

DURBIN of Illinois (Co-Chair); BENJAMIN L. CARDIN of Maryland; ROBERT P. CASEY, Jr. of Pennsylvania; TAMMY DUCKWORTH of Illinois; KYRSTEN SINEMA of Arizona; and RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK of Georgia.

AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY AND REPRESENTATION IN UNITED STATES V. HORN

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 329, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 329) to authorize testimony and representation in United States v. Horn.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, another criminal trial arising out of the events of January 6, 2021, is scheduled to begin on September 13, 2023, in Federal district court in the District of Columbia. The defendant in this case is charged with multiple counts, including unlawfully entering and remaining in a restricted area within the U.S. Capitol grounds.

The prosecution is seeking trial testimony from Michael J. Mastrian, Director of the Senate Radio and Television Gallery, and Jeffrey S. Kent, Director of the Press Photographers' Gallery, which operate under the authority of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, relating to the regulation of access to the Capitol by bona fide members of the electronic news media, news photographers, and heads of photographic news bureaus.

Senate Sergeant at Arms Gibson would like to cooperate by providing relevant testimony in this proceeding from Messrs. Mastrian and Kent.

In keeping with the rules and practices of the Senate, this resolution would authorize the production of relevant testimony from Messrs. Mastrian and Kent, with representation by the Senate legal counsel.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 329) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate

proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 330, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 330) expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. SMITH. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 330) was agreed to.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL CATFISH MONTH

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 331, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 331) designating August 2023 as "National Catfish Month".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 331) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 7; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Sen-

ate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Kugler nomination postcloture; further, that at 11:45 a.m., all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Gomez nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired at 1:45 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator KENNEDY.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

UKRAINE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am going to talk for a few minutes about NATO, but before I do that, I want to make two preliminary points.

I believe that America's aid to Ukraine is not charity. I believe that aid is in America's national security interest, and I have voted accordingly.

I am convinced that Vladimir Putin, President Xi Jinping, and the Ayatollah of Iran are working together. I am convinced that their objective is to have Russia dominate Central and Eastern Europe; the Ayatollah from Iran dominate the Middle East; and China, through President Xi, dominate the Indo-Pacific, Sub-Sahara Africa, and South America. That is not a world that is safe for the United States of America. That certainly isn't a world that is safe for democracy. That is point one.

Point two, I have been sorely disappointed at the refusal of the U.S. Senate to appoint or to pass a bill that would allow the President to appoint—confirmed by the U.S. Senate—a special inspector general to follow the money in Ukraine.

Once again, I have voted to send that money to Ukraine not as an act of charity but because I believe it is in America's national security interest. But that money didn't just fall from Heaven. That money that we sent to Ukraine—we thank Heaven for it, but it came out of the pockets of the American taxpayer. I understand that we have an inspector general from the Department of Defense following the money, and I don't mean to be overtly critical.

I would point out as an aside that I find it somewhat ironic that the Department of Defense inspector general says "We have got this," but yet the Department of Defense has never been audited. Ever. Never. The Department

of Defense is the only Agency in the U.S. Government that has never been audited, and the American people know that.

That is why I and a number of my colleagues have asked this Senate to pass a bill to allow the President to pick a special inspector general of his choosing to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate to follow every single dollar we are sending to Ukraine and to answer to the Members of the Senate, Members of the House, and, most importantly, to the American people.

Many Republicans and many Democrats have supported that effort, but many Democrats and many Republicans on both sides of the aisle have refused. Now, I am going to keep trying, but, as I said, this money didn't just fall from Heaven; it came out of people's pockets.

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

NATO

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, a word about NATO. For the past 18 months, the United States and our NATO allies have worked together to support our Ukrainian friends as they push back against Russian President Vladimir Putin's violent attack on their sovereignty.

Putin's war in Ukraine is illegal, and it has presented one of the most serious challenges that NATO—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—has faced in decades. As with many challenges in life, I believe that the difficulties we face today can make NATO stronger tomorrow. I believe that. But that will only happen if we are honest with each other. Friends tell friends the truth. Friends tell friends the truth.

Here is the truth as I see it: NATO is one of the most impactful defense PACs in all of human history. The United States is a proud NATO member. The American people support NATO. But it is also no secret that some of our friends in NATO have not been taking their own defense and defense spending seriously, and they had not been taking their own defense and defense spending seriously even before Vladimir Putin began his illegal assault on Ukraine.

As the full extent of Putin's cruelty unfolded last year, NATO leaders—they appeared at first to regard it as a wake-up call, and that is a good thing. It was a wake-up call for many people throughout the world. But sometime, somehow, over the past year, those same countries fell back asleep.

You see, when Putin began his march into Ukraine, key NATO leaders said that they would start spending 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense. That is a promise that they had made before but had reneged on until Putin's assault. But it took less than a year after Putin entered Ukraine for those same leaders to begin to renege again, and that is just a fact. Friends tell friends the truth. Recent analysis shows that as of today, just 11 out of the 31 countries currently

in NATO are on track to fulfill their 2 percent defense spending obligation.

Now, this is becoming a frustrating pattern for some of our NATO allies. As a smart person once said, history doesn't repeat itself, but sometimes it rhymes, and that is the case here. If you take a look at NATO today and compare it to NATO in 2014, it, frankly, would make Michael Avenatti blush.

Let me paint the picture for you. NATO countries first agreed to spend 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense in 2006. The 2 percent figure was designed, as the Presiding Officer knows, to be a floor, not a ceiling. And this didn't mean—this promise made by all NATO countries in 2006—this didn't mean that each country was required to cut a check to NATO. That is not what it meant. It just meant that each country would spend 2 percent of its gross domestic product on itself—in its own military and in its own national security. Why? Because all NATO countries understood then that our alliance was stronger when everyone pulled their weight.

Now, we know a lot of what has happened since then. The world economy sank into a recession in 2008. We all felt the brunt of that, including the American people. But for some of our friends in NATO, that 2 percent commitment fell apart. After the great recession, as we call it, just three NATO members—three—fulfilled their promise to invest 2 percent or more in defense. Do you know who took note? Vladimir Putin.

In 2014—fast-forward a few years—Putin invaded Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. Putin made it clear that he intended to take that key block of land on the Black Sea and make it his own, and he did. This was a blatant violation of Ukrainian sovereignty. It was an unmistakable foreshadowing as well of what would come.

Now, Putin's aggression outraged NATO. It should have. It outraged all fairminded, freedom-loving people. At a conference that year, 2014, in Wales, each member country of NATO reaffirmed their commitment to spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense by 2024.

At the time, President Obama was President. In a speech at the conference in Wales where each country pledged to spend 2 percent—the second time it made the pledge—President Obama said:

[T]his commitment makes clear that NATO will not be complacent.

I remember when the President said that.

President Obama also said:

Our Alliance will reverse the decline in defense spending and rise to meet the challenges that we face in the 21st century.

He later added:

Here in Wales, we also sent a strong message to Russia that actions have consequences.

Well, that turned out to be debatable. By 2021, just a few years later, only seven NATO members were spending

the minimum 2 percent on defense, and that is just a fact. Friends tell friends the truth. In fact, President Trump was met with scorn when he asked our friends in NATO to keep their word and reinvest in defense. Germany's Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, said:

Our common response today to the President of the United States and his assertion of "America First" must be "Europe United."

Apparently, Germany and others felt that upholding their pledge to spend 2 percent on their own defense was somehow an "America First" policy. And do you know who took note? Vladimir Putin.

