

NOT VOTING—1

Cornyn

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 57, the nays are 41, with one Senator voting “present.”

The motion to invoke cloture is agreed to.

NOMINATION OF PEDRO A. DELGADO HERNANDEZ TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:54 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COONS).

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant majority leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Sunday was a perfect Chicago afternoon—not in terms of weather, which has not been too kind to us lately, but in terms of my events and schedule.

My first stop was at Navy Pier for the Lithuanian Independence Day celebration, an event which is important to me personally because my mother was born there. I happened to be on hand for the latest round of independence in Lithuania when the Soviet Union was finally dispelled and this country was allowed to stand on its feet. It was a great celebration with regional food people might expect, dancing and music.

I left there to go over to a section of Chicago known as Ukrainian Village. I asked, after church on Sunday, if my friends in the Ukrainian-American community would come gather and we would invite a telephone call from Kiev from the American Ambassador, Geoffrey Pyatt. I expected a nice crowd. I didn't expect an overflowing crowd, but that is what I found.

The concern of Ukrainian-Americans and many others about the situation in that country is very tense and very personal. Many of them have family members there and strong cultural family ties, and they are very worried.

So the Ambassador called in and gave a few moments of remarks and then answered questions. Then we met later to talk about some of the possibilities as we consider the future of Ukraine.

I looked through the audience and found many of my Polish friends, many of my Lithuanian friends—friends from all of the different ethnic groups which had endured some form of Soviet Union or Russian aggression in the past. They felt bonded with the people of Ukraine, the Ukrainian-Americans, as we discussed this.

I had hoped a few weeks ago that we had turned a corner in Ukraine—that the difficult events of the last few months were coming to an end—but that didn't happen. We saw horrific violence in Maidan Square and sadly many innocent people were killed. Just as Ukraine seemed to be emerging from this difficult period with the departure of President Yanukovich, the Russians moved into Crimea. I think that situation has moderated somewhat, although I don't know because it changes by the hour, but their decision to have a show of force in Crimea is one we cannot ignore.

The operation in Crimea was so well orchestrated that it had to have been planned by Russian President Vladimir Putin during the 22nd Winter Olympic Games hosted in Sochi, Russia. Can anyone imagine anything so crass or brazen as to lavishly try to present Russia to the world as a peaceful and moderate nation while secretly planning the military occupation of another neighboring country? The Russian taxpayers should get their \$51 billion back they paid to set up the Olympics. It was money wasted by Vladimir Putin to try to create an impression of Russia which sadly does not exist.

The former Ukraine President, Viktor Yanukovich, freely elected, also squandered a historic opportunity to further modernize Ukraine, to overcome corruption, and to lift the aspirations of his people. He unnecessarily and cynically divided his Nation. Instead of strengthening economic and political ties with Europe, reforming his economy, and respecting Ukraine's historical ties to Russia, he set off to become a pawn in Moscow. He saw his survival politically teaming up with Vladimir Putin. As the emerging pictures from Yanukovich's opulent palace illustrate, he enriched himself personally and his enablers while allowing the country's promising yet troubled economy to deteriorate. Ultimately, his government led the bloody assault on his own people using heavily armed snipers to massacre the Ukrainian people on the streets of Kiev.

I met with Mr. Yanukovich and many in his government just a year and a half ago. Yanukovich said he truly saw his country's future with greater ties to the West. But under enormous Russian pressure and unable to let go of his own political grudges and terrified of the transparency that an Association Agreement with the Eu-

ropean Union would mean for his corrupt regime, he ultimately put his own political future ahead of the good and the needs of the Ukrainian people.

We all know the likely tragic consequences of such self-serving political calculations. Look at President Assad in Syria and President Maduro in Venezuela. The Ukraine will be no different.

I understand the Crimea region of Ukraine has a long and complicated history. I understand that then-Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev actually gave Crimea to Ukraine in 1954, probably never imagining the collapse of the Soviet Union and an independent Ukraine to follow.

Let's be clear about what happened. Ukraine wasn't joining NATO. Ukraine wasn't joining the European Union. Ukraine wasn't proposing cutting off its economic and political ties with Russia. Ukraine was simply contemplating signing a long-negotiated trade agreement with the European Union. For that rationale alone, Vladimir Putin decided to militarily invade and occupy Ukraine.

I know Mr. Putin says he was protecting Russian citizens, but there have been no credible examples of threats to any Russian citizens in Ukraine. In fact, the New York Times reported this week that Russian tourists have been sent to eastern Ukraine, where they are stirring up anger and resentment against the Ukrainian Government in Kiev. Arguing that Russia can militarily invade another country any time to protect the Russian people is an ominous suggestion that raises alarms for independent sovereign nations all along the Russian borders, and it also raises the chapters of history back in the middle of the 20th century which we need not recount in detail.

One need only look at the two regions of Georgia—South Ossetia and Abkhazia—that have been militarily occupied by Russia since 2008. Russia continues to illegally occupy these areas and has erected fences along administrative lines and permanent military bases in violation of the cease-fire agreement negotiated with the European Union. I have been there myself, and I have seen the deeply troubling permanent bases and boundary fences in Georgia.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia came to see me the day after the final Olympic ceremonies at Sochi, and he said there was a report that morning after the final ceremony that the Russians were stringing barbed wire around the perimeters of the places they were occupying in Georgia. Russia even stopped some of the demarcation during the Olympics but started again, as I have said, after the games' conclusion. Russian actions in Ukraine and Georgia are a clear violation of international obligations and treaties.

For example, Russia was a signatory to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum that