

out, speak, and participate in the political process, we would just pick out the people who are opposed to us and leave out the people who are in favor of us. The truth is that there are many wealthy Americans who feel deeply about the country, who are committed to one side or the other, and who are trying to have an impact on the country—as many on the left as on the right.

So we ought not to leave out Tom Steyer. I believe he also has a brother, who is also a billionaire, who has similar views and will probably try to impact the fall's election in one way or another beneficial to the things he advocates.

THE BUDGET

The release of a President's budget is usually a pretty big deal, but President Obama's latest budget, released only this morning, hasn't even ginned up much excitement. Folks just aren't taking it very seriously because it is not a very serious document.

First, it could probably never even pass the Democratic-led Senate, and in some sense that is the point. Rather than put together a constructive blueprint that the two parties could use as a jumping-off point to get our economy moving and our fiscal house in order, the President has once again opted for the political stunt—for a budget that is more about firing up the base in an election year than about solving the Nation's biggest and most persistent long-term challenges.

It would increase taxes by well over \$1 trillion in the worst economic slowdown nearly anyone can remember. It would explode spending by \$790 billion, forcing us to borrow more money from places such as China. As I indicated, it would do almost nothing to address the most serious threats facing our children's future, and it doesn't even come close to balancing this year. No wonder the President thought the left would love it.

But this is my question for the President: What about the middle class? What is in it for them? It seems as though the President has just about given up on helping folks who are in the middle, folks who feel as if Washington doesn't take their concerns and anxieties into consideration anymore. What hope is he giving them that their medical bills won't be as high, that their wages will start going up instead of down? What is in this budget for them except for this nagging feeling that they will just keep getting squeezed?

The President is well into his sixth year of trying to fix this economy, his sixth year of trying to tax, spend, and regulate our way to prosperity—just as his ideology demands. But this much has to be clear by now: This doesn't work. Since 2009 the government has spent almost \$18 trillion. Yet millions of middle-class Americans continue to suffer, whether in the unemployment line or in jobs that barely allow them to get by.

It is time the President realized that doubling down on the same failed policies is simply not going to work. Yet that is just what this budget proposes to do. We do not need any more election-year gimmicks. What is needed is a new approach, a positive strategy that focuses on helping the middle class instead of appeasing the far left.

President Obama still has 2 years in his Presidency. It is not too late for him to try to make a positive difference for folks struggling to pay their bills, but he has to let go of the left and reach to the middle. He has to decide that bipartisan solutions are worth fighting for. If he does he is going to find significant support on this side of the aisle. We want to work with him to get important legislation done for our country. We always have. We are eager to expand opportunity for the middle class and to build more ladders of opportunity for those who aspire to it. We are eager to enact policies that can create American jobs—improving things such as the Keystone Pipeline, medical device tax repeal, and important new trade legislation, just to name a few we could do together. We are eager to find ways to control spending and put the debt on a path to elimination. We are eager to reform the regulatory state so that the rules coming out of Washington actually work for people other than the bureaucratic class who writes them.

There are bipartisan solutions to be had on these types of issues if only the President could put the politics aside for a few minutes and actually work with us, really work with us, because the kind of unserious budget he put out today is just the type of silly politicking we need to get past. After all, why would we want a budget that grows the Federal Government while the middle class continues to shrink? Washington is doing just fine in the ObamaCare economy, but real Americans deserve a lot better. We can give it to them if we work together.

What I am saying is this: Mr. President, you have 2 years remaining in office. Work with us to make them count.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Connecticut.

POLITICAL SPENDING

Mr. MURPHY. First, I associate myself with the remarks of the majority leader. I certainly understand the con-

cerns of those on the Republican side about the individual who has proposed to spend a certain amount of money supporting the global warming cause, but it pales in comparison to the money that has already been spent by the Koch brothers, who have poured hundreds of millions of dollars and will continue to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into these races, completely dwarfing any amount of money that is spent on the other side.

