

with the way they vote, in a matter of 10 minutes.

Mr. SCHUMER. But nothing we can do?

Mr. REID. Nothing we can do. They are over there now negotiating with themselves, I guess.

Mr. SCHUMER. Is it not true that until they vote for that resolution, the government will remain shut? They could send us 100 different little doodads, gizmos, and other things, but the ball is in their court, and we hope and wish that they would pass our resolution and that we keep the government open.

Mr. REID. It is in their court and has been in their court.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I had hoped we would not get to this point. I believe that where I was headed is to embody why we have come to this moment today. It just did not happen. I was referring to this article by Jonathan Chait of New York Magazine that in January the House Republicans met, retreated to Williamsburg, VA, and came up with a strategy.

What is that strategy? He goes on to say:

The first element of that strategy is a kind of legislative strike. House Republicans initially decided to boycott all direct negotiations with President Obama, and then subsequently extended that boycott to negotiations with the Democratic Senate—

Which only goes to prove why, despite having passed a budget 6 months ago or over 6 months ago, each of the 18 times that Senator MURRAY, the budget chair, has asked to go to a conference—which is a meeting of the House of Representatives and the Senate to work out their differences in their budget—there have been objections.

So when I read this article and see that House Republicans decided to boycott all direct negotiations with President Obama and then subsequently extended that boycott to negotiations with the Democratic Senate—we are seeing the consequences of that strategy here today.

This kind of refusal—he says in his article that “to even enter negotiations is highly unusual.” The way to make sense of it is that Republicans have planned since January to force Obama to accede to large chunks of the Republican agenda without Republicans having to offer any policy concessions of their own.

It is pretty interesting. You know, for those who said: Well, both sides, the reality is that there is no moral equivalency to shutting down the government. If you are willing to use the tools of shutting down the government in order to elicit what you could not achieve by winning at the ballot box—i.e. getting a Republican President elected, both Houses of the Congress—then you could ultimately repeal a law

with which you disagreed. But since you could not do it that way, to have a policy that ultimately says: No, we are willing to shut down the government in order to achieve what we could not do at the ballot box with the will of the American people, there is no moral equivalency. So it cannot be accepted that both sides are to blame when clearly only one side is willing to pursue their political goals by closing down the government and the consequences that flow from that.

It is an interesting article. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD so that all of my colleagues might be able to read it.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

(Jonathan writes for NY Magazine.)

In January, demoralized House Republicans retreated to Williamsburg, Virginia, to plot out their legislative strategy for President Obama's second term. Conservatives were angry that their leaders had been unable to stop the expiration of the Bush tax cuts on high incomes, and sought assurances from their leaders that no further compromises would be forthcoming. The agreement that followed, which Republicans called “The Williamsburg Accord,” received obsessive coverage in the conservative media but scant attention in the mainstream press. (The phrase “Williamsburg Accord” has appeared once in the Washington Post and not at all in the New York Times.)

But the decision House Republicans made in January has set the party on the course it has followed since. If you want to grasp why Republicans are careening toward a potential federal government shutdown, and possibly toward provoking a sovereign debt crisis after that, you need to understand that this is the inevitable product of a conscious party strategy. Just as Republicans responded to their 2008 defeat by moving farther right, they responded to the 2012 defeat by moving right yet again. Since they had begun from a position of total opposition to the entire Obama agenda, the newer rightward lurch took the form of trying to wrest concessions from Obama by provoking a series of crises.

The first element of the strategy is a kind of legislative strike. Initially, House Republicans decided to boycott all direct negotiations with President Obama, and then subsequently extended that boycott to negotiations with the Democratic Senate. (Senate Democrats have spent months pleading with House Republicans to negotiate with them, to no avail.) This kind of refusal to even enter negotiations is highly unusual. The way to make sense of it is that Republicans have planned since January to force Obama to accede to large chunks of the Republican agenda, without Republicans having to offer any policy concessions of their own.

