

Europe, has brought prosperity to the United States, not as an act of charity but as an investment in the best interests of security.

We are here to say with one voice that we will stand up to Russian aggression that undermines democracy and violates human rights.

I am grateful for my colleague, for the chance to join him on the floor today, and I look forward to working together with any of our colleagues who see these issues as clearly as my friend and colleague, the Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. I thank the Senator for joining me in this endeavor here today. It is important that we speak out about this.

In a moment, the majority leader will be here with some procedural matters that will, I guess, take the Senate to a different posture.

Before that happens, I wanted to close by not just thanking him for being a part of this but by making a couple more points.

The first is, I want you to imagine for a moment, if you are sitting at the Kremlin and you are watching on satellite television the debate going on in American politics today, you are probably feeling pretty good about yourself. You have one group arguing that maybe the elections weren't legitimate because the Russians interfered. In essence, there have been news reports about a tension between the President and the Intelligence Committee. You have these reports every single day back and forth. You are looking at all this chaos, and you are saying to yourself: We did a pretty good job. If what we wanted to do was to divide the American people against each other, have them at each other's throats, arguing about things, and sowing chaos and instability into their political process, I think you look at the developments of the last 6 weeks and 6 months, and if you are in the Kremlin, you say: Well, our efforts have been pretty successful with that. I think that is the first thing we need to understand.

The second thing is, this should all be about partisanship. I am a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. It is probably known that we are undertaking an investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 elections. I want everyone to know—I speak for myself and I believe almost all of my colleagues when I say, on the one hand, I am not interested in being a part of a witch hunt; on the other hand, I will not be part of a coverup. We are going to get to the truth. We want to get to the truth. We want to be able to deliver to this body and to the American people a document with truth and facts, wherever they may lead us, because this is above political party. Our system of government and this extraordinary Republic has been around for over two centuries. It is unique and it is special, and with all of its blemishes and flaws, I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

I want people to think about that. The next time you wonder and say to yourself that things are so tough in America and things are going so poorly, well, with whom would you trade places? I am not saying we don't have problems, because we do, but I ask, in what country would you rather be? I promise you that you won't say China if you know anything about China. I promise you that you won't say Russia if you know anything about Russia. There is no nation on Earth we would trade places with, and there is no process of government I would trade for ours. It is not perfect.

One of the strengths of our system is our ability to stand up here in places like the Senate and discuss our differences and our problems and make continuous progress forward even if the pace is slower and more frustrating than we wish. That is what is at stake in this process and what is at stake in this debate. That is what none of us can allow to see erode because of interference by a foreign government, especially one that is a thug and war criminal in every sense of the word.

So our quarrel is not with the Russian people and it is not with Russia. I have extraordinary admiration for the Russian people. I have extraordinary admiration for the sacrifices and contributions they have made throughout history to our culture and to the world. But, unfortunately, today their government is run by an individual who has no respect for his own people and no respect for the freedom and liberty of others, and it is important for our policymakers on both sides of the aisle to be clear-eyed and clear-voiced in what we do moving forward.

I thank the Senator for being with us today and allowing us to engage in this discussion. I hope we will see more of that in the weeks and months to come so we can speak clearly and firmly in one voice that on issues involving America and our sovereignty and our system of government and decisions we must make, we will speak with one voice as one Nation, as one people, as one country.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the sesquicentennial anniversary of the founding of the University of Illinois, a nationally recognized institution of higher education with a long record of innovation and discovery and the home of the Fighting Illini.

In 1867, 150 years ago, my home State of Illinois established the University of Illinois with the purpose of fostering access to higher education for the working people. It would become one of 37 public, land-grant institutions established as a result of the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln.

Over the past 150 years, the University of Illinois and those associated with it have been responsible for pushing the boundaries of human knowledge, scientific discovery, social justice, and equality.

In 1941, David Blackwell, the son of a railroad worker from southern Illinois, received his Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Illinois. In 1965, Dr. Blackwell became the first African American elected to the National Academy of Sciences, whose members advise the President and Congress on matters related to science and technology. Dr. Blackwell is regarded as the most famous African-American mathematician in history.

In 1948, the University of Illinois became, and remains to this day, the most accessible campus in the world for individuals with disabilities. Timothy Nugent founded the first comprehensive program of higher education for individuals with disabilities at the University and helped create a campus that allowed individuals with disabilities to move about freely and independently. While the availability of buses with wheelchair lifts, accessible street curbs, and comprehensive collegiate programs for those with disabilities all have become the national standard, they started at the University of Illinois.

The University of Illinois has long been a leader in groundbreaking research and innovation in science. In the early 1970s, Paul Lauterbur discovered magnetic resonance imaging—better known by its initials: MRI. For his pioneering work, he was awarded a Nobel Prize in 2003.

Today the university is one of the premier public research universities in the world. It ranks in the top 50 universities in America for research and development dollars spent in science and engineering. It is also home to one of the world's most powerful supercomputers, known as Blue Waters. Blue Waters is the fastest supercomputer located on a college campus in the world.

What began 150 years ago as a small building on the Illinois prairie between