me cranky. I have got a couple of buddies that call me cranky.

Do you know what makes me cranky? Stupid. What makes me

cranky is when people don't do their homework. What makes me cranky is when we tarnish the extraordinary execution of a mission of fully supporting Venezuela by turning around and making insane comments about how it is our right to have territory owned by the Kingdom of Denmark.

Folks, amateur hour is over. You don't speak on behalf of this U.S. Senator or the Congress. You can say it may be the position of the President of the United States that Greenland should be a part of the United States, but it is not the position of this government because we are a coequal branch. And if that were to come to pass, there would be a vote on the floor to make it real, not this surreal sort of environment that some Deputy Chief of Staff thinks was cute to say on TV.

So you want to get me back to thanking the President for all the good things he is doing? Then give him good advice.

One of two things happened with Greenland. Either, one, the President came up with the idea that maybe we should have Greenland as a part of our assets, and somebody said that is a great idea, versus saying: Mr. President, take a look at our alliance. Take a look at the most important alliance in the history of the United States, the NATO alliance. This could actually destabilize that, Mr. President. Mr. President, you should know, at one point, we had 17 military installations in Greenland, and they would be happy to have us back. They are not refusing to allow us to have access to project power into the Arctic. We could do it without taking over a NATO country.

That is the sort of advice that should have been given. So if the President thought it was a good idea, then he needs the experts to say: Mr. President, that is why this is not a good idea.

I would defy you to find any credible general with a star on his shoulder who would say that it is because they understand that the NATO alliance is what has kept this Nation largely—or this world—largely safe for over 75 years.

The flip side could be that Mr. Miller or somebody else there said: Hey, this would be cool. Let's take over Greenland. It will be like a big aircraft carrier.

Well, that is stupid too. I am sick of stupid. I want good advice for this President because I want this President to have a good legacy. This nonsense on what is going on with Greenland is a distraction from the good work he is doing, and the amateurs who said it was a good idea should lose their jobs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

S.J. RES. 86

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to S.J. Res. 86. This resolution would repeal the Environmental Protection Agency's approval of South Dakota's Regional Haze Implementation Plan.

South Dakota has made substantial progress toward meeting EPA's ambitious 2064 visibility goals and has determined that no additional emissions goals are needed to make reasonable progress.

Overturning EPA's approval would force the State to adopt unnecessary pollution control measures, despite clear evidence that they would not meaningfully improve visibility. These requirements would impose significant costs on South Dakota communities and businesses for little to no environmental benefit, essentially burning money without improving outcomes.

This CRA ignores the fact that South Dakota's emission sources have a minimal impact on visibility in nearby class I areas. In recent years, the primary driver of visibility impairment has been wildfire smoke from Canada and the western United States, not in-State emissions. This resolution substitutes Washington mandates for State-level expertise, dictating decisions on a State the sponsors do not represent and unnecessarily constraining South Dakota's economy.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution.

VOTE ON MOTION

Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled rollcall vote occur immediately.

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

The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. ROUNDS. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), and the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 43, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—43

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

NAYS—50

Banks	Grassley	Moreno
Barrasso	Hagerty	Mullin
Blackburn	Hawley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hooven	Paul
Budd	Husted	Ricketts
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cassidy	Johnson	Rounds
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	

NOT VOTING—7

Britt	Graham	Schmitt
Coons	Padilla	
Gillibrand	Schiff	

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Virginia.

S.J. RES. 59

Mr. KAINES. Mr. President, I rise to speak with other colleagues about my War Powers Resolution, a bipartisan resolution cosponsored by Senators PAUL, SCHUMER, and SCHIFF that will be called up for a vote tomorrow. A number of Senators will speak in this block, most in support of my resolution. I know at least one Senator, my colleague from South Carolina, is scheduled to come speak in opposition.

I spoke at length last night about sort of what I view the big picture of this—and I don't intend to speak very long. It is better now to let others have a chance to speak. But what I wanted to focus on, just briefly, was the fact that we did have a briefing by administration officials in the SCIF this morning, the classified setting, and I am not at liberty to discuss the matters in that setting.

I will say what I said last night. I think it is important on matters of this importance, especially war, when 200 combatants have been killed—and that number is climbing—when U.S. troops have been injured—two still in the hospital—when U.S. assets are arrayed around Venezuela, and when there is now a commitment for the United States to essentially manage and control the Venezuelan economy and even civil governmental services for some significant time, I think it is time for us to get this debate out of the SCIF and into the public.

So I am hoping that the Senate committees with jurisdiction, including the Armed Services Committee, on which I sit, the Foreign Relations Committee, and to the extent this was a law enforcement operation, the Judiciary Committee, will finally start to have the first public hearings where administration officials can be questioned in full view of the public so that the American public knows what is at stake.

I will say one additional thing. I made my Democratic caucus mad early on when I came to the Senate because I challenged President Obama in 2013, his proposed use of the U.S. military in Syria to punish a bad dictator, Bashar

Assad, for using chemical weapons against civilians.

Now, he was a President of my own party and Bashar Assad was a horrible dictator. But despite that, I challenged President Obama's ability to act and deploy U.S. military against Assad, even to punish Assad for bad behavior, without Congress.

I remember the first time I really got shouted out in a Democratic caucus meeting, it was standing against President Obama's ability to do that unilaterally without us.

I tried to maintain that consistent standard under President Obama and then President Trump, term one, President Biden, and President Trump, term two.

Even in an instance—even in an instance—where military action may be a good idea—and I might have voted for use of military action to punish Bashar Assad for using chemical weapons—it should not be done on a Presidential say-so without a vote of Congress.

So the vote tomorrow on the War Powers Resolution is not about whether we like Nicolas Maduro, whether he is a good guy. He is a bad guy. He is a dictator. He has wreaked havoc on Venezuela's economy and on human rights within Venezuela.

It is, instead, whether the United States should engage in military action against Venezuela on a Presidential say-so without a vote of Congress. I believe the Constitution is clear, and I believe the equities, in terms of the respect we owe to our troops, if we are going to deploy them, gives life to the constitutional provision and really explains why it is there.

The last thing I will say before I yield to my colleague from Kentucky is one of the arguments that is being made—and this is not out of the classified setting because it is being made publicly by the administration—is this was not a military action; it was a law enforcement operation.

I think that argument is specious. I think it is—it kind of doesn't really pass the laugh test. Now, it might be an argument you would make if there were a covert operation to go into Venezuela in the dead of night and extract an indicted criminal, Nicolas Maduro—not a criminal until he is prosecuted but an indicted person—to bring back to the United States and face justice.

If it were just the execution of an arrest, you might make the argument, maybe that is just law enforcement. And you might make it even if the military was somewhat needed to carry out the arrest warrant.

This is far different than that. The boat strikes against Venezuelans in international waters, the amassing of 20 percent of the American Navy around Venezuela, the use of 150 aircraft deployed from 20 bases throughout the Western Hemisphere to carry out this operation, the arrest and deposition of Nicolas Maduro and his wife, but then also the U.S. decision to occupy and control the Venezuelan economy, its oil reserves, the indication

from the administration that this is not a few days or a few weeks; it is likely a few years of U.S. occupation and involvement in this country with a military blockade stopping commerce into and out of Venezuela—this is not an arrest warrant. This is far bigger than that, and it is the kind of hostilities that Congress specifically had in mind when they wrote the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

I urge my colleagues to cast a vote for their own relevance. Cast a vote for your own relevance by saying that power that the Constitution gives to Congress, that it is the only body that should declare war. If you vote for me tomorrow, you reserve your right to vote for war, if you think it is a bad idea or a good idea.

But if you vote for the resolution, all you are voting for is the proposition that the Nation should not be at war with an end run around you but should only be at war if you have had the opportunity to debate and vote and put our thumbprint on the validity of the mission, and your thumbprint should be necessary if we are going to send our troops into harm's way to potentially be injured or killed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Virginia for leading this effort. There is likely no issue more important that confronts us as a nation, as a people, as a Congress, than whether or not to send our young men and women to war.

I take a backseat to no one in my disdain and loathing of state-sponsored socialism. In fact, I wrote a book, "The Case Against Socialism," describing the historic link between socialism and state-sponsored violence.

I wish the people of Venezuela well and sincerely hope that they will not repeat the mistake of electing socialists that have plagued the nation since the 1970s.

Whether or not socialism is evil, however, is not the debate today. The debate today is about one question and one question only: Does the Constitution allow one man or one woman to take the Nation to war without the approval of Congress? Full stop.

That question is bigger than regime change in Venezuela, bigger than the claims that the ends justify the means, bigger even than the depredations and evils that multiple socialist autocrats have perpetrated upon the once great country of Venezuela.

Even those who celebrate the demise of the socialist, authoritarian regime in Venezuela, as I do, should give pause to granting the power to initiate war to one man. The power to initiate war is so vast a power that it must be confined by checks and balances.

The debate today would not be happening if our leaders read and understood the Federalist Papers. The constitutional power to initiate war is placed squarely on the shoulders of Congress.

Current congressional leaders squirm and would like to shift the burden of initiating the war to the President. Less than courageous Members of Congress fall all over themselves to avoid taking responsibility to avoid the momentous vote of declaring war.

But make no mistake, bombing another nation's capital and removing their President is an act of war, plain and simple. No provision in the Constitution provides such power to the Presidency.

No Supreme Court has allowed the Congress to abdicate its role in the decisions of war and peace, and no Congressman of any self-respect will argue otherwise.

Our leaders debated fully whether or not to grant this power to the President. To a man, from Jefferson to Hamilton, the spectrum of our Founding Fathers, they all agreed with the words that Madison wrote that the executive is the branch most prone to war, and, therefore, the Constitution, with studied care, vested that power—vested the power to declare war in the legislature.

Founding-era arguments in support of ratifying the Constitution demonstrate that our government does not entrust the decision to go to war to just one person. At the Constitutional Convention, Charles Pinckney argued that uniting the war powers under a single Executive would grant to the President monarchical powers.

It would make him like a King. They did not want a King. They were tired of the endless wars of Europe. They took that power and placed it with the people's representatives. They didn't want to make it easy to go to war. They wanted to make it hard to go to war.

Some will argue—they will say that Congress is so feckless. They will never declare war.

Well, guess what, when we have been attacked, we have been virtually unanimous. When we were attacked on 9/11, the vote was virtually unanimous to go after the people who attacked us. When we were attacked at Pearl Harbor, once again, the vote was virtually unanimous to go to war.

James Wilson, one of the Founders, assured Americans at the Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention that the proposed Constitution would not allow one man or even one body of men to initiate hostilities.

