

That is why I introduced a bipartisan amendment with Senator TOOMEY, which calls for a clear, publicly articulated strategy that will guide the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria. Critically, our amendment also makes clear that the United States must protect the Syrian Democratic Forces from attacks by Turkey, which is more focused on destroying the Syrian Kurds than defeating ISIS.

Finally, this legislation does not acknowledge the obvious: We have a reckless President who undermines our security daily. We have a President who conducts foreign policy by tweet and champions the views of brutal dictators, like Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un, above that of his own top intelligence officials. We have a President who has compromised American credibility; allies and adversaries alike cannot trust if his grand pronouncements will translate into action or if they will just as quickly be reversed. More than any President before him, President Trump has shirked America's founding principles and our values as a nation. Until Republicans in the Congress acknowledge that obvious point, our ability to preserve American leadership abroad will be greatly compromised.

For all of these reasons, I voted against S. 1.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, while the Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act is clearly far from perfect, the majority of the legislation addresses several key priorities that are particularly important to me: formalizing long-term security aid to Israel, supporting our Jordanian allies' fight against the Islamic State, and sanctioning the Syrian financial system over the Assad regime's human rights abuses.

These provisions represent important measures to concretely support our allies and address serious national security concerns. The legislation as a whole also preserves Obama administration international agreements that promote regional security while providing the Trump administration with more tools to levy sanctions against human rights abusers in the Assad regime in Syria.

I also strongly oppose the BDS movement. However, I have long had concerns about the Combating BDS Act and similar legislation, which could be interpreted to change longstanding U.S. policy towards Israeli settlement activity and could have negative implications on domestic freedom of speech protections. Those concerns are rightly being litigated in Federal court. This bill does not protect a state or local BDS law from being challenged in court by an individual on constitutional grounds.

While this was among the more difficult votes I have taken, ultimately the national security and other benefits of the entirety of this legislation could not be ignored or passed up.

REMEMBERING CHARLES S. KETTLES

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a Michigan veteran whose bravery, spirit of service, and selfless dedication to his fellow soldiers earned him the Nation's highest military honor and the eternal gratitude of 44 American families.

Charles S. Kettles was Michigan through and through. He was born in Ypsilanti in 1930, and that is where he passed away on January 21, 2019, a couple of weeks after his 89th birthday.

He attended Edison Institute High School in Dearborn and fell in love with flying in the school's flight simulator. Perhaps it was no surprise; his father served as a military pilot during both World Wars.

Charlie was active in the community. He and his brother opened a Ford dealership in DeWitt. He later earned a master's degree in industrial technology from Eastern Michigan University and launched its aviation program. He served on the Ypsilanti City Council and in the local Kiwanis club. He was close to his family and enjoyed his nine grandchildren.

In many ways, Charlie lived an ordinary Michigan life. What made his life truly extraordinary were events that happened far away from Ypsilanti on the other side of the world.

Charlie was drafted into the Army in 1951, attended Army aviation school, and served tours in Japan and Thailand. He retired from Active Duty in 1956, and that could have been the end of his military service, but the Army was in desperate need of helicopter pilots during the Vietnam war. So in 1963, Charlie volunteered for active duty and learned to fly the UH-1D "Huey."

Those skills would save lives on May 15, 1967, when then-Major Kettles volunteered to lead a flight of six Hueys on a rescue mission when members of the 101st Airborne Division were ambushed by enemy troops.

The helicopters came under fire, but that didn't stop Charlie. He kept on flying. When he returned to base after his second rescue flight, his helicopter was leaking fuel, and his gunner had been severely wounded.

Then the call came in: 44 Americans still needed to be evacuated. Charlie found a Huey that wasn't leaking fuel, led a flight of six evacuation helicopters back to the landing zone, and successfully rescued the stranded men—or so he thought.

On the flight back to base, Charlie learned that eight troops had been unable to reach the evacuation helicopters. He didn't hesitate. With no regard for his own safety, he turned his Huey around and returned to the landing zone.

His helicopter was hit by gunfire, and a mortar round damaged the rotor blade and shattered the windshield. Despite the damage, Charlie skillfully navigated his helicopter to the landing zone. The remaining troops scrambled

aboard, and all 44 finally made it off the battlefield.

Charlie was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's second-highest citation for valor, in 1968; yet when I heard his story, I thought, if anyone was ever worthy of receiving the Medal of Honor, Charlie was.

Typically, the Medal of Honor must be awarded within 5 years of the heroic act. That is why, in 2015, I introduced legislation with Senator GARY PETERS and Congresswoman DEBBIE DINGELL to allow Charlie to receive the Medal of Honor. In 2016, that is just what happened.

"In a lot of ways, Chuck is America," President Obama said during his Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House. "To the dozens of American soldiers that he saved in Vietnam half a century ago, Chuck is the reason that they lived and came home and had children and grandchildren. Entire family trees—made possible by the actions of this one man."

Charlie remained humble about his award.

"Out of all of that, there is really only one thing that means anything—those 40 names are not on the wall in D.C. Awards are nice, but there is far more gratitude in simply knowing that."

Charlie Kettles was a real-life hero and the very best of Michigan. The people of my State and the families of the 44 men he saved will remain forever grateful for his service and sacrifice.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF AUBURN, MAINE

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the town of Auburn, ME, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. Auburn might be a small city, but it features something for everyone, from recreation activities and parks and trails to cultural opportunities, a variety of restaurants, shopping, and public and private school options. Located along the banks of the Androscoggin River, Auburn is home to over 23,000 residents and is the county seat of Androscoggin County.

Auburn was first incorporated on February 22, 1869, and was created by annexing parts of the surrounding towns of Poland, Minot, and Danville, previously called Pejepscot. Auburn was the first city in Maine to adopt a council-manager form of government and grew into one of Maine's largest municipalities. In the early to mid-1800s, a new bridge across the Androscoggin River to Lewiston and the arrival of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad helped spur development in Auburn. Like many Maine towns, Auburn developed into a mill town, and many of those mills were powered by the falls on the Androscoggin and Little Androscoggin