

Ukraine's stated intention to achieve the criteria for joining NATO, too, is testament to the organization's renewed importance in our deterrence policy in the region.

While the sentiment of NATO's article 5—"an attack on one is an attack on all"—helped guide the U.S. stably through the Cold War, NATO has remained a relevant source of strength for the international community, beyond regional deterrence. Since 1999, when NATO identified the risk international terrorism posed for member nations, the organization has remained a steadfast resource in the fight against terrorism. In fact, the only instance in which article 5 was invoked was in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Since then, NATO has helped ensure freedom of navigation in waters plagued by piracy, helped train Iraqi security forces counter improvised explosive devices, commanded counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan for more than a decade, provided support for Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and innumerable other contributions. As threats to member nations evolved in the 21st century, NATO demonstrated its ability to adapt.

NATO showed the power of strength through solidarity, not only for its member nations, but also for its dozens of partner nations around the globe. The power of NATO's partnerships lends strength to the global community as a whole, better equipping regions of the world to respond when disaster strikes. Programs like NATO's Centres of Excellence help partner countries fight corruption, piracy, and terrorism and collaborate to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction and other arms. By serving as a resource for nonmember countries, NATO not only strengthens the resolve of the international community to strife and instability, but also serves as a beacon for democratic values like gender equality and rule of law.

Finally, NATO has long served as a force for human rights. It was central to ending the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, and it helped bring an end to violence in Kosovo in 1999. NATO has served as a vital resource assisting with the waves of refugees escaping from violence and atrocity in Syria, and the organization has been at the frontlines to combat international human trafficking.

NATO plays a critical role in combating increased Russian aggression, but its mission is much broader than that. The world is a safer place thanks to NATO, from stemming regional conflicts, to assisting partners around the world. It serves as an indispensable, indisputable resource for the international community. As we celebrate the anniversary of this pivotal organization today, we must remain committed to its successful future.

VAISAKHI

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to honor and celebrate the holiday of

Vaisakhi, a very significant day for those who practice Sikhism.

The world's fifth largest religion, Sikhism was founded over five centuries ago and was introduced to the United States in the 19th century. Today there are over 500,000 Sikh adherents in the United States.

Pennsylvania is the home of many proud Sikh Americans, who make a positive impact in their workplaces, communities, and to our country. They are an important part of the rich cultural fabric of the Commonwealth. There are many gurdwaras, or centers of worship, located across the State, which serve a vital role for both the Sikh community and people of other faiths.

This year, Vaisakhi will be celebrated on Friday, April 14. On this day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, a fellowship of devout Sikhs. Vaisakhi is a festival that marks both this occasion and the spring harvest. This holiday, which is meant to promote service to others, reminds us of the valuable contributions Sikh Americans make in many of our communities.

The Sikh community around the world recognizes this important holiday with parades, dancing, singing, visits to gurdwaras, and other festivities. Celebrations also include performing "seva," or selfless service, which can include providing free meals to others or volunteering for different service projects in their communities.

This year, the Sikh Coordination Committee East Coast has organized a National Sikh Day Parade here in Washington, DC, on April 8, 2017, to commemorate this occasion. Thousands of Sikhs from all over United States are participating in this parade, which will celebrate the Sikh identity and culture.

As a member of the American Sikh Congressional Caucus, I am honored to represent the Sikh community of Pennsylvania, and I wish the Sikh American community a joyous Vaisakhi. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING FLATHEAD VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the honor and privilege of recognizing the faculty, administrators, staff, and students of Flathead Valley Community College for their service to the people of northwest Montana—2017 marks the school's 50-year anniversary. FVCC serves thousands of students of every age and background. In its five decades of existence, the college and its faculty have won numerous awards for providing a high-quality and low-cost education in Kalispell, MT.

The college provides more than 50 career and technical programs, while also giving students a cheaper and more convenient option for their first 2 years

of college. FVCC also has developed programs that can help high school students get a "Running Start" on their college careers. FVCC has given generations of students the tools they need to succeed. The college also serves a vital role in supplying the region's employers with a skilled workforce.

The idea for a community college in northwest Montana began in 1960 when Kalispell School Board chairman Owen Sowerwine noted a study that 80 percent of local high school graduates were receiving no higher education whatsoever. Sowerwine worked with other local educational leaders such as Bill McClaren, Thelma Hetland, Les Stirling, and Norm Beyer to create a new community college. The college opened its doors in 1967, and today we celebrate their legacy.

FVCC continues to grow and find new and better ways to serve the community. Its Kalispell campus has grown to eight buildings, with new on-campus housing opening this year. FVCC also has an extension campus in Libby, MT.

I look forward to seeing what the next 50 years will hold, and I congratulate all involved in the success of FVCC on reaching this milestone.●

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT JOHN MASSICK

• Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a living example of the American dream. At 101 years of age, Mr. John Massick of Davenport, IA, has spent a lifetime in service—as a husband, father, soldier, and hero of World War II.

John was born on Veterans Day 1915, which proved to be symbolic in his life to come. He enlisted in the Army in 1941 and rose to the rank of sergeant, leading soldiers in combat across Europe as a member of Patton's 3rd Army. On his 29th birthday, while securing a bridge in Thionville, France, his unit suffered a perilous German attack, but John survived. It is a day Sergeant Massick describes as "a birthday he'll never forget." He continued to serve through the end of the war in Europe, earning the French Croix de Guerre, Presidential Unit Commendation, and two Bronze Star Medals, among other accolades.

After the war, John returned to Davenport, married his now-late wife, Velma, and raised two sons while working as a carpet salesman and installer. He finally retired just 6 years ago at the ripe age of 94.

Today Iowans who visit "Popcorn Charley's" in northwest Davenport will hear John tell stories from the war. Some recall the harsh realities of combat, others remind us of our humanity, like the one he tells of how he caught a pig to fry porkchops for his men, bringing a bit of Iowa to the battlefields of Europe. John's stories, like his life's experiences, seem to strike the right balance between honor, humility, and a sense of humor.

I ask my colleagues to join me as I proudly recognize the service and the