

Putin, sensing Western weakness for what it is, could be tempted to replay his Ukrainian playbook in Estonia or Latvia, forcing NATO into war or obsolescence.

China could escalate its island conflicts in the East and South China Seas. Without an adequate American response—or worse, with China denying American forces access to those seas—countries as diverse as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines would feel compelled to conciliate or confront regional stability.

While North Korea already possesses nuclear weapons, Iran appears to be on the path to a nuclear bomb, whether it breaks or upholds a potential nuclear agreement. Not only might Iran use its weapon, but its nuclear umbrella would also embolden its drive for regional hegemony. Moreover, Iran could provide its terrorist proxies with nuclear materials.

And does anyone doubt that Saudi Arabia and other Sunni states will follow Iran down this path? Nuclear tripwires may soon ring the world's most volatile region, increasing the risk of nuclear war, as well as the possibility that Islamist insurgents might seize nuclear materials if they can topple the right government.

Islamic terrorists, meanwhile, will continue to rampage throughout Syria and Iraq, aspiring always for more attacks in Europe and on American soil. Emboldened by America's retreat and by their own battlefield successes, they will continue to attract thousands of hateful fighters from around the world, all eager for the chance to kill Americans.

All these are nightmare scenarios, but sadly not unrealistic ones. The alternative, however, is not war. No leader—whether a President, a general or platoon leader—wishes to put his troops in harm's way. War is an awful thing, and it takes an unimaginable toll on the men and women who fight it and their families.

But the best way to avoid war is to be willing and prepared to fight a war in the first place. That is the alternative: military strength and moral confidence in the defense of America's national security. Our enemies and allies alike must know that aggressors will pay an unspeakable price for challenging the United States.

The best way to impose that price is global military dominance. When it comes to war, narrow margins are not enough, for they are nothing more than an invitation to war. We must have such hegemonic strength that no sane adversary would ever imagine challenging the United States. "Good enough" is not and will never be good enough.

We can look to a very recent historic example to prove this point. Just 25 years ago, a dominant American military ended the Cold War without firing a shot. If we return to the dominance of that era, aggressive despots such as Vladimir Putin, rising powers such as

China, and state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran's Ayatollahs will think long and hard before crossing us. And while we may not deter terrorist groups such as the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, and Hezbollah, we will kill their adherents more effectively, while also sending a needed lesson to their sympathizers: Join and you too will die.

Bringing about this future by being prepared for war will no doubt take a lot of money. But what could be a higher priority than a safe and prosperous America, leading a stable and orderly world? What better use of precious taxpayer dollars? What more lessons from history do we need?

I began with Churchill's prescient words from 1933. Alas, the West did not take his advice, did not rearm and prepare to deter Nazi Germany. The predictable result was the German remilitarization of the Rhineland and the long march to war. Now let me close with his regretful words from 1936:

The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.

Churchill later called World War II the unnecessary war because it could have been stopped so easily with Western strength and confidence in the 1930s. I know many of you in this Chamber stand with me, and I humbly urge you all—Democrat and Republican alike—to join in rebuilding our common defense, so that we will not face our own unnecessary war, our own period of consequences.

I will now yield the floor, but I will never yield in the defense of America's national security on any front or at any time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR COTTON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we just had an opportunity to hear from our new colleague from Arkansas, who has laid out the national security requirements of our country quite effectively. As someone who has served in the military himself in recent conflicts, he speaks with extra authority. I want to congratulate the junior Senator from Arkansas for an extraordinary initial speech and look forward to his leadership on all of these issues in the coming years.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, time is running out for us to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program, a program that began almost 20 years ago in this body and the other body and that right now is taking care of 10 million children—the children of parents who in most cases have full-time jobs that don't offer insurance and full-time jobs that don't pay enough so these families can buy insurance for their children.

We know that CHIP works. It works for parents, and it works for children. We know that if we don't act now, States will start rolling back the CHIP programs. Legislatures are adjourning almost as we speak. We need to provide States with certainty so they can budget for CHIP now and 4 years into the future.

