

Illinois, headquartered near Chicago, signed a contract for information technology services with Wipro, one of the largest foreign outsourcing companies based in India and one of the top users of the H-1B visa program.

Here is how it worked: Approximately 150 U.S. employees at Abbott Labs in Illinois are going to lose their jobs. The workers being laid off have stellar experience—many of them have been at Abbott for years. They have the credentials, the performance reviews, and some have amazing work records spanning decades at Abbott Labs. I know from recent conversations with Abbott Labs employees that this layoff is taking its toll on the morale of their remaining workforce.

When I heard about these plans, I wrote to Miles White, the CEO of Abbott Labs. I urged him to reconsider this plan and to keep his American workers who have worked so hard for Abbott Labs for years. Well, I am sorry to report he responded to my letter and confirmed his company's plans to terminate these American workers.

I am very concerned about Abbott Labs because they have required the employees who are losing their jobs and being laid off to sign away their right to sue or even disparage the company if they want to receive any severance pay. As a result of this agreement, Congress and the American people are unable to hear directly from the employees who are affected by this decision at Abbott Labs—employees who are losing their jobs to Wipro, an Indian company that specializes in outsourcing American jobs. Abbot employees have told my staff they were concerned that even if they spoke with our office about what was happening at Abbott Labs, they could be placed in jeopardy.

Other companies that have signed contracts with foreign outsourcing companies to replace American workers have also forced their employees to sign these nondisparagement agreements. So we are in the dark about the human impact of these outsourcing arrangements on the Americans losing their jobs. What we do know is this: 150 skilled and experienced American workers will lose their jobs and have had to sign an agreement that they will not say anything negative about their current employer. If they do not comply with that, they do not get their severance pay.

I sent a followup letter to Mr. White today about the gag order he has forced on his employees. We should be able to hear firsthand from workers who are losing their jobs because of outsourcing as to just exactly what is happening to them.

Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY and I first introduced bipartisan legislation to reform the H-1B visa program in 2007—almost a decade ago. Our bill would end these abuses and protect American and foreign workers from exploitation. The outsourcing companies are worried about our legislation. For a long time,

CHUCK GRASSLEY and DICK DURBIN were on the front page of a lot of Indian newspapers. Listen to the corporate jargon Wipro uses to talk about our bill:

With the growth of offshore outsourcing receiving increasing political and media attention, there have been concerted efforts to enact new legislation to restrict offshore outsourcing. This may adversely impact our ability to do business in these jurisdictions and could adversely affect our revenues and operating profitability.

Let me be clear. My first obligation as a U.S. Senator is to protect American workers. If that adversely affects the profits of a foreign company that specializes in outsourcing American jobs, so be it.

In 2013 I joined the Gang of 8—Democrats and Republicans—and we put together a comprehensive immigration reform bill. Corporate interests fought hard to protect these H-1B visas, but we successfully included several important changes to the program in the bill. Let me give an example. Under current law, employers are permitted to pay H-1B visa holders substandard wages, which creates an incentive to fire Americans and hire foreign workers.

The vice president of Tata, out of India, one of the leading foreign outsourcing firms, candidly acknowledged they use H-1B visas to undercut American workers. Here is what he said:

Our wage per employee is 20-25 percent lesser than U.S. wage for a similar employee. . . . The issue is that of getting workers in the U.S. on wages far lower than local wage.

He was pretty candid about it. The object is to put Americans out of work and to charge less than what the Americans are being paid. So I wrote a provision in the 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill that discouraged employers from hiring foreign workers as a source of cheap labor by doubling the minimum wage of H-1B employees, and employers of large numbers of H-1B visa holders would be required to pay, at a minimum, the average wage paid to an American. That is why the chief executive of Tata in India said our bill would have been “very tough” on outsourcing companies. So be it.

The Senate passed that bill on this floor 68 to 32. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives refused to even call the bill. They wouldn't debate it or call it for a vote.

Now, the two leading Republican Presidential candidates, Donald Trump and the junior Senator from Texas, have jumped on the bandwagon. They want to reform the H-1B program. Unfortunately, their track records call into question their real commitment. Mr. Trump owns companies that have sought to import at least 1,000 temporary guest workers while turning away hundreds of American workers. In 2013, when the Judiciary Committee considered the comprehensive immigration reform bill, Senator CRUZ of Texas offered an amendment to in-

crease—increase—the annual cap for H-1B visas to 325,000 per year—almost four times the current number.

Nonetheless, if they have changed their mind out on the campaign trail, we welcome that change of heart and welcome them to this debate. We must reform the H-1B visa program and fix other parts of our broken immigration system to protect American and immigrant workers. The solution is still comprehensive immigration reform. The time for action is now. Congress has avoided its responsibility for far too long.

