



**\* Floor Remarks \***  
**Sen. Susan M. Collins**  
**Germany/Poland CODEL**

On February 24th, approximately one month ago, Vladimir Putin launched an unprovoked and unjustified war against his neighbor, the free, democratic, and sovereign nation of Ukraine.

The bipartisan Senate delegation visit to Europe led by Senator Ernst that I joined over this past weekend was truly extraordinary. It has reinforced my already strong belief that the United States must do all that it can to provide lethal aid to the courageous Ukrainians fighting for their families and their freedoms, as well as to provide the humanitarian assistance necessary to ease the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

Madam President, you were on this trip as well. And like the Senator from West Virginia who just spoke, my most memorable conversation was with a young mother named Katarina, who had two children, one age eight, one age six, with her. I met her at the Polish Refugee Welcome Center. It was only a few miles from the Ukrainian border. She said to me, “I want to live in peace. I want to be back in Ukraine, but I have to keep my children safe.”

She was weary looking, but determined to keep her children safe. This young mother and her two children were leaving the only country she has ever known. She left her husband behind, not knowing when or if she will see him again. All in order to keep her children safe.

We have only to watch the scenes of what Putin is doing to try to destroy Ukraine and to break the will of its people. He has bombed apartment buildings, schools, theaters, shelters, humanitarian corridors. He has bombed a maternity hospital. What does that tell you about this man, this war criminal? What more do we need to know?

The only way that we can end this humanitarian crisis is to provide Ukraine with the weapons, supplies, ammunition, and other assistance that they need to bring to an end this Russian war of aggression. We must provide—without further delay—the Ukrainians with the MiG fighter aircraft that have been held up by this administration and which Ukrainian President Zelensky has requested. We must ensure that Ukraine receives additional anti-aircraft defenses, including the S-300, whether directly from our stocks or those of our allies. We must ensure that the Ukrainians have the means to fight and defend their people from these ongoing atrocities ordered by Putin. And we know—we saw firsthand—their extraordinary bravery, their determination to fight for their country, to put everything they have on the line.

Every moment, every hour, every day counts. We do not have time for endless debate and delay. That costs the lives of innocent Ukrainians. As a Ukrainian leader told us: “The Administration must stop telling Putin what America will not do. It must say what we will do.”

The Administration should also make every effort – in collaboration with Congress where necessary - to ease the process of allowing Ukrainians with family members here in America to come stay with them until it is safe to return home. I know many Mainers are eager to help.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the terrific American soldiers that we met, including several from the Great State of Maine. Many of them left their families with days or even hours’ notice over the past few weeks. They rapidly deployed to Germany, Poland, and other NATO allies to deter Russia’s aggression and defend these NATO members from any Russian threats. Each of these members of our military were motivated, patriotic, and impressive, and I am so grateful for their service.

I have read that President Biden is considering stationing our troops close to the front line to send an unmistakable message to the Russians on a more permanent basis, and I hope that he will indeed do that.

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