Unfortunately, the deal currently being floated in the House would not fund CHIP for a full 4 years. Instead, if reports are true, it would permanently repeal the sustainable growth rate—the so-called doctors fix—while failing to provide much needed certainty to children's health care. I want to take care of doctors. I want to make sure this is done right because it affects doctors. It affects doctors' ability to deliver care. It affects those patients whom doctors serve. But how do we leave here taking care of the doctors permanently and shortchanging children, only giving them 2 years of health insurance? It is past time we fix SGR.

In 2001, when I was a member of the House, Congressman BILIRAKIS as the Republican chair of the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee and I as the Democratic ranking member wrote the first SGR fix, so I have been fixing the SGR for a long time. But we shouldn't be focused in this body and that body on paying doctors at the cost of shortchanging our children. Our priority must be passing a full 4-year, clean extension of the current CHIP program, on which 130,000 children in my State depend—again, sons and daughters of working Oklahoma families and working Ohio families who are working in jobs where they simply don't get insurance and don't get paid enough that they can buy insurance. These 10 million children in our Nation depend on this.

A 4-year extension of CHIP will provide Congress, the administration, and our States with the necessary time to collect relevant data and information to fully analyze and prepare for the future of kids covered. Doing only 2 years is not just shortchanging these children and creating anxiety in their families, it is also truncating our ability, compromising our ability to really understand how to fully integrate CHIP into a health care system overall in the future. We should be providing certainty and stability for these families, not the cliché of kicking the can down the road in favor of a short-term fix. A

4-year extension provides that certainty and will make a difference into the next decade on how, in fact, we take care of low-income children.

In Ohio alone, CHIP provides insurance to 130,000 children. Enrollment is expected to grow over the next couple of years. I have traveled across Ohio in the last few weeks and have met with parents and children, doctors and nurses, to discuss CHIP. I have been to Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Toledo Children's Hospital, Columbus's Nationwide Children's Hospital and Cleveland's Rainbow Children's Hospital. This morning, I was in Mahoning Valley in Boardman, a suburb of Youngstown, at the Akron Children's Hospital. More than 6,000 children in Mahoning Valley rely on CHIP for care.

I met with Ericka Flaherty, a Youngstown parent whose children could lose comprehensive coverage if we don't extend CHIP now. Her son Chase was born prematurely, born at 27 weeks. He was immediately diagnosed with a number of chronic conditions, including a heart defect, chronic lung disease, and asthma. Chase spent more than 4 months in neonatal care, and, thanks to outstanding doctors at Akron Children's Hospital, he is alive and growing today. But he needs many routine medical visits—visits his family simply can't afford. His parents work, but they simply can't afford to treat his conditions, including visits to lung specialists, neurologists, an eye specialist, and the regular hospital checkup every 2 months. Without CHIP, Ericka would face significant financial hurdles in getting Chase the care he needs.

I also met with Jessica Miller of Lisbon, a community just south of Mahoning County, during this roundtable. Her youngest son, Payton, was diagnosed with a serious respiratory condition. He had to be life-flighted to Akron Children's Hospital to receive care when he couldn't breathe. He has been diagnosed with type 1 juvenile diabetes. His grandmother joined us. Jessica told me that she is so thankful for CHIP, that she gets Payton all the care he needs to treat these conditions—care she and her husband Justin would have a hard time affording otherwise. Justin is working as a paramedic. He was called out and couldn't be at our meeting today. Justin is full time in nursing school. They are making something of their lives. I don't want them to be anxious about the health care of their children.

Throughout Ohio, I hear the same thing: Providing health insurance to children like Chase and Payton isn't just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. It means children do better in school. They feel better when they are in school. They miss fewer days in school because they get preventive care because their health care needs are taken care of.

CHIP has been around 18, almost 20 years. It has always been bipartisan. If we follow these children later in life,

we see they have higher rates of going to college and higher earnings than non-CHIP kids who don't have insurance. By all kinds of very quantifiable measurements, CHIP is not just good for those families, it is not just the right thing to do to continue to fund CHIP over 4 years, it is also the smart thing to do for our country.

Together with more than 40 of my colleagues, I introduced the Protecting & Retaining Our Children's Health Insurance Program—PRO-CHIP—Act, which is a clean 4-year extension of funding for CHIP. PRO-CHIP would protect the Pediatric Quality Measures Program and provide funding to sustain this program through 2019.