Madam President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WORKING WITH OUR ALLIES

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I wish to spend a few minutes talking about our allies across the globe, and I am doing so because they are important to our national security. That seems to be an obvious statement, but our allies seem to be getting a bit of a bipartisan short shrift of late. I come to the floor of the Senate to talk about how important they are to our Nation, to our citizens. It is bipartisan, as I mentioned.

As many of us have read, on the campaign trail Presidential candidate Donald Trump has been critical of NATO, has been critical of our Asia-Pacific allies. Meanwhile—and in many ways it hasn't gotten the news it deserves because it is a sitting President—in a recent article in The Atlantic by Jeffrey Goldberg entitled “The Obama Doctrine,” President Obama himself is dismissive of many U.S. allies around the world.

I thought it was important to talk a little bit about our allies and how important they are to U.S. security and to expanding American influence globally.

Let's start with Mr. Trump. He has called NATO—which, by the way, happens to be one of the most successful alliances in the history of the world—an alliance that is “obsolete” and “too expensive.” About the members of the 28-nation alliance, he said: “Either they pay up, including for past deficiencies, or they have to get out. And if it breaks up NATO, it breaks up NATO.” Oh, well. So much for the world's most successful alliance.

However, contrary to public perception, the United States does not pay for a majority of NATO's spending. We pay about 22 percent of NATO's common-funded budgets and programs for all of NATO—about 22 percent.

The Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, was here last week, and he

informed me and many of my colleagues on the Senate Armed Services Committee that most NATO countries have stopped their decline in defense spending and have recommitted to NATO's goal of 2 percent of their GDP toward defense spending. That is important—working on the finances, reversing this trend. But here is the key point: It is not just about finances. Over 1,000 non-U.S. NATO troops have been killed in action in Afghanistan coming to our defense after 9/11, going after the terrorists who killed over 3,000 Americans on 9/11. Over 1,000 of our NATO allies have paid the ultimate price. You can't put a price tag on that. Thousands more have been wounded. Some sacrifices can't be measured in just dollars.

Based on his comments, Mr. Trump also does not seem to fully comprehend how the presence of American troops in the Asia-Pacific has been the linchpin of security and prosperity in the region for more than 70 years. Today our allies in the Asia-Pacific are substantially increasing their financial and military commitments in that region. Let me give a few examples.

Under Prime Minister Abe's leadership, Japan has amended its Constitution to do much more militarily in terms of being able to work with us and even defend U.S. forces in the region. As we are looking to rebalance and reposition U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific over the next several years, the estimates from Pacific Command are that is going to cost about \$37 billion, repositioning U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific. It is a very important part of our strategy. It is a strategy, by the way, that—the President talks about the rebalance, which I think is smart, in the Asia-Pacific. Of that \$37 billion for our forces and the military construction that is going to take place with this rebalance, about \$30 billion will be paid by Japan and Korea. That is certainly paying their way.

Let me give a couple of examples. Camp Humphreys—that is an Army base in Korea—we are moving a lot of forces there, doing a lot of military construction there, and it is going to cost about \$11 billion. Ninety-one percent of that is going to be paid by Korea—for U.S. military forces.

In Guam—U.S. territory where we are repositioning marines and other critical military assets in the Asia-Pacific—Japan is paying \$3 billion for that repositioning on U.S. territory. It is the first time ever. A foreign country is paying for military construction on our territory.

The bottom line is that there is no doubt that our allies around the world, particularly in Europe, need to do more in terms of defense spending. Many people have spoken on this. Former Secretary Gates—very well respected—raises this in his recent bio. But it is simply erroneous to suggest that America would be better off without NATO or without our Asia-Pacific allies and alliances. Yes, they need to

spend more, but there is a big difference saying we don't need our allies.

Let me say that we should all understand that Mr. Trump, Donald Trump—he is a candidate. He is certainly not an expert on national security affairs. And his views certainly reflect the frustrations that many Americans and many Members of Congress have about allies who are not spending as much on defense. Of course we know this often happens during elections. We have seen that. It is an outgrowth of frustrations.

But what is unprecedented is for a sitting President to be dismissive and even disdainful of our most important allies in a publication read by millions. To do so is not only unpresidential, it threatens to undermine ongoing U.S. national security interests.

I want to talk a little bit about The Atlantic article that I mentioned earlier, written by Jeffrey Goldberg. Mr. Goldberg, who had enormous access to the President for I think well over a year—traveled with him all over on Air Force One, had numerous interviews—in his article, he takes us on a trip across the globe through the eyes of President Obama. I would encourage all of my colleagues in this body to read that article.

As I mentioned, Mr. Goldberg has significant access to the President, but the tour across the world leaves us no doubt that the President not only views himself as the smartest man in the room, he is the smartest man in the world. In Mr. Goldberg's words, President Obama "has found world leadership wanting: global partners who often lack the vision and the will to spend political capital in pursuit of broad, progressive goals, and adversaries who are not, in his mind, as rational as he is."