UKRAINE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I am on the floor to talk about the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. I am pleased to have Senator MCCAIN on the floor because it is very hard to describe the sensation both he and I felt at the end of the last year when we got the chance to travel to the Maidan—Independence Square—in Kiev and speak to about 1 million people. It is even harder to describe the sensation of hearing that group of people yelling back to us in unison:

Thank you, U.S.A. Thank you, U.S.A.

But that was the reality we were able to experience.

It is important to note that Senator MCCAIN and I didn't go to the Maidan that day to advocate for President Yanukovich's removal even though the end of that process resulted in that fact. In actuality we spent 2 hours that night meeting with Yanukovich, pleading with him to reverse course on his decision to abandon plans to join the EU so that he could win back the support of the hundreds of thousands of people who had gathered on that square to support our European integration and domestic political reforms. But President Yanukovich didn't listen, and instead he lost his legitimacy as a ruler when he turned his security service on his own people, resulting in the murder of over 100 Ukrainians who simply wanted to compel their leader to follow the wishes of the Ukrainian people.

I was proud to author a resolution that passed unanimously in this body that declared our support for the ability of Ukrainians to peacefully air their grievances against their government and to oppose the use of force against them. Then, I was equally proud to join Senator MCCAIN and some others in a bipartisan call for sanctions against Yanukovich when he began his murderous crusade against the protesters. I was even prouder of President Obama, who through the State Department sent a clear, unwavering message to the Ukrainian people that the United States stood with them in their desire to see a better future for Ukraine, aligned with Europe and the West.

This strong bipartisan approach here in America to the Maidan movement helped the people of Ukraine as they charted their own path toward a new government. We didn't dictate the

terms of Ukraine's future; we simply supported the right of the people to determine it for themselves.

But now, despite the success of the Maidan, the crisis in Ukraine has changed its face. It hasn't dissipated. And today Secretary Kerry was greeted in Kiev by Ukrainians pleading for the continued support of the United States.

Having been so clear-voiced in our support of the Ukrainian people thus far since the protests began last November, now is the moment when Democrats and Republicans should stand united in this Congress so that years from now, when a group assembles in Kiev marking the anniversary of this grave crisis, they will celebrate Ukraine's political sovereignty and economic rebirth with more chants of thanks to the United States.

In what shape should this support come?

First, we need to stand together in the next week to deliver serious financial assistance to a Ukrainian economy that is weak and is growing weaker as this crisis persists. A \$1 billion aid package is a good start, but our real work must happen within the structures of the IMF, which can provide potentially tens of billions of dollars necessary to fully right the Ukrainian economic ship. While Ukraine does need to undergo economic and budget reforms from within, I would caution the IMF to be gentle in the timing of the conditions applied to this aid. Difficult steps need to be undertaken to right-size gas prices and trim budget deficits, but Ukraine should be given a long enough lease so that these necessary reforms don't strangle a nation today dealing with threats to its very existence.

Second, Crimea. Russia has invaded Ukraine, make no mistake. They have done so in violation of the United Nations charter and the very accord they signed in 1994 guaranteeing Crimea's territorial security. No doubt Vladimir Putin was sore at losing his erstwhile ally in the Ukrainian President's office. No doubt he didn't like the fact that the United States voiced its strong support for the right of a sovereign Ukraine to make independent decisions about its future partnerships. No doubt he is infuriated that the Ukrainian people are now on their way to getting their way. But this is not a schoolyard. You don't get to push weaker kids around just because you don't like them. This is the 21st century.

The reason we belong to organizations such as the United Nations or the reason we negotiate treaties such as the Budapest memorandum is because now we understand, after centuries of European war, how destabilizing this kind of behavior is.

The irony for Russia, of course, is that this invasion demonstrably weakens, not strengthens, their nation's position in the world. Let's say for argument's sake that the end result of this crisis is a Crimea that is more closely aligned with Russia than with Ukraine.

What does that accomplish for Russia? Well, it will have won the occupation of 2 million Ukrainians while the majority of the other 43 million continue to orient themselves permanently toward the European Union.

