

governing strategy around the party-line reconciliation process.

So the President cannot deflect blame for his disappointing first year. The American people know where the buck stops, and if our Democratic friends do not change course, before long, the buck will stop somewhere else.

Now, on a related matter, President Biden also campaigned on strengthening America's partnerships and renewing our global leadership. Well, how has the administration done?

The administration that campaigned on restoring alliances abandoned a coalition of loyal partners with its disastrous and fatal retreat from Afghanistan.

The Biden administration green-lit Vladimir Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and the Democrats blocked us from sanctioning it. This pipeline will help Putin gain even more leverage over Western Europe and, of course, further isolate Ukraine.

As we speak—right now—Putin has amassed more than 100,000 Russian troops along the border of Ukraine. If these forces cross into Ukraine, it will not be a new invasion or a "re-invasion." It will represent a major escalation of an ongoing occupation.

Ukraine has been fighting a Russian-backed war on its own now for 8 years. Eight years ago, I tried to warn President Obama that Putin is only deterred when the world imposes real costs—real costs—on his misbehavior.

But the Biden Administration sent Ukraine nonlethal support, and the sanctions it imposed and coordinated proved not to be as tough as advertised. The Obama-Biden administration failed to end Putin's invasion or compel compliance with the Minsk accords. Now the Biden-Harris team must not repeat the Obama-Biden grave mistakes.

But yesterday, on live television, President Biden telegraphed passivity—telegraphed passivity—and weakness, exactly when our allies can least afford it. Our President seemed to state—and, I pray, unintentionally—that he expects Putin to escalate in Ukraine, and, in any case, Putin can do what he wants.

Here is what the President said: "That decision is totally, solely, completely a Putin decision. . . . I suspect it matters which side of the bed he gets up on."

What on Earth does that mean?

Further, the President said: "My guess is he will move in."

The President said: "My guess is he will move in. He has to do something."

So President Biden thinks Putin has to do something. What does that even mean? Why is our President speculating like a passive observer on the sidelines?

He isn't a pundit. He isn't Putin's psychoanalyst. He is the President of the United States.

So will America hold Russia accountable if it escalates? Here was the mes-

sage from our Commander in Chief: "It depends on what Russia does. It's one thing if it's a minor incursion—a minor incursion—and then we end up having to fight about what to do and not do, et cetera."

"It is one thing if it is a minor incursion"? Does this mean President Biden will not actually authorize the tough response that his own administration officials have spent weeks—weeks—promising?

This was a moment to deliver a powerful warning to the Kremlin that Ukraine's sovereignty is inviolable; that we would stand with her people; that the cost of escalation would be devastating.

It was a moment to reassure our partners in Kiev and our allies along NATO's eastern flank that America had their back.

It was a moment to call for NATO's unity, not to expose and appear hamstrung by NATO's divisions. It was a bizarre and devastating performance—especially, I would add—for our friends on the frontlines.

President Zelensky's Defense Minister has already shot back. This is from Ukraine's Defense Minister:

We should not give Putin the slightest chance to play with quasi-aggression or small incursion operations. This aggression was [already] there since 2014. This is the fact.

I suspect our own Secretary of State, who is in Europe to meet with our allies and the Russian Foreign Minister—was also shocked by what the President had said. Minutes later, White House staff put out a frantic statement laying out a completely different position than what President Biden had just expressed. By then, of course, significant damage had been done.

But, alas, the damage can be undone. The President of the United States is never powerless. President Biden needs to clean up his remarks. He needs to clearly state American resolve and clearly demonstrate American leadership. He should call President Zelensky and NATO's allies most threatened by Russian aggression. He should rally allies and partners around the world to defend Ukraine and the international system that is being threatened by Putin.

His administration should be using every waking moment right now—right now—to expedite our delivery of real defensive capabilities to Ukraine.

The President must cut the indecision and redtape that has slowed us and our partners down. President Biden should finally, at long last, get around to nominating an Ambassador to Ukraine, a position he has left empty for 12 crucial months.

He should send U.S. forces to shore up NATO's eastern flank—not if—not if and when Putin escalates, but right now, before it is too late.

He should encourage our treaty allies to do likewise. But while alliance unity is important, the lowest common denominator of NATO's most nervous

members cannot be allowed to restrict American action.

Whatever course other nations choose to chart, we cannot afford to let Moscow underestimate our resolve to impose serious—serious—crushing costs in response to any further incursion against Ukraine.

Our friends and America's reputation deserve nothing less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REED). The Republican whip.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tomorrow, the streets of our Nation's Capital will be filled with Americans from across the country who have come to Washington, DC, to march for life. They come to nudge the conscience of our Nation, to remind all of us that every day in this country, baby girls and boys are being killed by abortion.

The March for Life, of course, is just one small facet of the pro-life movement, which works every day in this country to offer help and hope to moms in need. Pro-lifers collect supplies for pregnant moms. They pay for prenatal care. They assist moms with housing. They help moms continue with their schooling or find employment. They provide a listening ear to support a mom going through a difficult time.

The March for Life is just one small facet of that work, but it is an important one because abortion is an injustice that happens behind closed doors. It is not something that we see happening, and so it is all too easy to forget that every day in this country, hundreds of babies are being killed by abortion.

The CDC reports that almost 630,000 babies were killed by abortion in 2019 alone—630,000. That number is so big, it is almost unfathomable. To put 630,000 in some kind of perspective, that is equivalent to roughly 70 percent of the population of my State of South Dakota killed in 1 year—630,000 unique, unrepeatable human beings; future doctors, nurses, farmers and teachers and plumbers and busdrivers and research scientists, beloved sisters and brothers and nieces and nephews, future moms and dads. That is a lot of lives lost.

So events like the March for Life are fundamentally important because they provide a public witness to the truth about abortion. They remind all of us of what can be all too easy to minimize or ignore or forget, and that is that in this country, we are denying our most vulnerable citizens their most basic right.

You would think by now that we would have learned our lesson about deciding that one group of human beings is expendable; about deciding that some human beings are excluded from the protection and dignity that every member of the human family should enjoy. Unfortunately, history makes clear that great sins are often repeated. But we don't have to stay silent in the face of them. Indeed, we

must not stay silent in the face of them.

“Rescue those being led away to death,” it says in the Book of Proverbs. “[H]old back those staggering towards slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? . . . Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?”

The March for Life helps make sure that we can never offer the excuse “But we knew nothing about this” and reminds us of our responsibility to speak up to rescue the babies in this country who are being led away to death mere weeks or months after their life has begun.

Those who would defend a supposed right to abortion would like Americans to believe that the decision that legalized abortion in this country is settled law, but the truth is, it is not. If it were settled law, the Supreme Court wouldn't regularly be asked to rule on abortion legislation.

There is a reason why *Roe v. Wade* has never taken on the character of settled law, and that is because it was a fundamentally wrongheaded decision; a decision in tension with our most basic beliefs as Americans—that every person is endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. Chief among them is the right to life.

Americans are not a perfect people. We have made some very grave errors in our past. But Americans are fundamentally a good people. While we have not always fully realized the promise of our Declaration—the promise of protection for the unalienable rights of every person—it is something we keep fighting for and pursuing.

We really believe in the right to life and liberty and to the pursuit of happiness, and we have the sentiments to go with that: a strong sense of justice, a passion for the right, an instinct to protect the vulnerable. So the idea of killing innocent, vulnerable human beings is not something we can easily make our peace with. So it is not surprising to me that, despite the best efforts of the pro-abortion movement, a strong majority of Americans support restrictions on abortion.

An Associated Press poll from this June found that 65 percent of Americans believe that abortion should generally be illegal in the second trimester, or from about 13 weeks of pregnancy, while a whopping 80 percent—80 percent—of Americans believe that abortion should generally be illegal in the third trimester.

Americans know that abortions kill babies. The pro-abortion movement can talk all it wants about blobs of tissue or products of conception; science and technology and common sense point inexorably to the humanity of the unborn child. And Americans know that human beings deserve to be protected even when they are small or weak or vulnerable—especially when they are small or weak or vulnerable.

It is reprehensible that a country like ours, dedicated to the defense of

human rights, has some of the most extreme abortion laws in the world. We are part of just a tiny handful of countries that allow elective abortion past 20 weeks of pregnancy. Among those other countries are China and North Korea—not exactly the kind of company we want to be keeping when it comes to protecting human rights.

It is time for us to do better. We can do better. And I am so grateful for all of the marchers and for all those in the pro-life movement who are out there fighting to ensure that we do better.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,” it says in the Book of Proverbs. Thank you to all those who are speaking up tomorrow. Keep speaking up, and I am confident that sooner or later, life will prevail.

I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask to execute the previous order with respect to the Thomas nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Holly A. Thomas, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted “nay.”

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 11 Executive]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Heinrich	Padilla
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Peters
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Kaine	Rosen
Brown	Kelly	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Manchin	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Hassan	Ossoff	Wyden

NAYS—40

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rubio
Boozman	Hoeben	Sasse
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Graham	Portman	

NOT VOTING—12

Burr	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Capito	Marshall	Sinema
Cassidy	Moran	Tester
Cramer	Rounds	Toomey

The nomination was confirmed.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.
The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 655.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.
The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.
The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Bridget Meehan Brennan, of Ohio, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 655, Bridget Meehan Brennan, of Ohio, to be United