

violation case against a family that is clearly fleeing Russian persecution.

CICIG is supposed to be above reproach. Yet it collaborates with a state-owned Russian bank that, incidentally, is currently under U.S. sanctions. The CICIG is doing the bidding of Putin's henchmen in its acting as the long arm of Russia's dictatorship. The intervention of a Kremlin-controlled bank shows that influencing CICIG is a part of the Kremlin's broader campaign to exert pressure across Latin America, and we ought to be concerned about that.

Earlier this month, in the Wall Street Journal, Ms. O'Grady wrote that the creeping intervention from Moscow is designed to damage U.S. interests by destabilizing liberal democracy.

ADM Craig Faller, the commander of the U.S. Southern Command, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Russia is flooding Latin America's internet, social media, and television outlets with original and reproduced propaganda to sow doubt about U.S. intentions. Russia has also provided crucial financial support to the infamous Maduro regime in Venezuela, and it competes with the United States to provide military support for regional partners.

Another strategic competitor, China, is also seeking to influence important U.S. partners in Latin America. China has provided more than \$140 billion in Belt and Road Initiative loan commitments. Beijing is now Latin America's second largest trading partner.

Although CICIG once played a significant role in exposing and prosecuting serious corruption, it has now fallen victim to Lord Acton's famous observation—that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

President Morales has made a decision, as the duly elected head of a sovereign country, that he will no longer tolerate an increasingly neocolonial force. The United States should stand behind this decision. The CICIG was never supposed to stay indefinitely.

This move by the Guatemalan Government does not absolve its own responsibility to fight corruption. Indeed, we should demand a redoubling of these efforts. As a critical country in the Western Hemisphere, a return to pre-CICIG conditions would be unacceptable. This is the chance for Guatemalans to work toward the justice that CICIG abandoned with its complicity in Moscow's vendetta. This should begin with an end to the Bitkov family's long nightmare. Their ordeal has gone way beyond a miscarriage of justice, and with CICIG's being gone, Guatemala must do the right thing without further delay or excuse.

In conclusion, the duly constituted Government of Guatemala has made the right decision and should be congratulated for yesterday's action. The country's leadership took a necessary step in asserting its sovereignty and in ending a dysfunctional relationship

with CICIG, a well-intended agency that has exceeded its mandate and outlived whatever usefulness it may initially have had.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WICKER). The Senator from Colorado.

RECOGNIZING OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I come to the floor to honor our men and women in law enforcement. As Members of Congress and their staffs head home this holiday season, we must remember the sacrifice of those who make our communities safe, those who make our safety possible.

This year, across the United States, 143 law enforcement officers have paid the ultimate price.

In Colorado, we honor three fallen officers. We honor Deputy Sheriff Heath McDonald Gumm, whose final act was to bravely pursue an armed suspect. We will never forget the courage and bravery of his action. We honor Deputy Sheriff Micah Lee Flick, who was killed in the line of duty in February of this year after serving in the El Paso County Sheriff's Office for 11 years. We also honor the memory of Sergeant Matthew Moreno, who was killed in the line of duty in Las Animas County just last week. He was responding to reports of domestic violence when his cruiser and that of another officer's crashed into a civilian's vehicle that was headed in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, the occupants of the other vehicle, including a 1-year-old child, also lost their lives.

The pain of losing loved ones this close to the holidays is unimaginable.

Sergeant Moreno ends his watch after having served honorably for 5 years. He is survived by his loving family, including his three beautiful children, Summer, Morgan, and Jared. He has been described as being a superhero to his kids. It seems very fitting given the bravery that he showed throughout his career. He is also remembered for his sense of humor and his love for hunting and fishing—something all Coloradans can relate to. Our prayers are certainly with Sergeant Moreno's family and with the families of those in the other vehicle. I also offer my sincere condolences to the entire Las Animas County Sheriff's Department. The officers have not just lost a fellow officer but a brother.

All of the officers whom we lost this year were neighbors, beloved family members, and extraordinary Coloradans who gave their lives to protect their communities. Although the need is great, so few of us are blessed with the level of bravery and courage shown each and every day by the men and women in law enforcement.

As we all enjoy the warmth of this holiday season, law enforcement officers around the country will stand guard in cold and uncertain streets. This includes the selfless men and

women who serve right here in the U.S. Capitol, who work through the holidays to ensure that every American who visits the Nation's Capitol can do so safely. It is important that we keep them in our thoughts as we gather with family and friends this holiday season to celebrate.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the families of these brave men and women whose sacrifices must not be forgotten. They endure time apart from their loved ones so that families, like millions across this country, will know peace and security during their holiday celebrations.

When thinking about the brave men and women who defend that thin blue line, I am always reminded of the words of LTC Dave Grossman, who said, "American law enforcement is the loyal and brave sheepdog—always standing watch for the wolf that lurks in the dark." It is my hope that the thoughts and prayers we all offer to those who wear the blue uniform will bring them comfort as they carry out this solemn duty. I am thankful for their service and thankful to their families for their continued sacrifice.

I am also reminded of the words of Joe Rice, a former State legislator in Colorado, with whom I served. He served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and wrote how he prays for his fellow soldiers and their safety each and every day by saying and praying:

For all of those around the world in harm's way, we pray with you. Please God, just not today.

Each and every day, we echo that same prayer.

Thank you to the men and women in blue.

I also thank my colleague from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ, for allowing me to speak out of turn. I greatly appreciate it.

I thank the Presiding Officer for taking the Chair.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from New Jersey.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I am going to be shortly joined by my distinguished colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, for an exchange we will have, but in order to preserve the time on the floor, I will start.

I come to the floor today to once again join the Senator from Rhode Island in calling attention to the crisis that is climate change. I want to thank my friend Senator WHITEHOUSE for his passion, his persistence, and his refusal to let the Senate be silent in the face of one of the greatest threats to ever confront our Nation and the world.

Some say we can't afford to invest in clean, renewable, American-made energy. I say we cannot afford not to. The fact is, every year that goes by without a comprehensive strategy to reduce the