Republicans have thrashed this way and that throughout the year. Republicans have fallen out, often sharply, over which hostages to ransom, with the most conservative ones favoring a government shutdown threat and the more pragmatic wing, oddly, endorsing a debt default threat. They have also struggled to define the terms of their ransom. The Williamsburg Accord initially envisioned forcing Obama to sign spending cuts, or some form of the Paul Ryan budget. During the summer, Republicans flirted with making Obama lock in lower marginal tax rates. Recently, Republicans settled on pressuring him to kill his health-care law. But the general contours of the legislative strike, and the plan of obtaining policy vic-

tories without offering any policy concessions, has enjoyed general agreement within the party.

The history is important because much of the news coverage and centrist commentary has leaned heavily on the idea that the crises in Washington have come about because of some nebulous failure of bipartisanship. The Washington Post editorial page implores both sides to compromise, without explaining why only one party should have to offer policy concessions to keep the government running. Mark Halperin neatly implies that the two sides share the blame in equal measure.

The analytic error here is the assumption by professional pox-on-both-housers that they can take an advocacy position on the government shutdown without siding with one of the parties. If you want to land on the conclusion that both sides are to blame, you need to equivocate on the underlying moral question of whether a shutdown is really a bad thing. If, on the other hand, you want to take a stance against crisis governance, you need to be honest about the fact that one party is pursuing this as a conscious strategy.

Mr. MENENDEZ. This is a battle within the Republican party itself about where they are headed. It is a battle that is totally unnecessary because I think there is a simple message to the Speaker: Allow the House of Representatives to have an up-or-down vote on what the Senate has sent it, which is basically a clean continuation of the government without any gimmicks, without any poison pills.

If that vote were allowed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the floor of the House of Representatives, I believe it would pass and the government would stay open. Instead, a few within the Republican Party who hatched this concoction in January of this year when they lost the elections and retreated to figure out what was going to be their legislative strategy are bringing the Nation to its knees.

That is simply unacceptable.

I said at the beginning of these comments that it is not only consequential here at home—and it will be consequential—to many families, to those who are Federal employees, and their families, to those who seek the assistance of the Federal Government, whether that is a small business loan, whether it is somebody for the first time enrolling for Social Security payments or a veteran's disability or a whole host of other things; they will not be able to do it if the government is going to be shut down tomorrow—it is also a consequence in the world. I say that as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. What message do we send to the world when, in fact, we cannot get our own budget done and one party is willing to hold the Nation hostage in order to get their political views pursued?

We are trying to convince Iran not to pursue nuclear weapons. We tell Iran if you disarm totally and stop your nuclear weapons program, then sanctions to you can be lifted. I believe the Iranians are looking and saying is it possible that such an agreement could

ever be delivered by the Congress of the United States, if we do actually disarm, if we end all of our nuclear weapons program, if we do everything that the Security Council has asked of us. Would the United States lift the series of sanctions that they have ultimately passed upon us?

This Congress cannot agree with the President. When I say this Congress, I speak of the Republican Congress and the House of Representatives.

It is a dangerous message in the world. We tell other nations that we believe they have to abide by certain disciplines, and yet we cannot ultimately keep our own budget open and the Nation and this government functioning.

I think this is the ultimate extortion. I believe that since this is by design, not by chance, it is going to have real consequences for our Nation. There is no doubt that if there is a prolonged shutdown, it will be consequential to our economy. It will be consequential to the gross domestic product.

We saw that 17 years ago. It will be consequential to not only Wall Street but to Main Street in terms of their confidence as to how to move forward. This economy is in recovery. The last thing it needs is a body blow by its own government as it tries to continue to grow an economy in which more people can be employed.

The consequence of Republicans doing this is more than a government shutdown, it is increasingly an economic shutdown. This is simply something that we should not accept.

Finally, to send us a resolution after 6 months of trying to go to a conference, 18 different petitions and motions on this floor to go to a conference, to go to that simple meeting that might have reconciled these differences that were objected to by certain Republicans within this chairman—and now to say you are going to send us a motion to go to conference when you have shut down the government and, therefore, have a gun at our head in order to be able to try to negotiate the critical issues that might be negotiated—is simply unacceptable. They already have a legislative victory.

We have accepted an amount in the temporary budget that is less than what we devised in the Senate budget, \$80 billion less. Yet that is not satisfactory to them.

