

Over the past year, I have been encouraged by the close cooperation between the United States and the European Union to hold accountable those in Belarus who are responsible for the brutal crackdown there. Continued transatlantic coordination on Belarus is vital. The Euro-Atlantic community of democracies must speak with one voice to ratchet up pressure on Lukashenko. And while the United States and the EU have taken strong and important steps, including imposing travel bans on nearly 200 Belarusian officials, freezing the assets that these officials hold in the West, and both renewing and imposing new sanctions on Belarusian state-owned enterprises, more can be done.

In particular, I hope that in the weeks ahead, the United States and the EU will implement sanctions against other state-owned entities that enrich the Lukashenko regime at the expense of the Belarusian people.

Furthermore, it is critical that at a moment when the Lukashenko regime is looking for a financial lifeline to keep himself in power, the United States and our allies work together to ensure that responsible international institutions and actors—including the IMF—do not lend money to that regime. It is clear—as we have seen over the past 2 years—that such funds will only be used by Lukashenko to prop up his illegitimate and repressive rule. And I continue to urge our own government to state publicly that the United States will not support any further IMF assistance to Belarus until we see credible political and economic reforms by Belarusian authorities, beginning with the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Belarus.

At the same time we are shocked and appalled by the cruelty and thuggishness of the Lukashenko regime, we should also take note of the remarkable courage and perseverance of the Belarusian people, who press on in their struggle for greater freedom and opportunity.

Over the past year, I have been honored to meet with Belarusian opposition leaders and activists. These conversations have been extremely powerful, as I have heard directly from the men and women who are facing repression on the front lines and looking for help from us in their noble struggle.

Today, I join my colleagues in saying to the brave people in Belarus who are striving to secure their fundamental freedoms: We have not and will not forget about you and your important cause. We remember your names. We will stand in solidarity with you and in support of you until you achieve your goal, which is a free and democratic Belarus. And we believe more than ever that the day will come when Belarus will be free.

The extraordinary revolutions that are taking place across the Middle East and north Africa should remind us all that the United States does best in the

world when we stand with our values and the people who share them. And there is much we can do to help the Belarusian people.

To begin with, we must work with our European allies to ensure that the financial and technical assistance we have pledged to the Belarusian opposition is disbursed and implemented as quickly as possible, particularly for groups operating inside of Belarus. And we in Washington must continue to engage with the Belarusian opposition and its emerging leaders, and lend them our support.

Let me conclude by saying that I do not know when Belarus will be free, but I have no doubt that someday it will be free. I am confident that the future of Belarus belongs not to Lukashenko and his thugs but to the Belarusian people.

Indeed, the future of Belarus belongs to the dissidents who are in jail or who are being harassed—to Ales Byalitski, the founder of Belarus' largest human rights organization who recently celebrated his 49th birthday in prison. It belongs to Alyaksandr Klaskouski, a 33-year-old former traffic police officer in Minsk who pleaded with security forces on December 19 not to use force against peaceful protestors and who himself stood between riot police and unarmed protestors. He, too, is now serving time in a maximum security prison for his efforts. The future of Belarus belongs also to Natalia Kaliada, the director of the Belarus Free Theatre, who was arrested on December 19 but continues to press on in her work—to fight dictatorship with art. Natalia does this, as she put it in January when she testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, because “we want our spectators to think. When people start thinking, this is the most terrifying thing for a dictator.”

The future of Belarus belongs to every Belarusian who seeks a brighter future for their country—a future of democracy and opportunity. And we stand with them in their cause on this anniversary of the December 19, 2010, election—and on every anniversary to come, until Belarus is free.

TRIBUTE TO MARK JICKLING, CRS

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I want to recognize Mark Jickling, a dedicated public servant who has served as a financial economist with the Congressional Research Service and is retiring after nearly 33 years of providing expert analyses to the U.S. Congress on economic, finance and securities matters. He is widely respected in the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as among his CRS colleagues, for his broad knowledge and insights into financial and economic matters as well as his professionalism and collegiality. Thanks to his dedicated efforts, Congress has been better informed as it has sought to find legislative solutions to many of the

issues facing the United States financial system.

Mr. Jickling graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and started work at the Library of Congress part-time with the Collections Management Division. His dedication and intellect led to his becoming an expert in economic matters about which he consistently delivered comprehensive, insightful and helpful analyses. He rose through the ranks to become an economist reaching the level of specialist, the highest level of analyst at CRS. He headed the Banking, Insurance, Securities and Macroeconomic Policy Section in the Government and Finance Division of CRS from 2005 to 2007, in which he oversaw the work of a dozen other analysts and specialists. He is the author or co-author of 100 CRS reports and countless confidential memos.

Mr. Jickling has worked on some of the most significant securities and banking issues facing the country. He wrote the first CRS reports on the impacts of the September 11 attacks on the markets and on the Enron scandal. At that time, he also coordinated CRS' internal “Enron group.” He assisted senior Congressional staff as they formulated legislative responses to the corporate accountability scandals.

From the onset of the recent financial crisis, Mr. Jickling has been instrumental in assisting Congress as we addressed the serious banking and market problems facing the country. He provided expert analysis on a daily basis to the Banking Committee and to others in Congress on housing finance, non-bank financial intermediation, financial derivatives, exotic financial products and markets, and many other issues. His dedication was shown by his working nights and weekends during this period. He significantly contributed to the quality of legislation that ultimately was enacted and cooperated effectively with Members and their staffs to produce the legislation. He was exactly the right person at the right time.

Mr. Jickling retires from the CRS having set a standard of superior service and having assisted a generation of CRS analysts in developing their skills. He leaves CRS to spend more time with his family and pursue some of his other interests, including the professional performance of music. His many accomplishments will remain a fitting tribute to his career and character.

Mr. Jickling will be greatly missed. I wish him and his family all the best in the future.

TRIBUTE TO DON DIXON

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor Don Dixon, who is retiring from Senate service. Don has been a trusted advisor and dear friend for many years.

Approximately 15 years ago, I was blessed to have Don join my staff as my State director of agriculture. He