It would also extend the Performance Incentive Program, which provides bonus payments to States that help increase Medicaid enrollment among children, because if we provide insurance for low-income children, they are going to do better, and society is going to do better. They are less likely to end up in the emergency room for something much more serious. For instance, for a child without insurance who has an earache, the mother and father think that it is going to cost a lot of money to go to the doctor and that maybe it will just get better, they wait a week. Into the second week, the pain is worse. The child can't sleep. The child cries. They eventually go to the emergency room, which costs a lot more money than going to the doctor's office, with the possibility that the child has had hearing loss. That is just one example of why we want to provide insurance and get them into the doctor early rather than waiting until later.

PRO-CHIP has been endorsed by every children's hospital in Ohio, the Association of Children's Hospitals, virtually every children's hospital, I believe, in the country, and other national groups—the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Children's Hospital Association, and Families USA, all of which want a clean CHIP. All of them want a 4-year extension for all the reasons we talked about.

More than 1,500 organizations from across the country—including more than 75 groups from Ohio and a number from Oklahoma, the Presiding Officer's State—have written to Congress asking us to “take action as soon as possible to provide a four-year funding extension for CHIP.”

Groups, including the Urban Institute, the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, and the Bipartisan Policy Center, have all noted the importance of the current CHIP program.

The Urban Institute estimated that an additional 1.1 million children will become uninsured if separate CHIP coverage were eliminated. Again, these are sons and daughters of parents who have jobs—jobs that don't provide insurance and jobs that don't pay enough that they can afford insurance. This would be a 40-percent increase, if this

were to happen, in the number of uninsured children in the United States relative to the number projected under the ACA with the continuation of CHIP.

The Bipartisan Policy Center has called for extending CHIP for more than just the 2 years, but note what they say when calling for a CHIP extension: “Two years does not provide sufficient time for state and federal elected officials and agencies to address major programmatic changes sought by policymakers on both sides of the aisle and at both levels of government.”

Support for CHIP has always been bipartisan. Senator HATCH, Republican from Utah; Senator Kennedy, Democrat from Massachusetts; a number of us on the Energy and Commerce Committee in the House of Representatives back in 1997, Republicans and Democrats alike; and Chairman BILIRAKIS and I and others helped to write this legislation which has been successful at bringing the uninsured rate for children down by more than 50 percent. I am encouraged that Members of both parties have shown a willingness to come together. Senate Democrats will have a hard time supporting any plan that doesn't extend CHIP for a full 4 years.

I want to support the sustainable growth rate. I helped write the original one. I have supported it for 20 years. We shouldn't be doing it like this on a temporary 1- or 2-year basis. This is finally going to get done right, but we don't do that and then leave out the children by only providing 2 years.

Parents like Ericka and Jessica face enough uncertainty with their children's health. Most of us in this body are parents, and a number of us are grandparents. Most of us, because we dress like this and we are Senators and have good insurance provided by taxpayers—we may have anxiety about our children and our grandchildren's health, but we don't have anxiety about their insurance and their ability to go to hospitals and doctors and specialists to get care. Certainly, we are anxious about our children and all the things that could happen, but our anxiety doesn't reach into the whole sphere of worrying about how to provide insurance for children.

Ericka and Jessica can't be anything but anxious when they hear that CHIP could end, and they understand that it should be 4 years. CHIP gives parents like them peace of mind that they will be able to get their children the care they need without bankrupting those families. We need to make sure these parents continue to have that peace of mind with a 4-year extension. The PRO-CHIP legislation we have introduced in the Senate with almost four dozen cosponsors makes sure those kids don't lose critical coverage by saying no to any deal that doesn't fund CHIP for the full 4 years.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:55 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

PATRICIA M. LOUI-SCHMICKER, OF HAWAII, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2019. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IAN C. KELLY, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUN-

SELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO GEORGIA.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. ARNOLD W. BUNCH, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. STEPHEN W. WILSON

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. JAMES F. CALDWELL, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. MICHAEL T. FRANKEN

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 16, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CARLOS A. MONJE, JR., OF LOUISIANA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

MANSON K. BROWN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.