In Federalist 69, Alexander Hamilton stated the Constitution gave the Presidency fewer war powers than those of the British Monarch and that the American President would be restricted to conducting the operations of the Armies and Navy. In other words, the Constitution, the declaration of war, that power would remain with the legislature. The execution of the war—how many troops are stationed here; how many battleships are stationed here—that would be the prerogative of the President.

The beginning of the war, the initiation of the war, the declaration of the war would reside with the people and

their representatives to make it less likely that we go to war.

The founding generation was largely united in the opinion that the American President would not be endowed with the monarchial powers to initiate war unilaterally. These Founders were not just engaged in a sales pitch; they were accurately representing the Constitutional Convention's decision on how to divide the war powers. Initiation, declaration of war, would be the prerogative of Congress; execution, fighting the war, would be the prerogative of the President.

An early draft of the Constitution gave Congress the power to "make war" rather than to "declare war." This was debated, and during the debate over this, South Carolina's Pierce Butler rose to defend the proposition that the new American Government should vest the war-making powers with the President.

So this one man from South Carolina rose and said, not only should the President execute the war, he should initiate the war also.

But others stood up. Elbridge Gerry, a delegate from Massachusetts, was so aghast by Butler's suggestion that he rose to say that he "never expected to hear in a republic a motion to empower the Executive alone to declare war."

And in response to Butler's proposal to vest all the war powers with the President, Gerry joined with James Madison to successfully propose amending the draft of the Constitution to give Congress the power to "declare war." They specified that Congress would have the power to initiate or declare war, but the execution of a war would be the President's power.

But they wanted to make sure that the President would be able to defend the country against foreign attack without awaiting congressional action.

This comes up all the time about: What if we are being attacked? What if it is an emergency? Can the President act without Congress?

Of course, he can. No one has disputed that. Military action in defense from another military attack has always been the prerogative of the President.

People say: Well, this had to be a secret.

Well, guess what. It was no secret that we had an entire armada lined up outside and across the coast from Venezuela. They knew we were there. They knew it was a possibility that we were coming in. Had we voted to declare war, yes, they might have been chastened even more. They might have even decided to negotiate before, had the entire Congress said: We are declaring war.

So in some ways, a declaration of war actually is more potent if you are trying to effect diplomacy. But, instead, we didn't vote. People said: Oh, they wouldn't be surprised.

If we had voted to declare war, the President still doesn't have to divulge the time or place of the war. Those secrets can still exist.

And, in fact, it is even more justified for the President not to tell us anything about the attack until afterward, if we have already given him permission to initiate a war.

And people say: Oh, this is just a technicality. Why should we care?

Well, if you have sons or daughters, you should care, because if we have unlimited war, if we have no limitations on the war-making power of one person, what happens when you get someone who will run amok with war?

I am not even talking about this President. I am talking about “what if.”

That is why the rules are in place. The rules are in place to prevent a President, at one point in time, from running amok and having millions of our soldiers strewn around the world.

Does anybody remember the Battle of the Somme? A million soldiers died over an 18-day period in World War I. Now, that war was authorized, and it was still awful. But can you imagine a million soldiers dying without a declaration?

And people say: Well, what are you talking about? They are already gone. No one is in Venezuela.

What we are talking about is taking a country to war. We aren't just talking about Venezuela. We are talking about the power of a President to have a million soldiers die in an 18-day war.

People say: We are not talking about that.

Then we would declare war. You have to declare war at the beginning.

And then people say: Well, it is not a war. All it was was an arrest warrant. It was just a drug crime.

Oh, he was guilty of possessing machineguns. That sounds like that is being made up as humor.

In 1934, we passed a law in our country saying you can't own machineguns. It is an American law. Does anybody in their right mind—does any sane individual who can read in our country—believe that it applies to the security forces of a foreign dictator or a foreign President; that if their guards have machineguns, they are guilty of breaching a 1934 U.S. law? What kind of world would we live in if we could accuse people around the world and simply go arrest them and send the military to quiet down all of their defense systems so we could arrest them?

We had intelligence reports in our country that reported that, per our intelligence, the leader of Saudi Arabia was guilty of or was involved with killing an American journalist. What if a President decided they wanted to arrest him? Can they do that without a congressional vote or permission?

There are arguments that the current President of Brazil has unfairly imprisoned the previous President of Brazil. Now, you can have an argument on both sides. You can listen to the facts, but would you want your President to be allowed to go to Brazil, free the former President, and put the current President in jail without a vote of

your representatives? What kind of world would that be? Who could be for that?

The Constitution empowers the President to defend the country against sudden attacks initiated by any foreign power. The initiation of hostilities by the United States that requires deliberation and authorization must be voted upon in Congress.

Our Founders' intent was not a close call open to equivocation. Pundits argue that Presidents have been ignoring this restriction for decades. That is true. But that is not an argument. That is just an excuse, and a lame one at that.

The Constitution is clear: Only Congress can declare war. The power to declare war was too important to be left to the competence of one man. As Jefferson wrote, “in questions of power then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the constitution.”

See, the Constitution isn't chains on the people; it is chains on your representatives so they don't usurp the power, so your representatives don't take you to war without careful deliberation.

Our Founding Fathers were explicit, and yet they still worried that a branch of government might resist the chains of the Constitution. So in pondering how they would enforce these checks and balances, they took to heart Montesquieu's maxim that if the powers of the Executive and the legislature, if they are combined—if there is no difference between the legislature and the Executive, if they are combined together—there can be no liberty. Those are strong words. They felt liberty would be endangered or imperiled if all the power resided in one person.

Madison wrote that by dividing the powers, by separating the powers within the Constitution, within the branches of government, that would pit “ambition against ambition.” The ambitions of a President to usurp power would be pitted against the natural ambitions of the legislature to keep power. The natural allure of power would be checked by each branch jealously guarding the prerogative of power.

Who among the Framers would have ever guessed or conceived of a time when Congress would lack any ambition—any ambition at all? Who would have predicted a time when Congress would be so feckless as to simply and obediently abandon all pretense of responsibility and any semblance of duty so as to cede the war power so completely to the President?

It is as if a magical dust of soma has descended through the ventilation systems of the congressional office buildings. Vague faces, permanent smiles, and obedient applause indicate the degree that the majority party has lost its grip and become eunuchs in the thrall of Presidential domination.

A President is never truly checked by the minority party, other than through elections. Meaningful checks and balances require the President's party to stand up and resist unconstitutional usurpations of power. Until that happens, the dangerous precedent of unlimited war-making power will continue to be abused by Presidents of both parties.

I recommend a “yes” vote on this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

MR. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come down to the floor in support of the resolution, but I am hoping to use my few minutes to step back from the dizzying torrent of news that we have been delivered, often contradicting sources of news from the President and his advisers, and just ask some basic questions about the wisdom of this extraordinary military endeavor and the administration's future plans in Venezuela.

I think the basic question that people are asking in my State—and, I imagine, the same is true all over the country—is, Why did we invade Venezuela? Why is our entire national conversation today seized by this question of Venezuela? Why does Senator Kaine have to come to the floor and offer a very simple resolution to clarify that the President doesn't have the authority, unilaterally, to take military action overseas without the consent of the people? Because for people in Connecticut, they haven't been spending a lot of time, over the last 12 months, thinking or talking about Venezuela. Venezuela isn't terribly relevant for the people I represent, who are worried about an economy that seems to be stagnant; healthcare premiums that are doubling, tripling for many people in my State; prices that are going up on all the stuff that you need to afford to live. And, all of a sudden, the President is talking only about Venezuela.

So why did we invade Venezuela? Why are we still talking about Venezuela?

Well, let's rule out the reasons we know don't hold water. It is not because Venezuela presents a security threat to the United States.

There was a reason we went into Afghanistan. However badly that occupation ended, there was a reason we went into Afghanistan. They were harboring a terrorist group that had attacked the United States.

Venezuela is not harboring any nonstate actors that have plans to attack the United States. The Venezuelan Government is not a security threat to the United States of America. So you can cross off that reason. It is not because Venezuela is a security threat to the United States, and everybody basically understands and knows that.

Now, the administration spent a lot of time talking about drugs. Their initial forays with respect to military intervention in and around Venezuela were targeting these boats that they

claimed were carrying drugs. And, you know, that makes a little bit more sense to the American people because there are thousands of Americans that are dying every year due to overdose.

But those overdoses, as people know, are mainly from a drug called fentanyl. Well, Venezuela doesn't produce any fentanyl. What Venezuela produces and ships is cocaine.

Now, cocaine can kill you. But that cocaine isn't even coming to the United States. Reports are that 90 percent of that cocaine is going to Europe.

So to the extent we were targeting drug boats off the coast of Venezuela, to the extent that any of the rationale for the action against Maduro had to do with the drug trade, that drug trade doesn't really have anything to do with the American epidemic of overdoses. That will continue unabated, no matter what we are doing in Venezuela.

And, then, it doesn't have anything to do, apparently, with the restoration of democracy in Venezuela or the best interests of the people of Venezuela, because immediately after the action was taken against Maduro, the Trump administration lined up behind Maduro's second in command, who is, as we speak, ramping up the repression of political speech and political activities in Venezuela. All the bad actors in the Maduro regime, with the exception of Maduro and his wife, are still there, running a kleptocracy, stealing from the Venezuelan people, shipping drugs out of the country, while continuing to destroy the Venezuelan people's ability to protest.

So this doesn't have to do with a security threat to the United States. It doesn't have to do with the flow of drugs to the United States. It doesn't have to do with restoring democracy inside Venezuela.

And so, in those moments and days after the invasion of Venezuela, we were left to wonder: What is it all about?

And Donald Trump basically told you. I mean, he did tell you. He said it was about oil. He said that he wants access to Venezuela's oil. He wants the companies that are close to him to have access to Venezuelan oil.

Remember, there was this meeting in Florida in which the oil companies came down to see him during the 2024 campaign, and they told him—this is a report. This is not an allegation. This is a mainstream media report. The oil companies said they would give him a billion dollars for his campaign in exchange for favorable treatment when he became President.

Now, he has already given them a lot of favorable treatment, but, boy, this would be a coup—the oil industry having full access to the world's largest petroleum reserves.

But, today, this morning, in our briefing, we did learn that there is another objective.

Yes, Trump wants control of the oil for his friends. But today in our briefing—and also in public remarks so

there is no issue with me sharing this with you—the administration made clear that there is another purpose for seizing the oil, and that is nation building.

This is the business we thought we were getting out of. Donald Trump promised the country that he wasn't going to repeat the mistakes that we made in the past in which we tried to impose our will on a foreign country through military intervention or the threat of military intervention. But what they are proposing to do is exactly that.

It comes in a slightly different form than what we did in Afghanistan and Iraq, but it is from the same playbook. Here is their plan: They are going to seize control of Venezuelan oil under the threat of gunpoint, and then they are going to use that oil as leverage to micromanage the Government and economy of Venezuela. Let me say it again: We are going to seize Venezuelan oil by gunpoint. We are going to use control of that oil to micromanage the country.

That is nation building. That is nation building.

And as much as it should worry you that there is not a good national security justification and the only justification for this invasion is to get control of their oil, it should worry you more that now the plan is not just to seize the oil for the purposes of enriching Wall Street and the oil industry, the purpose is to seize the oil so the United States can manage and run the country of Venezuela.

Why should regular Americans care about that?

Well, first, it is this perpetuation of the same Bush-Cheney fantasy that America can impose its will on a foreign nation through the power of American military force.

Now, for now, this looks and feels different than Iraq or Afghanistan because there aren't hundreds of thousands of troops inside Venezuela, but let's make it clear. This is just a different kind of military force because the only way that we get the oil is through a military blockade—that is absolutely an act of war—and the threat of another invasion if the leader—whomever it turns out to be; today it is Delcy Rodriguez, who knows who it will be tomorrow—doesn't comply with our wishes. So we are essentially encircling Venezuela with the American military and telling them that if they don't do what we want, we are going to stop and board their ships. We are going to attack their country again.

And, again, this is not speculation. Donald Trump has said this is the plan; that if they don't do what we want, we will be right back inside Venezuela.

This doesn't work. It has never worked in the past. It is the essence of the quagmire that we got ourselves in, in Iraq and Afghanistan; the belief, this myopic belief that neocons, that hawks have, that warmongers have, that the

United States can use its military to impose our will on a foreign country.

And let me tell you, every country is unique and difficult to micromanage from afar, but Venezuela is a complicated country. We are talking about 30 million people. We are talking about active, armed insurgency groups. What happens when you try this Iraq-Afghanistan strategy is that, in the short term, it breeds resentment and extremism. That is what we saw with the growth of ISIS and the regrowth and reconstitution of the Taliban.

And in the long run, the country essentially just decides to wait you out. They knew in Afghanistan we were going to tire at some point and leave. So will the kleptocrats in Venezuela. They will play ball with us, but at some point the warships are going to leave. At some point, America can't devote one-third of its Navy to the waters around Venezuela. And as soon as we leave, the kleptocrats and the corrupt leaders will be right back in charge. If they don't want to change their country from within, if there isn't a viable mechanism to do that domestically, it is almost impossible to impose that from the outside.

The second reason that Americans should care is that it is illegal, and that is the subject of the resolution. It is illegal. An embargo is an act of war. Repeated military strikes followed on by invasion is an act of war.

And this engagement is not just a hostile act against Venezuela, it will inevitably draw increased frictions with Russia and China. Now, we shouldn't be afraid of friction with Russia and China as a principle. They are our adversaries.

But the reason that the Constitution says the people should be in charge of the decision as to whether to enter into military activity in a far-off nation—no matter whether it is a big nation or a small nation—is because there are often spillover impacts and affects. And if we are going to run a long-term naval blockade of Venezuela, if we are going to be running the economy of Venezuela from the White House, the American people have to have a say in that. The Founders, in fact, required that.

And lastly, the reason that the American people should care about this new plan, the nation building of Venezuela through the threat of military force, is because it is an enormous distraction from what actually matters to the people of this country, and so I will just end where I began. Nobody in the State of Connecticut was asking me for an invasion of Venezuela prior to the Christmas break. Everybody in my State knows that this has nothing to do with their interests.

Lives are going to be lost in this country when millions of people lose their insurance in the coming weeks. There are kids who are going hungry, who are being fed lunch and dinner but not breakfast or just dinner and not

lunch and breakfast because of the nutrition cuts that have been imposed by Republicans.

The problems that Americans are facing require a White House that is intent on running the United States of America. But this White House, under the plan that they have revealed today, is going to be running the country of Venezuela. And it is just true that when we were involved in the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan, it occupied an enormous amount of time at that White House. The amount of time that the President and his team spent worrying about Baghdad and worrying about Kabul—it was a distraction from the job of running the United States. And so maybe more than any of the other reasons that people should care about this plan to nation-build in Venezuela is that it is just even more reason to doubt that this President is sincere at all about doing what he said he was going to do, which is lower costs for people.

Costs are going up. Healthcare insurance is disappearing. And the President is telling you that, for the foreseeable future, he is going to be spending just as much time thinking about running Venezuela as he is about running the United States.

Finally, I will just say, if the Energy Department bill does make it to the floor of the Senate—it is being debated this week in the House—I will offer an amendment to that bill to prohibit the requisition of Venezuelan oil for the purposes of nation building.

That will, of course, be an endeavor that the Energy Department will be involved in. They will likely have to spend millions of dollars, enormous amounts of resources, to take control of that oil to sell it on the open market. That is a disastrous plan, as I have outlined, for America and the world. And so I will just tell you that we will have a chance to debate this plan if that appropriations measure reaches the Senate, and I would commend my colleagues to take a look at it and support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, Donald Trump has taken us back to the era of gunboat diplomacy over the last 4 months, back to that era when a powerful nation would station its gunships off the coast of another nation in order to compel them to do what we wanted to enable us to have access to their resources, to force them to enable our corporations to take over their economy. It is a deeply powerfully resented strategy for nations to say: Hey, that militarily powerful other nation came and threatened us with their gunboats in order to take our resources and profit the more powerful nation—gunboat diplomacy. And yet here we are.

This is hot off the press from CNN. Two senior White House officials told the CNN reporters: “During conversations led by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the Trump administra-

tion told Venezuela’s interim president Delcy Rodriguez that the country must cut ties with China, Iran, Russia and Cuba, and agree to partner exclusively with the US on oil production.” And that “Rodriguez,” the Acting President, of Venezuela, “must also agree to favor the Trump administration and US oil companies for future oil sales.”

Gunboats off the coast. Threats to say we will keep grabbing your oil tankers to prevent you from selling your resource on the international market unless we, the United States, take control of your oil. Sorry, Venezuela.

Well, this certainly wasn’t about the future of a better Venezuela for Venezuelans. You know, just 18 months ago, the people of Venezuela voted in a Presidential election, and they voted for a man named Gonzalez, who was a stand-in for the champion of democracy, Maria Machado, who just received the Nobel Peace Prize for her work. They voted, according to the estimates of monitors, about a ratio of 2 to 1—2 to 1—for democracy.

No, Venezuela is no stranger to democracy. They had a democracy for three decades, and they lost it to the internal corrosion of the separation of powers and the checks and balances of a democracy. And certainly that led to the current tyranny, the authoritarian state that they live in now.

But did the Trump administration say: We want to help Venezuelans reclaim their country? No. They said: We like dictatorships. We just want a pliable dictatorship. So they said: We are leaving in place this entire structure of corrupted military and government officials with massive corruption, and yet we will have a new Acting President, who has assured us that she will do what we want.

And what do we want? We want your oil. We want it under the control only of U.S. corporations.

That is hardly a message that helps the United States in our standing or our interests in the world. First of all, it produces enormous hostility from countries that faced that type of coercion in the past. They well remember the United States using its economic might, its military might, to try to exploit their resources through our U.S. corporations. So it undermines our collaboration around the world.

You know a second thing it does, it undermines the respect we are held in—or used to be held in—for advancing the vision of democracy, of government by and for the people, kind of the light that we brought to the world to say: The world shouldn’t be in a situation where citizens are ruled by powerful people for their own gain. No, they should be able to make their own decisions for their own future, for their own better future.

But you didn’t hear any discussion about honoring the will of the Venezuelan people who voted 18 months ago, 2 to 1, for democracy.

So now we are looking at a situation where we see other challenges that

flow from this, this continuation of a dictatorship by Delcy Rodriguez, the Vice President, who Secretary Rubio has said is more pliable, more manipulatable, will more service our interest than the predecessor, and yet all the corruption of that authoritarian government, all of the repression left fully in place.

President Trump said:

If she doesn’t do what’s right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro.

Leave the dictatorship in place. Put a person in charge we think is more going to bend to our pressure, and threaten her—the President of the United States threatened her with something worse than what he did to Maduro.

Trump’s goal is clear: He doesn’t mind if there is a dictatorship, as long as it is our dictatorship, serving us, the American corporations, and the Trump administration, rather than the Venezuelan people.

The people of Venezuela deserve free and fair elections.

And then let’s talk about how this entire setup for this gunboat diplomacy was based on a massive lie to the American people. The Trump administration said: This is about stopping drugs coming into the United States that have done so much damage to our families.

Well, we are all very sympathetic to stopping every bit of drugs that come into our country. We have cocaine. We have fentanyl. We have meth.

But here is the story: On the Venezuelan exports of cocaine, expert after expert says, overwhelmingly, that is the path of drugs to Europe, not the United States.

And then the Trump administration said: But—wait, wait, wait—there must be fentanyl down in Venezuela. We are stopping fentanyl from coming into the United States.

But that, too, was another lie. The fentanyl comes from Mexico. It comes across our southern border. It is made with precursors from China. We are pressing China to end their distribution or their importation or exportation of those precursors into Mexico, and we are working with the Mexican Government to stop the flow into the United States, doing everything we can to find those places where the fentanyl is made. We need to stop fentanyl in every possible way, but Venezuela is not the source of the fentanyl problem.

I think about how it was the case with George W. Bush that he created a fake story about weapons of mass destruction to lead us into a massive regime-change strategy and nation-building strategy in Iraq. Huge amounts of American treasure and lives paid the price. Four thousand U.S. servicemembers died, and \$2 trillion of our American treasure that could have built our schools, could have built our healthcare system, could have built our infrastructure was wasted because of a big lie told to the American people.

And now we have the Trump administration with this big lie that this was about drugs, when it turns out that it is about regime change and it is about oil.

What bothers me is a lot, but it is the fact that the administration directly lied to the American people and lied in the classified hearings that they held up here on Capitol Hill, saying: Nope, no plans for regime change.

Well, it turns out those plans had been developing over a very significant period of time.

So if it was about drugs, by the way, the President wouldn't have pardoned Juan Orlando Hernandez, a drug kingpin, right in the middle of the process of saying he is trying to stop drugs. Here is a guy who was sitting in our prison because he was the architect of a cocaine superhighway into the United States of America, delivering an estimated 400 tons of cocaine, devastating hundreds of thousands of American families, and Trump busted him out of prison while he was saying he was absolutely trying to stop drugs. You don't send a message about stopping drugs by taking a kingpin and setting him free, and yet that is exactly—exactly—what happened.

