

state and enforcing the ceasefire, Russia egregiously has prevented the ceasefire from taking hold.

Once again, Russia is abetting Assad's defiance and destruction for its own perverse purposes. At the very least, it is abdicating its role as a permanent member of the Security Council.

What can be done about this devastating situation? Regrettably, there are no easy answers.

But a President who previously argued that "heinous actions by the Bashar al-Assad regime are a consequence of the last administration's weakness and irresolution" has to demonstrate some resolve. I call on President Trump to put genuine pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin to rein in Assad and end Russian obfuscation in the U.N. Security Council as the carnage and number of likely war crimes mount.

Any discussion with Putin must also address deeply troubling—and seemingly ignored—reports that Russian mercenaries controlled by Yevgeny Prigozhin attacked U.S. Special Operations Forces in Syria, with approval of the highest levels of the Kremlin. Prigozhin is the same Russian oligarch who was recently indicted on charges of running a troll farm targeting American voters.

Donald Trump has also called on "all civilized nations" to help end the "slaughter and bloodshed in Syria." I have to imagine that the United States is included in his exhortation. Unhappily, he has also recommended a 30-percent cut in our already minuscule foreign assistance and diplomacy budget. The United States must do more to meet the humanitarian needs of Syrians suffering the ravages of a dreadful war.

Incredibly, at a time when a long-term diplomatic and political solution will be needed in Syria, this administration has marginalized our top diplomatic expertise at the Department of State. This is wildly self-defeating.

We have taken a back seat to Russia and Iran in Syria long enough. We can see every day the devastating results: more violence and the further fracturing of a country and a region that have suffered at the hands of tyrants too long.

Despite the important achievement made by our military in destroying ISIS in Syria, Syria will remain a monumental security, humanitarian, and governance challenge for the United States and its allies, including Israel, for years to come. Russia and Iran are vying for the spoils of the civil war, with civilians paying the highest price. We don't want to leave U.S. forces in Syria indefinitely, but doing nothing to bring a lasting peace to Syria is the worst option.

As such, President Trump, I call on your administration to come up with a real Syria strategy to bring an end to a war—and the senseless suffering—that has gone on for too long.

#### REMEMBERING MATT NIEMEYER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to recognize and celebrate the life of a friend, a colleague, and a trusted adviser whom we tragically lost last week.

That is what Matt Niemeyer was to me, but Matt would say that he was a husband and a father first. Everything else was secondary. Matt leaves behind his beloved wife, Amy, and their two beautiful children, Anna and Peter.

I first met Matt in 2005 when he was an Assistant U.S. Trade Representative. He was well known in the trade community, and he stood out as a substantive expert in his field. Matt would say that his time at USTR was the most fun he had ever had in government. That says a lot as Matt also worked on Capitol Hill for the National Republican Congressional Committee and as a congressional liaison for a number of private companies and organizations throughout his life.

Matt played a key role in our successful efforts to pass the Central American Free Trade Agreement. He was a happy warrior in that he loved trade, USTR, and getting things done. I think his thick skin and constant hopefulness was a credit to his upbringing as a long-suffering and then long-celebrating Boston Red Sox fan. He always found a way to get his mission accomplished and always had a quick wit.

I was lucky to remain close with Matt after our time together at USTR had ended. He would go to any length for his friends, and he was always thoughtful, kind, and jovial. He never passed at the opportunity to joke about one of his earliest experiences in politics, when he worked for the first primary opponent I ever faced. He would generously tell me how happy he was that, for one of the only times in his career, he wasn't successful in that job.

While Matt is no longer with us in person, his memory lives on through his family who love him dearly and friends and colleagues like myself who will forever cherish his impact on our lives.

#### TRIBUTE TO JANET JONES

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to honor Janet Jones for her distinguished public service to the U.S. Senate.

Janet began her Senate career in the Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment in 2006 as a litigation paralegal. Not long after that, she took on the tremendous responsibility of getting Senate offices prepared for their mandatory OSHA inspections by the congressional Office of Compliance.

During the 114th Congress alone, Janet pre-inspected almost a half-million square feet of office space, assisting Senate offices with identifying potential hazards and potential safety violations.

Janet's tireless work with Senate offices over the past 12 years has contrib-

uted to making the offices that serve this body safer for our employees, our visitors, and our constituents. With Janet's assistance, many Senate offices, including my own, have earned Safe Office Awards.

We will miss Janet's institutional knowledge and unparalleled professionalism.

Janet, thank you for your service, and I wish you great happiness in retirement.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO BILL GALT

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing a hard-working Montana rancher for his contributions to the community in Meagher County. Bill Galt is a third-generation Montana rancher; he has been ranching all his life. His dedication to White Sulphur and the surrounding community, however, extends far beyond his work in agriculture.

Bill has rescued numerous folks from plane crashes and accidents on the Smith River as part of his volunteer search and rescue work. He has served on the White Sulphur Springs Airport Board, the Meagher County DUI Task Force, the Conservation District Board, and the Mountainview Medical Center Foundation, just to name a few.

Bill has been a volunteer firefighter and has volunteered with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and 4H. I would be remiss to not include his service in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps during Vietnam as well.

Bill is humble and civic-minded in all he does, and his service to Meagher has not gone unnoticed.

Thank you, Bill, for exemplifying what it means to be an active member of a Montana community.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

##### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 9:50 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill: