

to justify a power grab to fundamentally change the Senate.

At the beginning of each of last two Congresses, we have had this discussion at length. At the beginning of the previous Congress, here is what the majority leader said back in January of 2011. He said:

I agree that the proper way to change Senate rules is through the procedures established in those rules, and I will oppose—

“I will oppose,” he said. This is January of 2011—

any effort in this Congress or the next to change the Senate’s rules other than through the regular order.

“I will oppose any effort in this Congress or the next”—the one we are in now—to change the rules of the Senate in any other way than through the regular order. The regular order is it takes 67 votes—not even 60 but 67 votes—to change the rules of the Senate.

Not being willing to keep the commitment he made in January of 2011, we went around and around again at the beginning of 2013—this year—and the Senate this year, after considerable discussion, joined by a number of Members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle, passed two new rules and two new standing orders. In the wake of that action, an additional commitment was made, and here was the exchange on the floor on January 24 of this year. I said:

I would confirm with the majority leader that the Senate would not consider other resolutions relating to any standing order or rules this Congress unless they went through the regular order process?

We had just done that. We followed the regular order, and we passed two rules changes and two standing orders.

The majority leader said:

That is correct. Any other resolutions related to Senate procedure would be subject to a regular order process, including consideration by the Rules Committee.

Now, that was not a promise made based on the majority leader’s view of good behavior. But, of course, by any objective standard, there has not been any bad behavior anyway, even if that would justify breaking a commitment that was not contingent.

Now my friend the majority leader has taken to kind of leaving the floor in the hopes that somehow this would go away if only he were not here. What will not go away is the unequivocal commitment made at the beginning of this Congress so we would know what the rules were for the duration of this Congress.

I think colleagues on both sides of the aisle have a right to know whether the commitment made by the leader of this body—the leader of the majority and this body—is going to be kept. That is the only way we can function. Our word is the currency of the realm in the Senate.

As you can see from the facts, this is a manufactured crisis. There is no crisis over the way the Senate has functioned. In fact, except for these periodic threats by the majority leader to

break the rules of the Senate in order to change the rules of the Senate, we have been operating much better this Congress than in recent previous Congresses. Bills have been open for amendment. We have been able to get them to passage. They have been bipartisan in large measure.

The Senate these days is not broken. It does not need to be fixed, particularly if your judgment to fixing the Senate is to not keep a commitment you made at the beginning of the year.

So I would conclude by saying that I am going to bring this up every morning, and the majority leader not being here or not responding does not make it go away. What my colleagues in the minority have on their minds is whether the commitment will be kept, and at some point the majority leader is going to have to answer that question because it is not going away.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Maryland.

ASIAN POLICY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this past weekend President Obama met with President Xi of China in California for a summit meeting between the two leaders. It was an opportunity for a personal relationship between the leader of China and the leader of the United States in order to improve the trust between the two countries.

China is important to the United States. China, as we know, is a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations—a key player in developing international policies that are important to the United States and global security. China is very influential in the policies concerning North Korea and Iran. China is a key trading partner of the United States. We know the amount of products that go back and forth between China and the United States.

President Obama has correctly identified Asia as a region of particular interest. He has rebalanced Asian policy because of the importance of Asia to the United States. We are a Pacific power, and Asia is critically important for regional security as well as for global security.

I have the opportunity of chairing the Subcommittee on East Asian and

Pacific Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In that capacity, 2 weeks ago I visited China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan.

In China, I was able to observe firsthand the progress that is being made in that country and to meet with key leaders of the Chinese Government. I did see much progress. I saw economic change in China as to how they are becoming a more open society from the point of view of entrepreneurship. I saw rights that have been advanced. People do have more freedom than they had several decades ago.

I saw an opportunity where the United States and China could build a stronger relationship between our two countries. It starts with building trust. There is a lot of mistrust out there. That is why I was particularly pleased about the summit meeting this past weekend. We have common interests. China is critically important to the United States on making sure the Korean Peninsula remains a nonnuclear peninsula. China has tremendous impact over North Korea and does not want to see North Korea continue its ambition to become a nuclear weapon power. They can help us in resolving that issue, hopefully in a way that will help us in a peaceful manner.

I could not help but observe when I was in Beijing that China has a huge environmental challenge. The entire time I was there, I never saw the Sun, and that was not because of clouds, it was because of pollution, which is common in Beijing. It is not only a problem that China needs to deal with, it is a political necessity. The people of China know that their air is dirty. Here is an opportunity for the United States, working with China—the two large emitters of greenhouse gases—for them to come together and show international leadership by what we can do in our own countries to encourage progress but also international progress on this issue.

While I was in China, I had a chance to advance areas of concern. I want to talk about that. Our security interests with China go toward their military, yes, but also go toward their economic conditions and their respect for human rights. I raised throughout my visit to China my concern, and I think America’s concern—the international concern—about China recognizing universally accepted human rights. The right to dissent is not there in China.

On June 4 we celebrated another anniversary of Tiananmen Square, where the student protest turned very deadly. It is still dangerous to dissent in China. Civil rights lawyers can lose their right to practice law and can be physically intimidated if they are too aggressive in representing those who disagree with government policies.

China has a policy to this day of detaining people, putting them in prison for their “reeducation.” That could be for up to 4 years without trial and without being questioned as to why they are being detained, solely because

they disagree with the government's policy.

If you are born in a community, you are registered in that community. There may not be economic opportunity there for you. You might want to move to a big city in order to explore additional economic opportunities for yourself and your family. In China that is not possible for the great majority of the people. They are registered in their community, they are expected to live in their community, and they are expected to work in that community. So you have the haves and the have nots. There are many people in China who are doing very well. The vast majority are not.

Then there is the issue of religious freedom. I think we all know about Tibet and the Buddhists in Tibet and how they have been harassed. We know about the Uighers and the Muslim community. What really shocked me was talking to the Protestants who have their house churches. They explained to me that if their churches get too big—maybe over 25 or 30 members—they lose their right to meet. The government is worried about too many people getting together to celebrate their religion. Well, that certainly is unacceptable. It violates internationally recognized human rights standards.

And then they block access, full access, to the Internet. Sites such as the New York Times or Bloomberg are considered to be too difficult for the Chinese people to accept, and the government blocks those sources.

Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges China has today is that it does not trust its own people to innovate and create. Instead, they use cyber to try to steal our rights, our innovation, not just in America but throughout the world. We are very concerned about the proper use of protecting intellectual property, and I raised that during my visit to China.

We are also concerned about the cyber security issues, and I know that was on the agenda of President Obama and President Xi. We would urge progress to be made on acceptable standards on the use of cyber.

Then there is the issue of corruption. Because so much is determined by where you live and your local government, corruption is widespread. That needs to be changed.

So these are important subjects that we raised in a country that is critically important to the United States, but these issues must be debated.

When President Park was here, the President of the Republic of Korea, she mentioned on the House floor to a joint session of Congress that she wants a security dialog in Northeast Asia. When I met with her when I was in Seoul, we had a chance to talk more about it. The more she talked about the security dialog, the more it reminded me of the Helsinki Commission, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which was established in 1975 as a

security dialog between all the countries of Europe, now Central Asia, the United States, and Canada.

That security dialog deals with all three baskets of concern. Yes, we are concerned about military actions. We have serious military issues that we need to take up in the northeast. Maritime security issues are very much of concern to all the countries of Northeast Asia. But we also need to deal with economic freedom and opportunity, and we need to deal with human rights.

This type of a dialog would allow us in the north to participate with the major countries in Northeast Asia to work out and know the concerns of each of the countries. It would include not just China and the Republic of Korea but Japan, North Korea, the United States, and Russia.

I would urge the region to either adopt a security dialog similar to the Helsinki process or look at becoming a part of the Helsinki process. We do have regional forums. There is a regional forum for Asia. So it is a possibility that they could actually work under the Helsinki framework.

In my visits to Japan and the Republic of Korea, I know we have two close allies. Japan, of course, is a treaty ally. We have U.S. troops both in Korea and Japan. We are working out ways to make our troop presence more effective, consistent with the political realities of both of those countries.

Both Japan and the Republic of Korea strongly support our policies in Iran and Afghanistan and the Korean Peninsula. The relationship between these two countries must improve. There are serious issues. Of course the comfort woman issue during World War II is a matter of major concern to the Korean population. I certainly support and understand that. But it is important for those two allies of the United States to become closer allies and to move forward in areas of mutual interest. I urge them to do that.

In Japan, I had meetings on the economic issues, on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, which clearly are areas where we can make advancements. I saw an opportunity to advance U.S. interests in the rebalance to Asia. It is not a pivot to Asia. We used that term originally. It is not. We have been active in Asia for centuries. It is a rebalance because we recognize the importance of Asia. I think we can do that by enhancing our relationship with all the countries in Asia. It is an opportunity to advance U.S. security interests through military cooperation.

I did talk about the military in China. I also talked, particularly in Japan, about more of their students coming here to the United States to advance good governance and economic relationships, and to have a responsible environmental program.

The subcommittee I chair has already held two hearings on the rebalance to Asia, including good governance and military issues. We are going

to hold future hearings dealing with the environmental issues and economic issues.

Clearly, working with the President, I see a major opportunity to advance U.S. interests through our rebalance to Asia policies.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, we all lost a dear friend when Frank Lautenberg passed away a little over a week ago. He was a friend, he was a colleague, he was a mentor. In the last Congress I had the opportunity to sit next to him on the floor of the Senate. Our desks were back there in the last row. I had a chance to sit next to him. I tell you—you have heard this many times—but when we had those vote-aromas Frank kept me very much engaged. His sense of humor, his ability to use contemporary activities with a sense of humor kept us all going. We are certainly going to miss that humor.

I also sat next to him on the Environment and Public Works Committee. He was a fierce defender of public health and the environment. I am going to certainly miss his advocacy. He was there to protect clean air. He chaired that subcommittee and took on every special interest in order to protect our children and to protect our communities.

He was a fierce defender of the environment, recognizing we all have a responsibility to pass on the environment in a better condition to future generations.

His story is a story about the success of America. Here we have a child of an immigrant family that came to this country and started anew with virtually no resources. It is very appropriate that I am talking about Frank Lautenberg on a day in which the immigration reform bill is on the floor of the Senate.

I know if Frank were here, he would be talking about his own family and his own experiences and why the passage of this immigration bill is so important for America's future. Yes, we are going to do the right thing for the values of America, but we are also going to help America's economic future and our security in the future. He grew up in a family of poverty. His father died when he was very young. He had no choice after high school but to enter the military. But he wanted to enter the military because he wanted to serve his country. So he went and served our country in World War II. As we know, he was the last surviving Member of the Senate who served in World War II. He did an incredible service to our country under extremely difficult circumstances. He came back to the United States and this country offered him the GI bill opportunity for education. But for that GI bill Frank Lautenberg never would have had those educational opportunities. He took advantage of it and went to business