

Hawaii and everybody across this country about the death of 1LT Tyler Feehan of Ewa Beach, HI, who was among those killed in Jordan this past weekend while serving our country. His courage, his dedication, and his unwavering commitment to duty reflect the very best of our Armed Forces. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, his loved ones, and to his fellow servicemembers.

FOREIGN AID

Mr. President, it shouldn't be this difficult to get the State Department to follow the law. Earlier this year, when we passed the State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill on a bipartisan basis, we were very clear that the spending requirements in it were not suggestions; they were a matter of law. We are not asking the State Department to do us a favor and spend the money we provided; we made a law. Yet we are still having to fight tooth and nail with the State Department officials to get money out to the people in places around the world that are counting on the United States of America.

Let's take funding for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. For months, the administration has been withholding \$600 million which is meant to help millions of children get vaccinated against preventable diseases, including Ebola, cholera, and mpox.

And even though the Secretary has told us repeatedly, including in a hearing last month, that he will personally see to it that this money is released, it is still stuck. Why? Because people at HHS, who have their own views and theories about vaccines, keep blocking it.

Here is the thing: This funding is in the State Department's budget. HHS has no jurisdiction here. And I want to be really clear about this. Sure, this is a jurisdictional dispute. Sure, this is a legal matter. A, this is a law, not a suggestion. B, this just doesn't go through HHS; they have no jurisdiction here.

Why am I so animated about it? It is because little kids are not getting vaccinated right now.

Gavi, the global Vaccine Alliance, they come to us, and they articulate to us that children across the planet are getting sick unnecessarily because they are not getting vaccinated. What happened was, because of the COVID pandemic and the disagreement about mandatory COVID vaccines, now certain people are so brain-poisoned that we think we shouldn't even prevent disease in children. And kids are dying because the United States is sitting on its butt, not disbursing money that is a matter of law.

Here is another example with the Global Fund. Last week, after months of fighting to release funding, the administration finally made a \$661 million contribution to the Global Fund, which will help to fight deadly epidemics like HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria by providing medicines and

strengthening health infrastructure. But even then, the administration is still withholding close to \$2 billion in additional contributions, all while HIV prevention is falling, malaria is surging, and we are trying to contain multiple outbreaks globally, including Ebola.

When the Congress got all animated about attacking USAID, it was because: Hey, we want to help PEPFAR; we want to help Gavi; we want to help the Global Fund. We want to be the good guys around the world, but let's not do all this cultural stuff. Let's not waste all this money on superfluous stuff.

And do you know what is happening? They eliminated a tiny portion of the tens of billions of dollars that get pushed out every year—tiny—and I mean we are talking tens of millions versus tens of billions. That was like cultural stuff and arguably—arguably—progressive or leftwing, a tiny portion of it.

But I want everybody to understand what they did in the process. They cut previously bipartisan priorities, and lots and lots of people died. These are not bureaucratic mixups. Every day that this money doesn't get to where it is supposed to go, every contribution worth hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars is delayed, people go hungry, people get sick, people die.

That is what has made what happened last year at USAID particularly cruel. The richest man in the world wanted to send USAID to the wood chipper, and this Congress and this Senate ratified those decisions. And yet we worked with the Secretary and we worked with appropriators on both sides of the aisle and we worked with the great, late Senator Lindsey Graham—may his memory be a blessing—to reestablish the principle that the United States is the good guys and that it is not just the example of our power but the power of our example that makes the United States the indispensable Nation. We are the good guys. And when a batch of aid medicine or communications infrastructure or food arrives with that little patch with "United States of America" on it, people go: Help is on the way. The good guys are here.

And so we got through this process on the appropriations side to reestablish the principle that USAID, in its new iteration, under mostly the State Department, is still a bipartisan priority. And there are lots of people who believe that. But the State Department is not executing on these dollars. And the consequences are geopolitical, but they are also human. People are still literally dying because we are not pushing this money out.