And then we have this issue of the administration saying: Hey, this isn't a military operation—no, no, no. It is a judicial operation.

If it is a judicial operation, then what we are talking about is an American indictment supported by an extraterritorial rendition, a fancy term for going abroad and kidnapping the person whom we have an indictment on.

Is that a principle that we abide by in the law? Are we saying: Hey, Canada, if you have an indictment, come to the United States of America and grab an American citizen. We are fine with that.

I say: Hell, no. We don't want any country coming to the United States of America and grabbing people off our streets, and yet that is the principle that Donald Trump just promoted and exemplified to the world: We are going to go kidnap somebody we have an indictment for.

And if it was about an indictment, then it would have ended the moment that he was on the plane being brought to the United States. But it doesn't end—does it?—because we are hearing from the administration that it is about us now running Venezuela.

Obviously, this was a military operation—a military operation not in support of an indictment; a military operation in support of a regime change and in support of taking oil.

That is why my colleague from Virginia is bringing forth the War Powers Resolution—because if it is a military operation, it should go through Congress because our Constitution says so.

If we go back to how the Founders viewed this situation, we can turn to James Madison, who wrote to Thomas Jefferson and said:

The constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly, with studied care, vested the question of war in the Legislature.

That is our Constitution—vested in the legislature because issues of war and peace should never be entrusted to one person. It is too tempting. That is why our Founders put it in the responsibility of this Congress.

So to my colleague from Virginia, thank you for bringing forth this War Powers Resolution.

Under the leadership of the last year, the House and the Senate have failed their article I responsibilities in three very significant ways. First of all, they have not defended the power of the purse placed here with Congress, not the President. Every time the President shuts down a program and says, "It is authorized, it is funded, but I am ending it because it doesn't align with the priorities of the administration," that is an authoritarian statement, breaking our Constitution, and all 100 Senators should be down here on the floor and saying: Hell, no.

We failed.

Second is in oversight. It has now been 4 months that the administration has been preparing their war plan, striking ships in the Eastern Pacific, striking boats in the Caribbean. Not a single oversight hearing—not one. That is our responsibility, and we failed it.

And now we are failing on the third key provision, which is that it is Congress that carries the responsibility for declaring war or authorizing war, not the President.

So this week, due to the resolution being brought forth by my colleague from Virginia Senator Kaine, we have a chance—all 100 of us—to weigh in and correct this failure on this third point and reclaim the responsibilities that we took on when we took the oath of office to become a U.S. Senator. That is our responsibility.

This should pass overwhelmingly to tell the President: no more military action in Venezuela unless Congress provides an authorization for the use of military force.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of my colleague from Virginia's resolution prohibiting the United States from engaging in any further military operations in Venezuela. And I want to begin by asking a simple question: Have we learned nothing?

Nicolas Maduro is, without a doubt, a horrendous and illegitimate dictator. He lost the 2024 Venezuelan Presidential election, but through fraud and force he stayed in power. He is a known drug trafficker and has been indicted twice by the Department of Justice on multiple charges of collaborating with drug cartels and smuggling drugs into the United States. And he is a brutal dictator responsible for murder, tor-

ture, and systematic repression of the Venezuelan people.

But the question before us today is not whether Nicolas Maduro is a brutal dictator or not. The question is, Have we learned nothing?

I am so reminded of a similar debate in Congress before the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In 2002, as a Member of the House of Representatives, I spoke out against President Bush's intent to invade Iraq. I believed the Bush administration dangerously underestimated the potential consequences of a war with Iraq and did not have a clear path forward after the initial military operation.

And, lo and behold, I was right. And, as a result, thousands of brave service-members died, taxpayers were forced to pay hundreds of billions of dollars, and we got ourselves into a yearslong war that destabilized the entire Middle East.

So, again, I am here to ask the question: Have we learned nothing?

I have those same concerns with President Trump and Venezuela today as I had with President Bush and Iraq.

The U.S. military operation in Venezuela last week was remarkable. There is no doubt our military is the most capable in the world. However, President Trump's concept of a plan for Venezuela and whether the Senate will allow him to drag our country further into conflict is much less clear.

Yes, our military operation to capture Maduro last week was a success, but I would remind my colleagues that the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 was also considered a success. Yet, in both Iraq and Venezuela, the President did not have a clear plan about what would happen next. And that uncertainty today is dangerous and risks leading the United States into an all-out war in Venezuela.

President Trump has openly claimed that the United States would run Venezuela and mused about deploying U.S. military troops to the country—in other words, taking the United States to war.

President Trump and his administration have offered confusing and contradictory claims regarding their intentions. The President has offered multiple reasons for last week's operation: stopping drug trafficking, securing Venezuelan oil, and protecting the Western Hemisphere from our adversaries. Yet Venezuela is not the center of drug trafficking into the United States, and, just last month, Trump pardoned the former President of Honduras, who had been sentenced to 45 years in prison for running his country as a narcostate.

Our economy does not depend on access to Venezuelan oil, but President Trump is after Venezuela's oil to enrich his Big Oil buddies. And, if anything, our adversaries will only feel empowered by President Trump's reckless violations of international law.

Let me be clear: There is no U.S. national interest in Venezuela worth the lives of my constituents in Wisconsin.

Wisconsinites want President Trump to live up to the promise of lowering costs back home, to live up to his promises that he made during his campaign. They do not want him to pull our country into another war that the American people did not choose.

The President does not have the unilateral authority to invade foreign countries, oust their governments, and seize their resources. Under the Constitution of the United States, the power to go to war lies with the people's branch. It is time for Republicans and Democrats in Congress to reassert our constitutional role in authorizing military force when needed and hold President Trump accountable before the United States is engaged in another war that the American people did not choose.

So, again, I ask my colleagues across the aisle: Have we learned nothing? Have we forgotten how dangerous it is for our country and our constituents when Presidents recklessly take us into conflict without a plan to get us out? Have we forgotten the lessons we learned from each of the thousands of Americans killed in Iraq?

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MR. GALLEGOS. Mr. President, 25 years ago, I made the best decision of my life and became a U.S. marine. I fought in Lima Company 3/25 alongside some of the bravest men I have ever known, and some of my closest friends didn't make it back. Coming home, knowing it was for an illegal war for oil was devastating, and it is still devastating. And now, 20 years later, here we are again at that same crossroads. We cannot blindly go into another illegal war for oil. I know I am not the only one—not the only veteran seeing the parallels: the oil, the regime change, quick declaration of victory without a long-term plan. And we do not want our country to go down this path again.

Of course, we know Venezuela has different geopolitical realities, and this won't go down exactly as what we saw in Iraq. But what is the same is this: Trump's reckless use of military power without a plan for what comes next or respect for the men and women who will be sent to fight this war—will engage in it—is going to cause problems.

He has shown us he could care less about the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who are screaming from the rooftops right now not to make this mistake again. If we allow this to continue, I will have to look into the eyes of young men and women in Arizona—working-class kids like everywhere in this country who are disproportionately the ones who serve in our military—and explain what they are risking their lives for.

And I can't because it is for oil.

The American public does not want this. They do not want to be the world police. They don't want their sons and daughters from Florida, from Arizona,

from New Mexico, from New York sent to fight for Big Oil. They don't want another forever war, and that is the slippery slope we are going down right now.

When I talk to people in Arizona, they want their politicians to focus on healthcare, on housing, on work—so kids actually have a job when they graduate college—not these oil companies in Venezuela. That is what Trump campaigned on. But that is what Trump is now saying he is going to do, invest in oil instead of Americans.

Who does this war really benefit? It is clearly not the American people—Trump has done little to help them—but certainly to help Big Oil and to satisfy trigger-happy neocons like Marco Rubio. This is exactly the moment that Marco Rubio has been itching for, and he played Donald Trump like a puppet. Marco Rubio came into the Senate and lied straight to our faces when he said this was not about regime change. That was not true.

And now, it is clear to everyone that regime change was always the goal. That is exactly why I introduced a War Powers Resolution last month—because I knew this moment was coming. The Constitution is clear. Only Congress has the authority to decide when to go to war. Whatever you call this something we are in right now—whatever spin Marco Rubio puts on it—at the end of the day, when people are shooting, it is war. When the President deploys the power of the U.S. military, it is war.

Now, the Trump administration has to answer to what comes next. They must tell us who will govern Venezuela or how this will end. And they just can't do that now.

As a veteran, that terrifies me, and it should terrify you. This is the same trigger-happy neocon logic that dragged us into Iraq, into a forever war killing thousands and thousands of Americans, many of them my friends. And the American people have been clear that we do not want to be in another forever war.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Michigan.

MS. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the War Powers Resolution. As a Senator from Michigan, as a former CIA officer who served three tours alongside the military in Iraq, I saw conflict up close.

But I think it is important that we put this decision to go into Venezuela in context. It is confusing. President Trump campaigned for nearly 2 years on staying out of foreign wars. That was a huge signature part of his campaign. So why do we find ourselves now “in charge,” in his words, of Venezuela?

Let's put it in context. All fall, the White House has been attacking boats in the Caribbean Sea, in the Pacific, saying that we were at war against drugs and the flow of drugs, even

though no fentanyl is produced in Venezuela. These drugs were cocaine headed towards places like Europe.

Fine, drugs were the reason we were talking about these strikes.

January 3 comes along. U.S. forces entered Venezuela, from what I can tell, in a truly amazing and heroic military operation, captured President Maduro and his wife, and brought them to New York City. Why? Why do we find ourselves doing this?

I think there are really two reasons, one unspoken, one spoken. First and foremost, President Trump is clearly deciding that he wants to distract the public from talking about his domestic failures. Donald Trump, as I said, campaigned on getting out of foreign entanglements. But let's just review. He has launched military action in nine different localities across the world: seven countries, two seas.

We went back and looked. That is the single greatest number of countries with military action that any President has taken in the history of the United States in their first year. So the man who said that he wasn't going to get us involved has done more strikes in more countries than any President and has taken more strikes in this first year than Joe Biden took in the entirety of his Presidency. So the idea that he is trying to keep us out of things is—I think—should be put to bed. He has made himself a foreign policy President.

Why? He doesn't want to talk about his domestic agenda. He doesn't want to talk about his lack of action on the things that actually matter to Americans. Most people did not wake up wondering when we could invade Venezuela, when we could take over Venezuela. Most Americans want him to be attacking—not other countries, but the things that are holding them back from living their best and most free life.

Think about what he promised. On healthcare, our premiums have gone up, for many Americans, doubling and tripling as of January 1; housing prices, up; energy costs, up; jobs, down with cuts, particularly in places like Michigan, in manufacturing. All the things he said he was going to attack, he has ignored. And all the things he has done abroad are for you to think he is a big tough guy, he is Presidential, he is in command of something.

I have three brothers. I grew up in a very active household. If you remember—those of you who got the crap beat out of you the way I did—when your brothers say, “Look over here,” “look over here” and sucker punch you, that is purposeful to distract you. That is what Donald Trump is doing with military action in his first year: “Look over here.” We are talking about Venezuela today and talking about places like Greenland instead of talking about the housing emergency or healthcare emergency. So the unstated goal by the President is to distract you. And please, please, please don't let him do that.

Secondly, the stated goal. The President has been very open. This is not about drugs. It was never about drugs. This is about taking over Venezuela and particularly their oil fields. We used to make fun of the conspiracy theories of George Bush taking over Iraq because of the oil. Donald Trump just admitted it outright. He is happy to brag about the fact that he is taking over the oil fields of another country. The only problem is, if you talk to some of the oil executives, as of this past Saturday, they had zero plan, zero idea.

The administration had no plan for the day after this removal of Maduro. And I have to tell you, as someone who served in places like Iraq, haven't we learned the lesson over and over and over again? This country always tries to get into "limited" military engagements. That is what Kennedy said about Vietnam. That is what Bush said about Iraq and Afghanistan. We may go in with intentions of things being very limited, but the world has a vote on how things go in these other countries, and we do not know where Venezuela is going to go.

Oil companies, despite how they are portrayed in Hollywood, are very conservative. They have to think in 20-year time horizons. They can't make willy-nilly moves. They have to make a profit and think about that over 20 years. It is not a surprise that some of the early plans earlier this week about what the Trump administration was going to have the oil companies do have now fallen by the wayside.

The President has said we are going to throw money at this problem. Now, the President is saying and Marco Rubio is saying we are going to control the oil. "Don't worry. The U.S. Government is going to move that oil into the United States, and we are going to help sell it, and we are going to hopefully make some profit off of that."

The only problem is the oil companies are still extremely, extremely cautious and sort of suspicious of this plan. These plans to invest in Venezuela would involve them investing a ton of money upfront and just hoping that long after Donald Trump leaves, they are going to make a profit. So it is not a surprise that he had no plan and he has no idea where this is going to go.

You don't have to imagine instability in Venezuela. In 2017, we had protests on the ground. Back in the early 2000s, the then-government had to fire or ended up firing 18,000 people in the oil industry because there was a general strike. We have no idea and, certainly, this President has no idea where this is going to go. He had no plan going in, but we are all along for the ride.

I think it is just as important to understand the context as we talk about the legal authority to go into a place like Venezuela. I would say what we all need to be cautious of is this idea that whether you go in trying to do a limited military operation or not, at the

end of the day, it is Americans' sons and daughters from places like Michigan that are called up to create calm, to create stability. You break it; you buy it.

This administration has been very open about the fact that they now believe they own Venezuela. I stand here as a Senator, yes, but also as someone who has seen this movie in other places. I call upon the administration to just be transparent. Just play it straight. Don't try to distract us. Don't try to sucker punch us. Tell us what you are doing in foreign countries, then get back to the work you said you were going to do. Attack healthcare, not Venezuela. Get to the domestic things you promised, and stop leading us around by our noses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, no regime-change wars.

No regime-change wars.

I heard it from leftists. I heard it from rightwing people. I heard it from BERNIE SANDERS. I heard it from Tulsi Gabbard. I heard it from Donald John Trump: No regime-change wars. And yet here we go again.

Almost 25 years ago, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney cooked up claims of Saddam Hussein having weapons of mass destruction to justify going into Iraq. Last month, just 2 weeks before ordering the capture of Nicolas Maduro, Donald Trump designated fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction. Fentanyl is terrible. It is not a weapon of mass destruction.

It was Donald Rumsfeld all those years ago who falsely claimed there was "bulletproof evidence linking Saddam Hussein to al-Qaida." Marco Rubio has spent the past few months accusing Maduro of leading a cartel that even our own DEA doesn't recognize.

Just like the Bush administration insisted earlier on that oil revenue, not American taxpayers, would cover the cost of reconstruction in Iraq, Trump is hoping people will buy the fantasy his incursion into Venezuela will be cost-free. The parallels to Iraq are alarmingly obvious. In fact, according to Trump himself, here is the only way in which the situations are different:

The difference between Iraq and this is that Bush didn't keep the oil. We're going to keep the oil.

"We're going to keep the oil." He could not be any clearer. The Justice Department can dress this up in charges of narcoterrorism. Secretary Rubio can talk about the promise of a better life of Venezuelans as a secondary effect. But Trump is being very explicit about the main goal. It is the oil.

This is the same guy who for 10 years and over three Presidential runs made not getting into wars a central premise of his campaign. It scrambled the political coalitions. It really did. There were a lot of young veterans who came back from Iraq and Afghanistan and

said, "What the hell is the Democratic Party even for if not to be the party of peace?"

It doesn't mean that we are opposed to the use of force in all situations. But as Barack Obama used to say:

I'm not opposed to all wars. I'm just opposed to dumb wars.

We got away from that. Donald Trump seized that opportunity because he saw those young men and women who came home who were injured with physical and mental injuries and who were trying to reintegrate into society, and said: What was all that for? We have to stop regime-change wars.

That is why he beat Hillary Clinton.

But it turns out Trump is basically George W. Bush but with the corruption ratcheted up. How else do you explain the administration's talking to oil companies before the strikes but not to Congress—talking to oil companies before the strikes but not to Congress?

The Gang of 8, not all of us—I understand 535 of us can't be briefed on an ongoing, kinetic, risky military operation. I am an adult here. I don't think we have a right to know—all 535 of us—but there is a thing called the Gang of 8. They are supposed to be trusted with the most sensitive national security information, and they were not trusted with the national security information in realtime. But do you know who was trusted with that national security information, we think? Oil executives. This is not an accusation I am making. This is an assertion that the President is making, which is that they were in on it before the kinetic engagement. There is no reasonable explanation for this.

We all know how this is likely to end, and it will not be good for us. We paid a mighty price for our blunder in Iraq in the thousands of lives lost, trillions of dollars spent, and untold new problems in the region and elsewhere. In response, as a country, we said no more—no more war—but especially not when our fundamental national interests are not at stake. Yet Donald Trump is now knowingly, enthusiastically dragging us into another conflict again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, this is an important debate we are having, and I will give you my view on how all of this works.

Under the Constitution, two things occur: The President of the United States is designated as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, not Congress. So the Commander in Chief is one person, the President. Declaring war is a duty of the Congress. In the case of modern times, it requires 535 people to vote.

The question is, Can you use military force as the Commander in Chief without a declaration of war?

The answer is yes.

There have been five declarations of war in the history of the country: the

Spanish-American War, the Mexican-American War, the War of 1812, World War I, and World War II. Only five times in the history of our Republic has the Congress exercised its responsibility and right to declare war—five times.

Now, does that mean that other actions taken by the Commander in Chief don't exist where there were no declarations of war?

The answer is no. They do exist. We have been able to find 130 examples of a Commander in Chief using military force without a declaration of war by the Congress and also without congressional authorization under the War Powers Act.

One example is in 1989, when President Bush 41 literally invaded the country of Panama. He sent ground forces in, sustaining casualties, to take down Noriega, who was the leader of Panama, who was a drug kingpin. Panama was being used as a drug safe haven when President Bush 41 authorized the military without having congressional approval to go in and take him down—take him out of Panama and put him in an American prison. We used ground forces, and we lost people in that endeavor.

Things like this, President Clinton used and threatened military force to take a military coup in Haiti down and returned power back to the elected leader of Haiti.

I could go on and on and on about how different Presidents have used military force that has sometimes involved casualties without their having congressional approval. So I don't want to hear anybody tell me that this has never been done before. It is actually the norm.

What is odd in America is to declare war by the Congress. The norm is for the Commander in Chief to use military force as he or she deems necessary to protect the national interests.

The 1973 War Powers Act is a congressional statute, not a constitutional provision, that has a series of reporting requirements when military force is used, crescendoing with an approval process by the Congress, and if that approval is not given, the operations must cease.

In my view, it is patently unconstitutional. You are creating, through the War Powers Act, 535 Commanders in Chief. The Members of Congress sit in judgment over the Commander in Chief, and under the War Powers Act, they have a veto under the law. I think that violates the constitutional structure that has been around since the founding of the Republic.

Now, what can Congress do?

If Congress doesn't like a military operation, the Constitution says that it is Congress that appropriates money, not the President. So, for instance, in Venezuela, if you don't want any American boots on the ground, I think you could come forward and pass through the appropriations process a prohibition of funds to be used to have

American ground forces in Venezuela. If you don't like the seizing of the oil for the mutual benefit of Venezuela and the United States, you could say that no money could be used on behalf of the American Government to seize the oil. We would win the day because that is the way you check what you think is an out-of-line action by the President when it comes to using military force. You can do those two things.

What we can't do is substitute our judgment for the decision itself. We can't all sit around up here and say: You know, I don't know if we should use troops here or troops there. I don't like the way this thing is shaping up.

That is chaos.

President Trump is well within his legal rights under article II to use military force to advance the national interest, which is to end the drug trafficking dictatorship of Maduro, which every Republican and Democrat condemned, and President Trump finally did something about it. He was flooding our country with drugs, and it was a safe haven for Hezbollah and other drug cartels. Everybody said he should go. Well, President Trump made those words real. He used military force in the advancement of a national security interest of this country: to stop Venezuela from being a safe haven for drug dealers and international terrorists.

He has a plan to rebuild the country and eventually transition it, through an election, to a new regime. Regime change will come to Venezuela through the ballot box. In the meantime, he is threatening military force to people who want to undercut this effort.

He is taking the oil and selling it and creating an account for the benefit of Venezuela, which is basically out of money. He is telling those people who are holdovers from the regime: I want to work with you to get to where we need to go, which is to rebuild the country and have a free and fair election, but if you don't work with me and you try to undercut what I am doing, then you can meet the same fate as Maduro.

Maduro was an indicted drug guy. He had indictments for being a drug trafficker. The argument is that this operation was to enforce the warrant. It was more of a law enforcement activity because he was the President of the country—not legitimate, by the way, and everybody pretty much denied that he was the legitimate President when he stole the election.