If the United States and Europe make good on sanctions threats, which I hope we will, it will devastate the Russian economy, leaving millions of Russians out of work and adding political instability to Putin's own land at a time when he really can't afford much more instability, and it will make Russia an international pariah, shunned by the industrialized nations that help form the future path of global, political, and economic values.

Given this reality, why did Putin do it? He didn't do it to protect Russians in Ukraine because the only threat to their safety is due to the military crisis of Russia's own making. He did it because, like the schoolyard bully, he doesn't see past his own nose. He believes that he wins by temporarily flexing his muscles and by capturing the world's attention. He doesn't look to the long-term, potentially dire consequences to his own political standing and to his own people. He pulls punches because it feels good today no matter how bad it will hurt tomorrow.

But that being said, no matter the irrationality of Moscow's behavior, we need to make sure in the case that Russia does not correct its mistake, and correct it soon, the consequences do hurt. I believe Congress should authorize broad authority for President Obama to enact strong sanctions on Russia through penalties to its banks, its oil companies, and its political and economic elite. I believe the President should only be allowed to use this authority in the case that this illegal incursion into Ukraine continues and that we should give Moscow the opportunity to reverse course or join with the international community to address their concerns about the safety of Russian citizens in Ukraine.

Let's give Russia a chance to make this better and deliver a clear message of the consequences if they don't. This, of course, can't happen without the support of our European allies. As chairman of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs, I will be on the phone this week with European Parliamentarians urging them to join us in proposing new sanctions on the Russian economy.

I know there is hesitance in Europe due to the integration of Russia into the European economies, but this crisis should, frankly, matter more to Europe than it matters to us. Five years ago it was a laughable proposition that Russia would invade Ukraine, but it is happening now. It may be unthinkable today that Russia, in 5 years, is going to move on a NATO ally, but if this aggression goes unchecked, then the future can be very perilous, even for our friends in Europe.

Finally, a word on the politics of this crisis. I have listened to some of my

good friends on the Republican side try to score political points in connection with the Russian move on Crimea, trying to paint this somehow as Obama's fault. This is a ridiculous contention. Putin marched into Georgia in 2008 under a Republican President, who many of my Republican colleagues considered to be strong on foreign policy, and now he is doing it with a Democrat in office. President Obama is considering steps in response that seemingly weren't even considered in 2008.

What has me feeling even more suspect of the criticisms of President Obama is there doesn't seem to be any real difference between what the Republicans want the President to do and what he is actually doing. It is easy to say it is Obama's fault, but history tells us otherwise, and these political attacks mask the fortunate fact that there is pretty solid bipartisan agreement on what to do next.

Ukraine can remain whole and free and it can stay on a path to join Europe. When that day emerges from the smoke and the fire of the crisis, if we play our cards right, then they will have America and our European allies to thank, in part, for that new day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UKRAINE

Mr. McCAIN. I thank my colleague from Connecticut for his thoughtful remarks on events taking place and the tragedies taking place in Ukraine as we speak. I appreciate his commitment to trying to find a way through this very difficult situation.

The Senator is dead wrong when he says this is similar to Georgia. In fact, this Senator wanted to do a lot more than we did. In fact, we did a lot more. The fundamental problem, I say to my friend from Connecticut, is that this President does not understand Vladimir Putin. He does not understand his ambitions. He does not understand that Vladimir Putin is an old KGB colonel bent on restoration of the Russian empire. It was Vladimir Putin who said: The greatest catastrophe of the 20th century was the downfall of the Soviet Union.

The Senator from Connecticut should understand that. This President has never understood this. This President is the one who ridiculed Mitt Romney when Mitt Romney said our great enemy was Russia and its geopolitical threats. This President said the Cold War has been over for 20 years. This President believes the Cold War is over, but Vladimir Putin doesn't believe the Cold War is over.

When the President of the United States is overheard to say to Mr. Putin's puppet, Mr. Medvedev: Tell Vladimir that after I am reelected I will be more flexible.

Did you get that? The President said: Tell Vladimir after I am reelected I will be more flexible. This is the same