And just so you know that I don't think this is an entirely partisan question, there were Democrats, people who consider themselves Democratic strategists, who said out loud—who said out loud—that Democrats were walking into a trap because USAID doesn't poll well.

I don't care if it polls well. I am not here to have a pollster tell me that I shouldn't care that kids are getting malaria. I am not here to get talked out of the United States being the good guys because healthcare polls higher, because the cost of gasoline polls higher. I am not deciding what to put into a 30-second spot. I am deciding how to use the power given to me by the people of the State of Hawaii, and I think they care about whether people die unnecessarily because of the stupidity of this Congress. And I want everybody to know what is happening now, in addition to all that money being still throttled.

So there were parades and festivals and other things that were funded that ended up on a FOX News chyron that were embarrassing to USAID. And I would say about two-thirds of them were just flatly untrue, but some of them actually happened.

So the idea—I went to Lindsey, I went to Marco, I went to MARIO DIAZ-BALART, I went to LOIS FRANKEL, I went to JOHN THUNE, and I went to others, and I said: Look, you are pushing on an open door. If the principle here is USAID should stick to its knitting, stay in a narrow couple of lanes—foreign military financing, economic assistance, disaster response, and humanitarian assistance—and we should do nothing superfluous, you are pushing on an open door. If you would like USAID to be a little more aligned with the State Department and not working sort of against each other's interests—even in country—fine, you are pushing on an open door.

So that is what we tried to ratify in the last appropriations bill. But here is the crazy thing. It is not that they are not spending money on ideological projects. They have just decided to spend money on their own ideological projects. So instead of vaccinating little kids against deadly diseases, they are now spending millions of dollars to help British nonprofits—one of them recently established and now receiving \$7 million from United States taxpayer dollars—to help British nonprofits report on whether free speech is being censored in London.

This is how they explained the funding:

American diplomacy should continue to stand up for genuine democracy, freedom of expression, and unapologetic celebrations of European nations' individual character and history.

Just so we are all clear, they were trying to get out of the business of saving lives in order to get into the business of promoting "unapologetic celebrations of European nations' individual character and history." That is what we are now paying for with our tax dollars.

Here is another one. They want to send millions of dollars to protect free speech and foster dialogue in the UK, Europe, and Australia—not Equatorial Guinea or Eswatini, which despite

being among the world's most repressive governments, the Trump administration is still sending tax dollars to them.

They are going after our allies. Is the UK or the EU or Australia a threat to democracy?

One more example: The State Department set up a \$200 million fund to make private sector investments in and around Armenia, and the guy they appointed to lead it just so happens to be one of Trump's ballroom donors and has deep business ties in the region.

You could have made a credible argument that USAID strayed from its central mission by supporting societal and cultural activities, that it tried to do too many things in too many places and that actually focusing our efforts on a few key priorities was a better strategy. But they didn't do that. They have just picked their own rightwing version of wokeness to fund with taxpayer dollars.

And so we are only partially through metabolizing what has happened to foreign aid globally and in the United States. The good news is that we have reestablished the bipartisan principle that we should still be present in the world, that we should still alleviate suffering, that we should still provide economic assistance, that we should still respond to disasters, that we should still do foreign military financing, and that all of that is the right thing to do because we are the good guys. And, also, all of that is the right thing to do because it is way cheaper than any military engagement, and winning hearts and minds is just a hell of a lot cheaper than going to war. And so we reestablished that principle in the legislative context.

But now the State Department has to start executing on what the law says. And this is not like the USAID thing, where we gave them a pile of money and gave them the authority to do a bunch of grants and then they canceled a bunch of grants and moved things around. I may have objected to that, but that was permissible. What they are doing now is not permissible. PEPFAR money is not a choice they get to make; it is a choice we already made. Gavi money is not a choice they get to make; it is a choice we already made. The Global Fund money is not a choice they get to make; it is a choice we already made. These are things in statutory law.

They are not the Ford Foundation, where they say: Well, we have changed our grant criteria.

