

American moral tradition. It broke faith with our core values, and it broke trust with freedom seekers across the globe.

This very day there are dissidents all over the globe struggling against totalitarian regimes in darkness. To them, America has always said and America still says: We see you. We stand with you. We may make long and deliberate decisions about how we engage in the world and about what particular commitments are prudent to exercise at different times with different allies, but we have always spoken unequivocally about the universal dignity of 7.6 billion people. To those who struggle, we have always said: We see you, and we stand with you.

These simple truths matter. The moral responsibilities of the Office of the Presidency matter. When we don't affirm these basic truths, it is a failure to who we are, and it is a failure to do what we do. It is a betrayal not just to the millions of people who were denied free and fair elections in Russia this week, but it is a failure to people all across the globe who are struggling in darkness against tyrants.

Each and every Member of this Senate—all 100 of us—was elected in the kind of free and fair election that Vladimir Putin fears—the kind of election that he would not win. Vladimir Putin is a coward. Vladimir Putin is a despot.

Just this month, Vladimir Putin tried to assassinate a political dissident and his daughter on NATO soil in the UK. Given that we have taken an oath in this body, after our free and fair elections, to uphold and defend the Constitution—given that—we ought not, in this body, find it difficult to say basic true things, like that we condemn leaks by the President's staff against him. We also condemn Vladimir Putin's sham election. We condemn a Russian despot who aims to make Soviet tyranny great again.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO THAD COCHRAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, back in 1985, I was a second-term Member of the House of Representatives and a member, I was proud to say, of the House Appropriations Committee. The Committee chairman was a man by the name of Jamie Whitten. He was from the State of Mississippi. He was a Mississippi Democrat. Yes, there used to be Mississippi Democrats.

Jamie Whitten had been a witness to a great deal of American history. He was on the floor of the House as a newly minted Congressman from Mississippi on December 8, 1941, when Franklin Roosevelt delivered his "Day of Infamy" speech.

There I was speaking to this same man 44 years later, and I was a junior member of his Appropriations Committee. I knew that Appropriations, under the House rules, had several members who were also represented on the Budget Committee. So one day I went to Chairman Whitten from Mississippi and suggested to him that I wanted to be on the Budget Committee in the slot reserved for Appropriations members. Chairman Whitten looked down at me and he asked: Why do you want to be on the Budget Committee?

I said: I think it is good because the Budget Committee makes the spending decisions and blueprints that Appropriations and other committees follow.

He kind of sat back in his chair and Chairman Whitten said to me: Well, if you want to be on that committee, you can be on that committee, but I want you to remember one thing, the Budget Committee deals in hallucinations and the Appropriations Committee deals in facts.

I will never forget that exchange. I served on the Budget Committee and again in the Senate on the same Budget Committee, and I have come to believe that Chairman Whitten was not that wrong in his conclusion. I call that "Whitten's Law." It remains one of the most important lessons I have learned about the Federal budget.

I have learned other lessons from Mississippi politicians, and one of them is a man by the name of THAD COCHRAN, my colleague from the State of Mississippi and one of my friends who cochaired the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee with me. I shouldn't say cochaired; I am the ranking member on that committee and he, of course, is the chairman. THAD COCHRAN taught me and others many important lessons about the Federal budget and about public service in general.

THAD COCHRAN is a man of humility and integrity, and he is a man of his word. He is a conservative Republican who values principle and cooperation over pointless confrontation. He prefers common ground to scorched Earth because he knows it is better to build on.

Senator COCHRAN and I have served together in the Senate for more than two decades. For much of that time, we have both been on the Senate Appropriations Committee. He has been the committee's ranking member and chairman twice. In all of those years, I can only think of a time or two when he and I disagreed so completely on an issue that we found ourselves unable to find that principled compromise. Some may call that "old school." I call it leadership in a representative democracy.

As a member and two-time chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator COCHRAN's skill as a negotiator has served Mississippi and the United States exceedingly well. He has helped keep his State and our Nation strong and safe and economically sound.

In a time that increasingly prizes the quick profits and short-term vision, THAD COCHRAN has helped to protect and increase America's investments in scientific, technological, and medical research. That is a proud part of the legacy he leaves.

His voice is common and quiet, but don't be fooled. When it comes to protecting the interests of his State or this Nation, he is tenacious.

That was never more apparent than in the weeks and months after Hurricane Katrina pummeled the Mississippi gulf coast and other States in 2005. Senator COCHRAN helped secure appropriations that enabled thousands of homeowners in Mississippi to rebuild after their insurance companies turned them down.

As the former chairman and now ranking member of the Appropriations Committee Defense Subcommittee, I worked closely with Chairman COCHRAN to protect critical national security priorities in my State of Illinois, and he has worked hard for his State.

Behind every Senator, of course, there are hard-working staff members without whom we could not do our jobs. Senator COCHRAN's personal staff and his committee staff are first-rate public servants. I want to thank them too. They have been part of a winning team with Senator COCHRAN. Their hard work and loyalty on his behalf and on behalf of the Senate has served this Nation well.

I wasn't surprised the other day when I learned that Senator COCHRAN had been an Eagle Scout. I was surprised to learn, however, that he once failed in pursuit of a Boy Scout merit badge as a young man. He learned a lesson from that experience that he said has stayed with him all his life: Always be prepared.

THAD COCHRAN's adherence to that lesson, his remarkable skill as a negotiator, and his deep integrity and honesty are qualities we could all do well to emulate.

I thank Senator THAD COCHRAN and wish him all the best as he departs the Senate, and I thank him for his great service to Mississippi and to America.

REMEMBERING LOUISE SLAUGHTER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER of New York passed away after representing the Rochester area of that State for more than three decades. She was tough, unfailingly gracious, and wonderfully effective in helping people throughout her life.

LOUISE carried titles you don't see often around here. She was the Congress's only microbiologist. She was also a blues and jazz singer as well. She was a fighter, first and foremost, earning the respect of her colleagues and even those who disagreed with her. I have counted her as a friend and an ally in many causes.

She hailed from Harlan, KY, the daughter of a blacksmith in a coal