So the bottom line here is—the theory that some of my colleagues are hanging their hats on is that this is legitimate because it is actually a law enforcement function. I respect what you are saying, but I don't agree. This is clearly beyond issuing a warrant. This is clearly beyond using law enforcement power. The game plan is not only to take the indicted leader of the country—who is a horrible person—and put him in jail but to change the country in a way that doesn't threaten

America in the future, in that it will not, in the future, be a drug haven for cocaine to be dumped into our country, and it will not be a safe haven for Hezbollah and other drug cartels.

That is the goal. Well, that is going to take a while. That is not about the warrant; that is about our national security interests.

People ask about “America First.” What does it mean?

Here is what I think it means: “America First” means that we are not going to tolerate—in Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba—countries in our backyard that are run by international drug cartel leaders, who are not legitimate in terms of being elected, to poison this country; that we are going to clean up the drug caliphate in our backyard; and that we are going to use a combination of tools to do that, including military force.

So there will probably be another one of these War Powers Act resolutions. I want to tell my colleagues where I am going to be on that: If you don't like what you see coming about threatening force in the future to have a transition to make Venezuela free and fair and if you don't like taking the assets of the country and selling them to prop up a failing economy, then limit the President's ability to do that by denying funding for those operations. That would be lawful.

The War Powers Act, in my view, is unconstitutional because you are not denying funding; you are basically vetoing the decision of the President to enact a national interest, and the national interest is far beyond taking Maduro down and putting him in jail. It is about transforming the country so we will never live again with Venezuela threatening America by dumping cocaine into our country—killing tens of thousands of people—and being a safe haven for international terrorist groups like Hezbollah. They are aligned with Russia. The goal is to make sure that it never happens again, and that will be a process that involves military force, potentially, and diplomatic engagement.

What the Congress, I fear, is going to do is to limit the President's ability to achieve that national interest by misapplying the War Powers Act—by substituting our judgment for his when it comes to how to change Venezuela.

The bottom line is, if you don't want troops on the ground—right now, there is no need for them—and if you think that is a bad idea, then let's pass an appropriations bill that denies funding for that. If you don't like taking the oil, selling it, and putting the money in an account to get Venezuela back on its feet and to help pay us for the operations, then say through the appropriations process: No money can be spent to do that.

That is within our lane.

The idea that we are going to reject the plan of transforming Venezuela that has been drafted by the Commander in Chief because you don't

agree with it means that he is not the Commander in Chief; we are. So, if a congressional enactment can veto the Constitution, then we are really off script here.

A congressional statute has to give way to the Constitution. The Constitution names the President as the Commander in Chief—only the President. The Constitution says that Congress and only Congress can declare war.

After 250 years, what have we learned?

There have been five declarations of war. They are unusual. There have been over 130 military actions without congressional authorization that have used military force to advance the national interests. That is the norm. The War Powers Act throws that into chaos.

So I look forward to future debates. President Trump has all the constitutional authority he needs to execute the game plan against Venezuela and to advance our national interests.

Again, if you don't like what he is doing, there is a constitutional process available to you, and that is to cut off funding. The other process would be impeachment. If you think he is doing something unlawful under international law, you can impeach him. Those are your two options.

So I will be voting against this idea, and I will be voting against this idea in a new form in perpetuity because I think it creates a constitutional imbalance of where the Congress, over time, becomes the Commander in Chief, not the President, and we cannot run this country having 535 Commanders in Chief.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I think the real danger is that over time, this Congress has conceded and delivered its constitutional responsibilities to the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue and President Trump and other executives. It is time for Congress to take seriously its responsibilities, including the constitutional responsibility to decide when to declare war.

Here at home, our fellow Americans are facing higher costs for virtually everything: for groceries, for electricity, childcare, healthcare. The list goes on and on. Folks all over the country are working nonstop just to make ends meet.

So you would think that President Trump would be focused on keeping his campaign promise to bring down prices. He said he was going to do that on day one of his administration, but that is not what he is doing. He is doing the opposite.

He and Republicans right here in the Senate and in Congress are actually driving up costs, including healthcare costs across the country. Members of Congress on the Republican side voted against extending tax credits to help middle-class Americans afford their healthcare. In fact, those tax credits

expired at midnight on December 31, and 20 million Americans are seeing their healthcare costs spike.

President Trump is also breaking another promise. He is breaking his promise to keep America from being dragged into costly foreign conflicts. He is not focused on nation building here at home. He is focused on nation building overseas—exactly what he said he did not want to do.

First of all, he bailed out Argentina, and now, he says he is running Venezuela. He says he is in charge of Venezuela. In fact, just this morning, President Trump's Secretary of Energy Chris Wright said the United States would be overseeing the sale of Venezuela's oil production "indefinitely."

Here is a Washington Post story: "U.S. vows to control Venezuela oil sales 'indefinitely'"—Energy Secretary says.

That is what this has been about from the beginning, grabbing and controlling Venezuela's oil for the benefit of Trump's billionaire buddies. That is why Wall Street appears to be drooling at the prospect of making more money in Venezuela.

So I think we should start by pointing out the fact that the Trump administration has been engaged in a long campaign of deception and lies to the American people about the reasons for this adventure in Venezuela.

They lied to the American people when they said this was all about stopping the flow of drugs into the United States. We all support that goal. But that is not what this has been about. If this was about stopping the flow of drugs into our country, the Trump administration would not have proposed big budget cuts to the Drug Enforcement Administration. They would not have shuttered the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force. They shut it down.

President Trump talks about deaths caused by fentanyl in the United States. He is absolutely right about that. What he does not tell the American people is that the fentanyl killing Americans is not originating or even transiting through Venezuela.

And, of course, if President Trump was serious about fighting drugs, he would not, just as he did weeks ago, have pardoned the former Honduran President and notorious drug kingpin Juan Orlando Hernandez.

I should say, even closer to home in December, we learned President Trump also pardoned a Baltimore City drug kingpin whom the DEA called "one of the largest cocaine and heroin dealers to be arrested by the DEA in recent history."

That sends a signal to everybody that Donald Trump is willing to pardon people who have been engaged in poisoning our people.

So this has not been about stopping drugs for Donald Trump. And it certainly wasn't about removing an illegitimate leader—and Maduro is an illegitimate leader—but Donald Trump

cozies up to dictators all over the world.

Of course, yesterday was the fifth anniversary of Donald Trump's efforts to overturn a free and fair election right here in the United States.

The President himself has made clear that this is all about the oil. When he announced the fact that the United States had seized Maduro, he said: "We're going to get back our oil" and "We need total access . . . access to the oil and to other things in their country," meaning other natural resources in Venezuela. He uttered the word "oil" 19 times when he announced the seizure of Maduro.

Indeed, while President Trump did not consult or notify Congress about his plans, as is required, he revealed that "the oil companies were absolutely aware that we were thinking about doing something."

So colleagues, Donald Trump wants to grab the oil, and he wants to do it to help his billionaire buddies. Case in point is Paul Singer. He is the billionaire head of Elliott Investment Management and a Trump megadonor. He recently acquired Citgo, the U.S.-based subsidiary of Venezuela's state-run oil company in November 2025, just a few months ago. He acquired it for approximately half the company's estimated value.

Now, according to the Wall Street Journal in an article on January 5:

Now Elliott appears poised to reap the rewards of owning Venezuela's most valuable foreign oil asset. The regime change could lead to an increase in Venezuelan oil production, which would likely provide cheap feedstock to Citgo's Gulf Coast refineries and increase the company's value, analysts and refining experts said.

So a huge win for one of President Trump's biggest donors.

Now, I think we all need to acknowledge and salute our troops who took part in this operation. They performed magnificently, flawlessly, bravely. I want to thank them on behalf of my fellow Marylanders.

But it is also outrageous that President Trump would put the lives of American service men and women at risk to grab Venezuela's oil to enrich his friends on Wall Street. At least six of our American service men and women were wounded, approximately 80 Venezuelans were killed in this operation, including civilians, not to mention the over 100 people who were on those boats over the last couple of months who had been killed.

And while the Trump administration and congressional Republicans attempt to bask in the euphoria of Maduro's removal, the hangover of running Venezuela is still to come. In fact, it has started.

In recent remarks on Venezuela's future after Maduro's capture, President Trump said:

You know, rebuilding there and regime change, anything you want to call it, is better than what you have right now. Can't get any worse.

Well, actually, colleagues, it can, and we have seen it before; two decades in

Afghanistan, years in Iraq stand as a warning: The United States spilled blood and treasure on state-building fantasies that failed, undermined American interests, and left a more fractured and unstable region in their wake.

The United States has no mandate to decide Venezuela's future. That is up to the Venezuelan people, not to be imposed through U.S. military regime change efforts that are really motivated by oil company interests and not to be dictated by threats of occupation.

This time, President Trump has co-opted the U.S. military in service of those goals, benefiting oil companies and his billionaire buddies. And in doing so, he has charted a dangerous playbook that they say they may employ elsewhere.

As we all know, since seizing Maduro, President Trump has threatened further action against Cuba, Colombia, and Greenland. After being asked about an operation in Greenland, which he has threatened several times with invasion since beginning his term, he said—President Trump said:

We need Greenland.

Just yesterday, the White House confirmed in a statement that they are discussing “a range of options” to acquire Greenland, not excluding military force.

When asked about a U.S. operation against Colombia, President Trump said:

It sounds good to me.

Look, what we have seen is President Trump resurrecting a policy from a by-gone era, one which would be better left in the dustbin of history, the Monroe Doctrine.

That was encapsulated in his recent press conference as well when he said that “American dominance in the Western Hemisphere will never be questioned again.”

What he means by that is that he will deploy U.S. forces wherever he wants for whatever purpose he wants—and, again, trying to leave Congress out of the equation. You know, you listen to our Republican colleagues here who apparently just want to give the Executive a blank check.

If you look at the National Security Strategy that the Trump administration unveiled a few weeks back, you will see how serious a change their proposal is because it essentially throws overboard the idea that the United States will employ a foreign policy based on values and principles, that we will support a rules-based order, human rights, freedom, and democracy.

However imperfectly we have done that—and we have been far from perfect—that has been one of the guiding lights for U.S. foreign policy. And when you throw that overboard in favor of this new policy, which says we will essentially reassert a dominance in the Western Hemisphere, it is clearly a signal to others around the world—or at least this is the way they will hear it—

that they get free rein in their neighborhoods, which explains why President Trump has been so weak when it comes to negotiating with Vladimir Putin over Ukraine.

We can explain it when we understand that when Donald Trump says “Ukraine is your neighborhood,” you, Vladimir Putin, get to do what you want in Ukraine. So he invites Vladimir Putin to a summit in Alaska, thinks he is going to sweet talk Putin. As soon as the summit is over, Russia and Putin escalate their attacks against Ukraine.

Maybe in Donald Trump's mind it is like: Well, you know, Ukraine is in your neighborhood, none of my business. That is a very dangerous signal to send.

Of course, President Xi—I mean he is looking at Taiwan 90 miles away and saying: Well, that is in my neighborhood.

So Donald Trump has unleashed this idea that we are going to focus only on the Western Hemisphere—or mostly on the Western Hemisphere—and that we are essentially going to live by the rule that might is right. When you unleash that idea around the world, other significant powers will listen and it will make the world a lot more dangerous and it will undermine American interests.

So I do want to close where I started, which is instead of engaging in these costly foreign adventures that cost billions of dollars and put American lives at risk, we should be doing what Candidate Trump said he was going to do, which is focus on making sure we improve the lives of American people right here at home.

That is not what the President is doing. That is what we should be doing, and we should start by saying no to this foreign, illegal adventure by supporting Senator Kaine's resolution.

And then we should get about making sure that we work to bring costs down here in the United States, including, after the House passes later this week, legislation to restore those tax credits that help people afford their healthcare. We should take that up in the Senate and get it passed.

Let's focus on helping the American people here at home rather than putting Americans and their lives at risk in costly foreign adventures to get our hands on Venezuela's oil for the benefit of Donald Trump's donors and billionaire buddies.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Maryland for his wise words. I was glad to be here for the end of his remarks because he is right about this moment that we are facing.

Donald Trump has painted himself as the peace President since 2016, promising that “we will stop racing to topple foreign regimes that we know nothing about.”

In 2024, he said that “I'm not going to start wars, I'm going to stop wars.”

One year into Donald Trump's second term, we know how false those promises were. Just in the last 12 months, President Trump has ordered military action against seven countries, blown up alleged drug boats in the Caribbean without any authorization, deployed Federal troops to at least 10 cities in the United States of America, all without congressional authorization.

Now, he has bombed and invaded Venezuela to capture its dictator, Nicolas Maduro. I have said over and over again, for years, how illegitimate Maduro was as President of Venezuela, and that is not up for debate.

And by the way, it is also not up for debate what an excellent job the U.S. military did in its effort to get him out of there. It was extraordinary to learn exactly what they went through to get there. They did their job. They did their job. They did it excellently.

And now Congress has the responsibility to do our job here. As we meet here today, President Trump is blocking Venezuela's ports from exporting oil while threatening to collapse their economy and also to threaten future military strikes against the country if they don't comply with his will.

Despite what the President claimed on the campaign trail, war and threats of future wars with Colombia, with Cuba, with Mexico, and even our NATO ally Denmark, when it comes to Greenland, are now animating features of his foreign policy.

The President's team claims their operation to oust Maduro was a “law enforcement” operation about drugs. That is the legal pretext for the action that they have led, but Maduro is now in jail in New York City and 15,000 U.S. troops and an American armada are still hovering off Venezuela's coast.

We already captured Maduro. He is in jail. So what are our troops doing down there? Clearly, this is not about law enforcement. This is not about democracy. No, as my colleague from Maryland was saying, this is about oil. The President has made that painfully clear.

President Trump mentioned oil 20 times in his January 3 press conference after Maduro was captured. He complained that Venezuela “stole” oil from the United States, and we must “run” the country to take the oil back.

But the United States doesn't need the oil. Even U.S. oil companies didn't want this invasion, nor did these U.S. companies ever own oil or own land in Venezuela. The Venezuelan Government definitely nationalized its oil industry in the seventies. That is true. From that point forward—by the way, that was when I was about 6. I am so old.

But that did happen in the seventies when I was about 6. From that point forward, Venezuela was certainly not an easy place to do business. I don't think anybody here would say that, but American companies stayed, stayed

there despite the nationalization and lack of full compensation they should have had that was ordered by international courts.

In fact, American companies never pressed for higher compensation during that initial nationalization. And I would say failing to reimburse American companies is surely outrageous, but a decades-old legal dispute over a compensation is not a legitimate justification for the United States to go to war. And very few Americans—very few Americans—would support putting boots on the ground to secure Venezuela's oil.

It would be shockingly irresponsible for the President to send American troops to "run" Venezuela as he promised this weekend, seemingly, with the sole goal of accessing that country's oil.

Bolivia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Mexico, Angola, Peru, and countless other countries have nationalized some American oil assets in the 21st and 20th centuries. All of them took advantage of American companies.

Would the Trump administration have us invade and occupy and govern all these countries to reverse that history? Would the President wield our military as tax-funded security for the expansion of American oil giants in these markets?

Remarkably, incredibly, this seems to be his plan. President Trump has floated sending American troops to secure U.S. companies to rebuild Venezuela's oil infrastructure. He has even said the U.S. Government could subsidize these oil companies. Estimates suggest it will cost a staggering \$110 billion to bring Venezuela's oil and gas infrastructure back to peak production levels and take at least a decade.

I, for one, can think of a lot better uses for that money. And instead of "no new wars," this President has plunged us into a quagmire—paid for by the American taxpayer—seemingly, with the primary goal of giving expensive handouts with respect to oil.

Why should the American people foot the bill for this misadventure? Why should our tax dollars fund private interests in Venezuela? Why should American troops risk their lives for any of this? Perhaps the greatest irony is that Chevron, America's only remaining major oil company in Venezuela, was not even asking for any of this to happen. Instead they simply asked the Trump administration, as they had the Biden administration, to allow their continued operation in Venezuela, which President Trump had restricted during his first term.

Other American oil firms weren't asking for this either. Few have much desire to go back into Venezuela, which helps explain why Chevron and other American companies have no plans—no plans—to spend, as the President says, "billions and billions of dollars" rebuilding Venezuela's oil industry as the President has declared.

Despite the President's promises to not start new wars nor pursue regime

change operations abroad, today there are 15,000 brave U.S. troops and an American armada off of Venezuela's coast all without congressional authorization. And the President is threatening more attacks on more countries, including every time you turn the TV on, it is another country: Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Greenland, part of Denmark, a NATO ally.

Congress has not authorized any of these dangerous potential operations which risk destroying alliances and relationships that have long kept the American people safe. The Trump administration, however, continues to trample on our Constitution with unauthorized military actions while threatening others, weakening U.S. democracy, and making the world more dangerous in the process.

Congress cannot allow this to stand. I congratulate the Senator from Virginia for his leadership to make sure the American people's voices are heard in this moment, on this floor, in this Chamber. We must reassert our role to prevent the President from his continued irresponsible conduct.

And I think it is really important for us, as I have heard the Senator from Virginia say—it is critically important for us to hold public oversight hearings in which the administration explains to the American people what they plan to do with the thousands of U.S. troops off Venezuela's coast, with their plan to "run" Venezuela, and with the regime in Caracas over which they now claim to have control.

The unusual thing about where we are right now is this is not some after-action report where kinetic activities is already done and now Congress is complaining that it hasn't been brought into the loop. Fifteen thousand troops are off the coast of Venezuela today. The administration should be here today explaining to the American people what the plan is for those troops.

And if it is, in fact, to secure oil assets for the United States of America in Venezuela, which I don't believe the American people will support, I know the American people will never support putting boots on the ground. The President said I don't mind using the words "boots on the ground." I think the American people will mind it.

With so many troops and assets still in the region, this is the opportunity for Congress to help determine what our path forward is going to be in our backyard, right here in this hemisphere.

The American people did not vote to send U.S. troops on President Trump's project to Venezuela, but I don't think they voted to dominate the Western Hemisphere either, which is what President Trump says his overall mission is.

And as my colleague from Maryland said, he is willing to twist the Monroe Doctrine. He is not even following it. He is twisting the Monroe Doctrine, which the United States actually used

to keep colonial powers out of our hemisphere, to justify his own colonial intentions to exploit Venezuelan oil.

That is a complete inversion of what the Monroe Doctrine is. So I guess the President has rightly amended it to call it the "Donroe" version of the Monroe Doctrine. But in any case, it is gunboat diplomacy, a 19th century foreign policy we have not seen on this scale since President McKinley was the President of the United States. And it will normalize a world in which "might means right," as the White House is saying today, doing away with the rules-based international order that we helped build, that has served the United States so well since World War II.

All of this would seem to be part of the President's embrace of a "spheres of influence" arrangement with China and with Russia. The President seemed totally fine with allowing China to dominate Asia and Russia to dominate Europe, as long as they let us dominate the Western Hemisphere. That is a 19th century idea if there ever was a 19th century idea.

He clearly sees little reason to compete or constrain them as demonstrated by his willingness to accept the trade deal with China's Xi Jinping that overwhelmingly—overwhelmingly—favored Beijing. He was giving Xi Jinping stuff that he didn't even ask for the minute he was worried that somehow we were going to get cut off from his critical minerals.

But as an unrestrained Chinese Middle Kingdom will inevitably expand outward, as will Russia with its imperial design, history shows us the result will be a global conflict when these ambitions collide, as they inevitably will, a global conflict that ultimately will implicate the United States and put America in danger.

This begins to show you how out of the mainstream this President's view of the world is. His constant abandonment of basic principles of international law and order are, again, going to eventually reverberate against America's national interests. The only question is when.

Indeed, the kind of "spheres of influence" arrangement on which the President seems to be so obsessed or focused is exactly the arrangement that produced two world wars. It is exactly why, after World War II, the United States and our allies established the rules-based order to peacefully resolve conflicts, regulate global trade, and ultimately ensure rules-based international exchange. That order was never perfect.

And the United States often undermined it with our own hubris, particularly the invasion of Iraq—which I opposed. And we need to learn from our own mistakes, including by avoiding reckless new wars like the one President Trump has launched.

Nevertheless, the postwar order that prevented war between the great powers, among the great powers, and for

all its flaws, it largely kept the American people safe. And criticizing that order seems pretty easy, given its imperfections. But the critic's task becomes harder once they are forced to compare it with what came before, the anarchy that preceded the Second World War and what China and Russia offer for the future of this world.

This is what President Trump risks with his 19th century foreign policy, with his actions in Venezuela, his lawless strikes across the Caribbean and Pacific, his threats to invade Colombia, Cuba, Greenland, and Mexico. These actions and threats will have serious implications for U.S. national security today and tomorrow.

In the case of Greenland, the President's threats risk the unity of NATO, our most vital alliance, the most successful alliance in world history. They risk setting precedent for authoritarian regimes all over this world to intervene militarily under the guise of going after leaders accused of criminal conduct or simply to access valuable natural resources or critical technologies under their control.