Flash-forward to 2022. Putin's tanks are rolling farther into Ukraine. And just like in 2014, our NATO friends issued statements a third time once again pledging to spend 2 percent of their gross domestic product on their own security. Yet, today, despite Putin's ongoing attack on Ukraine, today, some of our friends in NATO have already stopped or postponed their 2 percent spending plans, and that is just a fact. Friends tell friends the truth.

French President Macron, for example, promised to increase France's defense spending in the days following Putin's invasion. I remember when he made that promise. But French officials have also announced that it will take until 2025 to hit the 2 percent defense spending threshold. Similarly, Italy announced it would not hit 2 percent until 2028. Spain said it won't hit its 2 percent goal until 2029. Belgium said it won't hit its 2 percent goal until 2035.

The war is going on.

To be fair, Belgium and Spain, both good friends of America, have made some small progress in their defense spending over the past year. I want to make that clear. They may come through eventually. But France's spending has hardly changed at all, and Italy will actually spend less on defense this year, in the middle of the war which is happening in Europe, than it did in 2021, before Putin even entered Ukraine.

Germany's failure to follow through on its 2 percent commitment is especially disappointing and consequential. As the world's fourth largest economy—Germany is the world's fourth largest economy behind only the United States of America, China, and Japan, the world's fourth largest economy. So Germany's defense spending shortfall, and it is a shortfall, leaves a much bigger hole. We are talking about a lot of money. Germany will only spend 1.6 percent of its GDP on defense in 2023. That is \$18.1 billion short of the commitment that it has made not once, not twice, but three times.

Now, NATO is an alliance. It means we are friends, and we are. It means we know that we are stronger together. It means that if you come for one of us, you are going to have to fight all of us. That is what it means.

At the end of the day, an alliance, though, is just a promise. That is all it is, but it is built on mutual trust. It states that we won't leave each other to fight threats alone, and that is what NATO is supposed to stand for and I am very proud of that and so are the American people. We support NATO.

But when countries in NATO choose not to keep their commitment to spend 2 percent on their own defense, they weaken the alliance of NATO. It shows us and it shows our enemies that we cannot count on those countries to step up to help keep all of us safe. And it tells Putin—it tells Putin that some NATO members are content sitting back and waiting, rather than remaining strong together, and that is just a fact. Friends tell friends the truth.

Now, the United States of America, we keep our promises. And all along, every year through the history of NATO, we have proudly invested in our defense to the benefit of our allies—to our own benefit but to the benefit of our allies. And it was important to our allies in Europe. It was.

I don't know what would have happened in Europe had the American people not come to Ukraine's rescue. Putin may be in Paris right now, for all I know, God forbid.

Now, a few of our NATO friends have kept their commitment, and I want to thank them. Our friends in Greece, for example, our friends in the United Kingdom, our friends in Estonia, they spent 2 percent of their GDP on defense before Putin invaded. Our friends in Lithuania and in Hungary and Romania and Slovakia, they will all reach the 2-percent threshold by the end of this year. And that is a good thing. Thank you, Greece. Thank you, United Kingdom. Thank you, Estonia. Thank you, Lithuania and Hungary and Romania and Slovakia, for keeping your word.

Now, Finland—Finland just joined NATO. We are so pleased. Our friends in Finland spent 2 percent on defense before joining NATO, but they didn't use the alliance as a reason for taking their foot off the gas. Instead, Finland increased their defense spending even more to 2.4 percent of GDP. Thank you, Finland. I hope our allies, which have been nestled safely under the NATO umbrella for years without pulling their financial weight, will take note of Finland's dedication.

Let me say it again: Thank you, Finland.

And we have got to commend Poland. Poland spent 2 percent on defense long before Putin invaded Ukraine, but over the past 2 years, it hasn't spent 2 percent—Poland hasn't. It nearly doubled its defense spending to 4.3 percent. It is investing that money, in part, by buying American weapons, and it is showing Putin that Poland is serious about its sovereignty and that Poland is serious about freedom. By the end of this decade, Poland is on pace to have more tanks than the United Kingdom, than Germany, than France, than the Neth-

erlands, than Belgium and Italy put together—put together. Thank you, Poland.

Now, I understand you don't have to be Mensa material to understand that Putin's threat is more visceral when it is happening next door, and of course Poland is much closer to Russia than Germany or France is. I get that. But when you are allies, when you are friends, when you have promised not once, not twice, but three times to have each other's backs, you are not only supposed to think of yourself and your proximity to the threat.

You know, as Americans, we have got an entire ocean between us and Russia. We have got an entire ocean as our buffer against Putin's tanks. But I doubt that Germany or France—both good friends, love them to death—but I doubt that Germany or France would support the United States backing away because we aren't close enough to the shelling to be bothered.

Let me be frank. Allies through NATO have pledged to have each other's backs, and I see no sense in bubble-wrapping it. That starts by putting your money where your mouth is.

I want to be frank again. Some of our friends in NATO have engaged in a cycle of broken promises time and time and time again. Putin shows his cruel aggression, and horrified European leaders pledged to invest in defense. Then Putin's aggression maybe falls off the front page of the paper, and leaders forget their promise to invest until Putin's rockets start blowing up another city.

It has been more than a year, as the Presiding Officer knows as well as I do, since Putin sent Russian tanks and troops into Ukraine. And maybe for some the horror of it all has worn off, maybe. It hasn't worn off for most Americans, and it sure hasn't worn off for Ukraine. Citizens of a sovereign Ukraine are still dodging missiles on their own streets, and Putin is still watching too many NATO members bury their heads and drag their feet. And so is President Xi Jinping.

Now, I don't mean to offend anyone—I don't—but friends tell friends the truth, and everyone in NATO is a friend. And I am so proud that the United States of America is a member of NATO. But NATO is only as strong as our confidence in one another. If we want to strengthen NATO's ability to deter bad actors from bad acts, we have each got to do our part. It is time for all of us in NATO to start keeping our promises and investing in our defense.

The American people have sent over \$100 billion to fight Putin in Ukraine, and I don't regret a single penny. We kept our word. But, again, friends tell friends the truth: Not all of our allies in NATO have, and it is time they put their money where their mouth is.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:25 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 7, 2023, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be colonel

JASON E. LITTLE

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

LARRY K. CREEL
BRIDGETT Y. EPPS
TIFFANY M. FUSCO
BERNADINE D. GALANG
LEESA M. HARRIE
SUZANNE D. HERNANDEZ
JAYSON S. JARVIS
NATALIE A. JOHNSON
ENRIQUE C. LUNA
BRIAN J. MC MILLION
AUDLEY S. SALMON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

ALFRED L. BOOKER, JR.
ANTHONY M. KELLY
FERNANDO L. RIVERA
PABLO RIVERA, JR.
MELISSA L. WARDLAW

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

CHRISTOPHER J. HANKEY
JENNIFER M. JAEGER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

CHRIS R. LARSEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

CHRISTOPHER J. CALVANO
OLUWASEUN T. COLE
JONATHAN F. DICKENS
CHARLES G. DIPIERRO
ROBERT V. MADLINGER
BRIAN OREILLY
JOHN R. REAUME
ERIN S. SEEFELDT
JOHN G. SPETHMAN
DAVID C. THOMA
ALFREDO E. URDANETA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

RYAN S. CASPER
CHRISTOPHER J. CHABOT
ANTHONY B. COLE
CHRISTINE M. DECAPITE
CHRISTOPHER S. DOBOZY
EMILY C. GRAFF
BRIAN K. HOWELL
DOUGLAS S. LOWERY
AMY L. LUER
CHRISTOPHER L. NORTHAM
DAWN R. PAUL
DAVID M. PEYOK
MARTIN J. REIDY III
KYLE A. SMITH
STEPHEN TRYNOSKY
BENJAMIN J. WEITZEL, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

EUGENE S. JOHNSON