This is not about the economics. This is about their drive to kill the Affordable Care Act in a way that undermines the health and quality of opportunity for millions of Americans who finally don't have to worry about pre-existing conditions. They don't have to worry about lifetime caps, can keep their children on their insurance until the age of 26, and can get millions of dollars across the landscape of the country for seniors to reduce prescription drug costs, that finally controls costs in this Nation. Their fear is not

that it won't work. Their fear is that it will succeed and in doing so will undermine the very essence of what they have been against all along.

That is a hard way to pursue a political tactic as a consequence of the Nation's laws. This is what is going on here today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. SCHUMER. We are in, as has been said by Leader REID and my good friend from New Jersey, an unfortunate moment. There are millions of people who are innocent. They wake up in the morning, work hard, and hope to get a paycheck to help feed and clothe their families. They will not be getting a paycheck tomorrow morning.

They might be Federal Government workers. I have heard some of my colleagues on the other side demonize the Federal Government. When I think of the Federal Government, I think of individual people who are working hard, who show up at work in the rain and the snow, who work hard, as do people in the private sector, people who work for State governments or such as the people who work for us. Why should they be punished?

Then there are so many others, such as the veteran who needs a change in his or her disability formula and can't get it; the construction worker who is working on a federally funded highway, or somebody who works in a defense plant, as a civilian, all of these people now have been put at real risk.

There is an answer, as I mentioned in my colloquy with the leader. The answer is for the House to pass the bill that passed here—the key vote had a majority of Democrats and Republicans, 25 Republicans—and keep the government running.

They are busy working late at night on another little subterfuge, a little scheme. Have a conference.

As the leader said, conferences are fine with us. We tried to do a budget conference 18 times. Don't do a conference as a charade while you are shutting the government down. That is what the other side is asking us to do.

Let's modify what they are doing. Let them pass the bill that is now in the House that will keep the government running until November 15, and then we will have a conference on how to fund the government for another year.

Make no mistake about it. Tomorrow morning their next gambit will be defeated in the Senate and then we will be back where we were, where we are now.

There is a bill, a ready bill, in the House of Representatives that can keep the government funded and prevent these millions of innocent people and our national economy from being hurt and hurt significantly.

This is a final plea, at 12:15 a.m., 15 minutes after the government has been officially closed. House Members, Speaker BOEHNER, let the bill come up

for a vote. It will pass. It will save such trouble, and, even worse. For millions of innocent Americans it will save our economy from great risk. Then we can go back to debating the many issues that you and we wish to debate.

With that, with a bit of a heavy heart because it didn't have to happen, that we have a small group of people who are so sure that they are right that they can hurt millions to pursue that righteousness, that self-righteousness, is a bad thing. I hope it doesn't happen again.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

SYRIA

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last Friday I was reading the press reports about the remarkable progress that has taken place at the United Nations in obtaining a legally binding resolution, with the support of Russia and the other members of the Security Council, to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons. I could not help but compare it to what has been happening here in the Congress over the past week and a half.

While Secretary of State Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov have worked diligently to reach a historic agreement to destroy one of the world's largest arsenals of poison gas, the Congress has been consumed by political theater, debating an utterly pointless, politically motivated, doomed attempt to defund the Affordable Care Act. In doing so we are now perilously close to a shutdown of the Federal government that will cause untold damage to innumerable programs on which States, municipalities, and every community and family in this country depend and cost the taxpayers far more than if the government stays open.

Ironically, while just 2 weeks ago Congress was on the verge of authorizing a military attack against Syria, some of the most vocal advocates of an attack are the same Members who are toying with a government shutdown that could make it harder for the United States to help implement the U.N. resolution to destroy Syria's chemical weapons. If the government stops functioning, it will no longer be able to pay the salaries of our diplomats, nor to provide the funds to help pay for the weapons inspectors and the removal and destruction of the weapons.

I commend President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and our new U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power for their extraordinary efforts. We should also recognize the indispensable cooperation of Minister Lavrov and his government. While it will be many months before we know if this agreement will be faithfully implemented and achieve its goals in Syria, it is a dramatic step forward.

I also commend President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their efforts to