Donald Trump, President Trump, says he wants to dominate "our hemisphere," he calls it. Surely, China's Xi Jinping wants to dominate what he would describe as his region in Asia, and Vladimir Putin would like to dominate what he sees as his region in Eurasia. President Trump's recklessness risks normalizing such imperial aggression, putting us on a pathway toward a more dangerous world in which "might means right" and the rule of law is abandoned.

Colorado cannot allow this President to create such a world for our children, which is why we need to continue to fight on a bipartisan basis when possible to prevent another forever war in Venezuela or beyond and to constrain the President's dangerous, dangerous ambition because our country deserves better than this administration's recklessness and our children surely do as well.

Thank you for allowing me to speak here today, and I hope this will be a moment when we come together and fulfill the demands that our Constitution requires of the people fortunate enough to serve in this body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Colorado, and I want to thank my colleague from Virginia for their leadership on what is the very important question before the U.S. Senate.

In the weeks and months leading up to the capture of Nicolas Maduro, President Trump sent 15,000 U.S. military personnel to the Caribbean and Venezuela, that included Special Forces, Marines, and specialized units from all of our branches of government. He sent 13 warships to the Caribbean, including the USS *Gerald R. Ford* Carrier Strike Group, and several am-

phibious assault ships. More than 100 advanced combat aircraft were deployed, including F-35s from the Vermont National Guard. And we can estimate that thousands of military and intelligence personnel were involved in planning and executing the raid that seized Maduro.

A mobilization of this size costs hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions. This operation is, and apparently always has been, about one thing: seizing control of Venezuela's oil. President Trump and his closest advisers have made that clear. It is about President Trump using the power that he has as President, without restraint, to get the oil that he wants.

This is not my assertion. These are President Trump's words:

We built Venezuela's oil industry with American talent, drive and skill, and the socialist regime stole it from us . . .

It was the greatest theft in the history of America. They took . . . away from us.

We're going to have our very large United States oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure, the oil infrastructure and start making money for the country. We will be selling large amounts of oil to other countries.

I think it is a fair question. If that is the President's goal, what is in it for farmers in Vermont? Small business owners in Ohio? For the elementary school teacher in Texas? For a truck mechanic in South Dakota? There is absolutely nothing in it for everyday Americans. And we spent hundreds of millions of dollars on a mission that can only benefit the oil industry who didn't even ask that this be done in the first place.

So what about this operation is "America First"? It might be "Trump First" or it might be "Chevron First," but it is not "America First." And we just saw the revelation that a major donor to President Trump bought at bargain basement prices a Chevron subsidiary and can stand to make literally billions of dollars. Should our foreign policy be about pure profits, as opposed to pure benefit for the American people? About profits that go to big corporations and to the President's friends? That is what is going on here.

There is no limit. Within hours of Maduro's capture, President Trump was threatening Greenland; they have minerals. Colombia, they have resources as well. Cuba and Mexico. Is this the world that will work for us or the world that we want where rather than acting as a defender—actually the leader—in maintaining long-established principles of national sovereignty, we threaten and invade countries to seize their natural resources? That is the way it was before 1945: "Might makes right." That is a dangerous world. And is that the world that the United States wants to leave to future generations?

There are two questions before the Senate. One is a policy debate, the wisdom of this attack on Venezuela. There is no dispute about the evil of Maduro.

None. There is enormous respect and appreciation for the professionalism, the bravery of our military that did something that, frankly, seems impossible. But in service of what? This is an extraordinary military victory, but it is in service of a neocon dream. We saw this in Libya. We saw this in Iraq. We saw this in Afghanistan.

President Trump is now saying we are going to "run the country." And President Trump is heralding that Maduro is in jail in Manhattan. We all are. But left behind in Venezuela is every structure that Maduro put in place. His hand-picked Vice President is now the leader. His repressive, brutal, murderous Interior Minister is still in charge. So, yes, Maduro is gone, but everything he built remains behind. What kind of victory is that?

The second question—and I thank Senator Kaine for being the leader on this—is one that every person who serves in the U.S. Senate has to answer: Will we do our job? This is not optional. Article I of the U.S. Constitution says it is up to Congress to authorize the use of military force in going to war. It is our job, and it is our responsibility. And one of the enormous threats to our democracy right now is the capitulation of too many Members of the House and too many Members of the Senate of powers that are vested in this body, under the Constitution, in ceding those authorities to the Chief Executive.

Why is that wrong? It is wrong because there is wisdom in the Constitution's separation of powers that power cannot be concentrated in one branch of government. And it is as a result of one branch of government ceding its authority and its responsibility to the Executive. We have an obligation to protect our constitutional role, and it is not about us. It is about our country. And what is a greater responsibility than the decision to send men and women into combat? That is our job.

And, Senator Kaine, thank you so much for all of your efforts to remind us of our responsibility and to tell us to do our job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, I rise today because the American people are looking at this administration's actions in Venezuela and asking: What is the plan? As someone who worked in national security before coming to Congress, I have been in the situation room for discussions about military operations. I worked on and in both Afghanistan and Iraq, where our country has seen the risk of getting pulled into open-ended commitments trying to run other countries.

And I have seen the importance of always having a plan for the day after, something this administration clearly did not do. So what the American people are seeing from this administration is hubris, but without strategy—a dangerous combination.

Moreover, it seems President Trump is drunk on this hubris. We have now seen Stephen Miller saying that the United States has the right to take Greenland. Secretary Rubio threatened Colombia and Cuba. It appears that President Trump thinks that reverting back to an era of imperialism or “spheres of influence” is the best way to demonstrate power, that just because a military operation was skillfully executed by our brave military personnel without Americans killed, that there are no costs, that a world where “might makes right” benefits American interests.

He is simply wrong. We live in a global world—if anything, an increasingly shrinking world. Borders and oceans no longer protect us against many of the threats we face today, including cyber threats and the changing nature of warfare. The idea that protecting our immediate surroundings will keep the American people safe is a dated, 19th century idea that long ago became irrelevant.

This approach also risks taking our eye off the ball on other critical challenges—like the one posed by China—while opening further feuds with critical allies and partners.

Just look at the letter signed the other day by leaders from Denmark, France, the UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Poland reminding President Trump that Denmark is a treaty ally of the United States and, in doing so, effectively issuing a “hands off” on Greenland.

I have told you I worked in Afghanistan. I worked on a NATO military base alongside military servicemembers from Denmark who were there to be able to protect and defend us with the work we do. I was there as part of that NATO mission that was part of the article 5 response that was about protecting the United States and supporting us after September 11 in our time of need. Denmark lost many in that fight, and the idea that we are now threatening that nation is shameful.

By staking claim to anything and everything within our so-called sphere, we are risking alienating ourselves from allies and partners, which is, arguably, our greatest strength. Furthermore, this approach of “spheres of influence” and “might makes right” is one that our leading competitors and adversaries—China and Russia—have been asserting themselves. We are using their language. President Trump’s adoption of this approach endorses and advances their world view, a move that could have dangerous global consequences.

How will this administration tell Putin that he does not have the right to assert the same control over its proclaimed sphere of influence or that Xi cannot exercise his will unchecked in the Indo-Pacific, including with respect to Taiwan? The United States should be countering this vision of a world based on spheres of influence

with our own alternative of a stronger global order, not participating in the destruction of the existing one by endorsing Moscow and Beijing’s alternative.

These moves also have costs at home. At his press conference over the weekend, President Trump demonstrated a deep lack of understanding that there is always a cost to our actions. There is the cost for our servicemembers—more than 15,000, at last reports—currently positioned in the Caribbean and focused on the operations in and around Venezuela. Their lives are on the line. They have been taken away from their families.

And there is the cost to the American people. Millions of Americans are about to see their healthcare costs rise exponentially. Why are we conducting military operations in a country that has no direct security threat to the United States when people are about to lose their healthcare?

Even if this administration had a sound foreign policy, it would be essential that Congress assert its authority to speak for the American people. But this administration does not have a sound foreign policy; it has one that is rooted in bluster, built on extortion and extraction, for the President’s own benefit and without the best interests of the American people at heart.

It is for them that we must reassess our authority. It is for them—the American people—that we must be a strong check on this reckless and feckless foreign policy.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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 JO ELLEN DEUTSCH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary career and service of Jo Ellen Deutsch, who recently retired after a nearly 40-year career focused on ensuring and expanding rights for all Americans.

Jo graduated from Smith College in 1982 with a B.A. in American studies and later received her M.A. from the George Washington University, focused on women’s studies, specializing in public policy and women’s history. Although her activism began long before her college years, Jo jumped immediately into advocacy and public service as she began her professional career.

On Capitol Hill, Jo spent a year as a fellow in Representative Barbara Boxer’s Washington, DC, office. She then joined the Association of Flight Attendants, as their director of government affairs, focusing on passing a ban on smoking in-flight to protect work-

ers and passengers from secondhand smoke. Later, with roles at both the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees and the Commercial Workers International Union, Jo continued her work to support and defend the rights of working men and women across our Nation.

In 2011, Jo joined Freedom to Marry as their Federal director, with the goal of overturning the so-called Defense of Marriage Act which defined marriage as between one man and one woman. Jo, as she did with all her efforts, threw herself wholeheartedly into this fight for equality. She built coalitions—including Mayors for the Freedom to Marry, Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry, and the Respect for Marriage Coalition—signaling that there was sustained momentum and progress across our Nation in support of the freedom to marry. She used her deep knowledge of the inner workings of Capitol Hill to build support with a bipartisan coalition of Members in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Jo’s sustained efforts paved the way for change across the Nation.

After 2015’s landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, establishing the freedom to marry across the country, Jo turned her advocacy into sustained mentorship. She established the Deutsch Initiatives Group, sharing her experiences and expertise in lobbying, management, training, and messaging. She later joined the Campaign Legal Center to advocate for critical reforms goals to the laws undergirding our democracy, particularly with regard to campaign finance, ethics, and voting rights laws.

Jo’s landmark work at Freedom to Marry paved the way for legislation I was proud to help author and usher into law in 2022, the Respect for Marriage Act. This act repealed the Defense of Marriage Act and ensured that under Federal law, you were free to marry the person that you love.

And love has always been at the center of Jo’s world. Together with her wife Teresa, they have centered their family in their adopted home of Maryland. After 29 years together, in 2013, they were married with their three children serving as their wedding attendants, an event I was honored to attend.

I am delighted to congratulate my friend Jo on a wonderful and deeply impactful career. The ripples of her determination and advocacy will be felt for generations to come, and I am thrilled to see what the next chapter holds for her, Teresa, and their family.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING NATHAN CLARK

• Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, last month Tennessee lost a great man, community leader, and champion of our State’s military community: Mr. Nathan Clark.