This is a matter of Federal law, and they have to follow it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the Pozos and Traynor nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FISCHER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1804

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Trump's corruption has no ceiling, and it apparently doesn't have an altitude limit either. Trump's \$400 million luxury jet is the single biggest bribe an American President has ever accepted from another country in all of American history—the single biggest bribe in all of American history. And make no mistake about it, Trump's so-called palace in the sky is a boondoggle at 40,000 feet.

If you thought this illegal gift was bad before, it is even worse now. We just learned that this new jet wasn't safe enough for Trump to make the return flight from the NATO summit in Türkiye, a country that borders on Iran. It doesn't have the countermeasures for heat-seeking missiles and the other security equipment that it needs to keep the President safe.

The rest of the Air Force One fleet had all these security features, but Trump left them in the hangar back at home.

So I call on Senate Republicans to pass my Presidential Airlift Security Act so Americans don't have to pay to upgrade Trump's luxury jet when he already has access to a fleet of U.S. planes that are far safer and far less expensive to maintain.

The luxury jet may have come wrapped in a bow for Donald Trump, but it came with a massive price tag for the American people. Trump is asking taxpayers to fork over an estimated \$1 billion to retrofit and max out his flying palace so it can meet the security standards of the existing Air Force One fleet that, of course, we already paid for.

Americans can't afford gas, can't afford groceries, can't afford the electric bill, but Trump thinks they can afford to fly him in style.

Trump's luxury jet also poses a great risk to our national security. All the experts agree: no matter how many modifications are made or how much is spent or how intensely it is retrofitted, there will never be 100 percent confidence that the plane is secure. This is not a gamble anyone should be willing to take.

I introduced this legislation last year, but every single Republican Senator voted against the bill. Now, with this new information, hopefully they will see the light, what a boondoggle this is.

Why do they back up Trump on every one of his boondoggles that is as plain as can be for Americans to see is a gross waste of taxpayer dollars and gross corruption?

Why don't they ever stop him?

Whether it is the slush fund, the ballroom, the family tax exemption deal, or this Air Force One nonsense, we see a new grift coming out of this administration every day.

Where are the Republicans?

Senate Republicans need to stop letting Trump off the hook for fleecing the American people.

And so, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1804; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would like to say a few words about Senator SCHUMER's legislation on the Presidential airlift.

This has been discussed before, and it was voted down earlier this year as part of a vote-arama that we participated in.

Senator SCHUMER's legislation would prevent any funding to be used to modify a foreign aircraft for Presidential airlift. We made this point during the vote-arama. The Senator is trying to make a political point today, of course, about the VC-25 Bridge aircraft, which was made in America and then owned by Qatar.

Unfortunately, this legislation would also apply to a different aircraft, the Survivable Airborne Operations Center aircraft, or SAOC. Those aircraft were actually purchased from Korean Air. So this legislation would hamper a crucial program that ensures Presidential safety in the event of a nuclear war.

Thus, Senator SCHUMER's bill would significantly harm our U.S. nuclear deterrents. To be clear, the SAOC is the cornerstone of our NC3 modernization. This is the plane that will command and control our nuclear weapons on America's worst day.

We cannot play these political games with the NC3. So with that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Nebraska.

SANCTIONING RUSSIA ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, Lindsey Graham, a friend, a colleague, and a tireless national security advocate. He was a true leader in strengthening our military and our country's defense, and I miss him dearly. I am so pleased that his sister DARLINE now serves here in this institution. She is carrying on his legacy and honoring his commitment to the people of South Carolina and to this country.

So I rise here today to, yes, pay tribute to Lindsey Graham, but to also call on my colleagues to help us carry on one of his greatest efforts: ending Putin's barbaric and unjust war against sovereign Ukraine.

For more than 4 years, the Ukrainian people have shown extraordinary resilience and resolve. They have defended their homeland with courage that has inspired the world.

In 2022, Putin thought he could seize eastern Ukraine in days. He thought he