The President assesses the very strengths and weaknesses of our allies. In his view, only German Chancellor Angela Merkel measures up. There is a whole list of leaders from countries that are allies of the United States and are mentioned in this article. The President calls the President of a critical NATO country a "failure," and he is openly disapproving of the leadership role of Britain and France and openly complaining that neither did their part with regard to Libya, where the Obama administration famously, or infamously, announced it was leading from behind.

The jabs and the stories in the Goldberg piece at other leaders, such as the leaders of Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, are gratuitous. These might be appropriate for later in the President's memoirs, as he is writing his memoirs talking about world leaders and where they measure up and where they are weak, but not while he is still the President. He still has work to do for our country.

The President even trains his fire on American leaders, members of the foreign policy establishment, and even GEN Lloyd Austin, the well-respected and recently retired commander of U.S.

Central Command. There is a big section in there about how the President viewed Ronald Reagan's leadership and shortcomings in foreign affairs. Everybody seems to be lacking in the President's eyes.

It is not just individuals, it is the way we, as a Nation, supposedly conduct our foreign policy. By the President's own account, he has been a bulwark against American hubris, self-righteousness—his words—in foreign affairs. Let me repeat that. His view is that he has been a bulwark against our hubris and our self-righteousness in foreign affairs.

As the Presiding Officer knows, whether it is Alaska or West Virginia, most Americans understand another more historically accurate narrative of our role in foreign affairs throughout the world. It is not one of hubris, but one of sacrifice, commitment, and courage in defending freedom for hundreds of millions of people across the globe. That has been the role of the United States, and for decades, especially since World War II, there has been a bipartisan, long-term effort by truly some of the smartest people in American foreign policy who were "present at the creation," and beyond—as Dean Acheson said in his autobiography—into deepening our relationship with other countries and, as part of doing that, establishing the forward presence of U.S. military power around the world. These were some of America's best minds—Marshall, Acheson, George Schultz.

Why did they do this? Because forging these alliances ultimately not only advances the goal of freedom and a more peaceful and prosperous world, but it also helps ensure that American influence and power remain pre-eminent and, most importantly, that our citizens remain safe.

In assessing our significant international challenges right now, one central truth stands out: Many of our enemies and potential adversaries and rivals are ally poor while the United States is ally rich. Think of countries like Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and terrorist groups like ISIS. They have very few allies. Very few other countries are running to them right now. Then think about our allies throughout the world. It is time to recognize and double down on this uniquely American comparative advantage in foreign affairs. We are ally rich. Our rivals are ally poor. We need to take advantage of it. Yet the Obama administration seems to have ignored it.

Indeed, Secretary of State John Kerry has spent more time wooing adversaries like Iran and Russia than doing the hard work of deepening the bonds of trust with our allies. Coupled with the President's remarks in the Atlantic, his missives directed at friends make it seem as if they are actually repelling allies, not working with them and building up trust. This, of course, is a mistake.

Like many in this body, I have had the opportunity to serve my country in

different capacities, trying to work to advance the national security of our Nation. I have had the opportunity to see the positive results of the carefully woven fabric of decades of bipartisan American diplomacy, military engagement, and leadership throughout the world. Without American leaders who understand history and the important role our allies play in America's security and prosperity, the fabric of our alliances put together over decades threatens to unravel. If that happens, the world is going to become a much more dangerous place.

Our Founding Fathers provided the Senate with significant responsibility in terms of foreign affairs, and I am hopeful that every Member of this body will redouble their efforts to reach out and to work with our allies so we don't continue this trend where leaders currently in the White House, or perhaps potential occupants of the White House, view our allies as a burden when in reality they are a key component of our security and prosperity, and we need to continue to work with them.

I yield the floor.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the formal establishment of the Reserve Officer Training Corps, ROTC, at its birthplace, Norwich University in Vermont. Thanks to the vision of Alden Partridge and Norwich University, we now enjoy the benefits of this century-old program that has commissioned more than half a million ensigns and second lieutenants since its inception.

Years before many of his peers, Alden Partridge saw the potential of the citizen soldier. He created Norwich University as a place to educate future generations in a variety of academic fields separate from, but also essential to, the military and to the civic participation synonymous with today's Norwich University. Over the years, the value of the ideals promoted at Norwich University have remained clear to me. Today these proven ideals can be found at institutions of higher education through ROTC programs in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

Without question, the country benefits from this diversity of experience. The U.S. service academies create high-quality, professional officers, and I am proud to nominate Vermonters to them every year. Our military, however, cannot rely on leadership that comes solely from a handful of institutions, however excellent they are. For 100 years, ROTC has guaranteed an officer corps that better reflects the diversity of America.

Few schools can boast a history as long, rich, and relevant as Norwich University. Always forward thinking, in 1974, Norwich became one of the first

military colleges in the Nation to admit women, beginning yet another proud chapter in its history. Today the school ranks among the top institutions for education in the realm of cyber security, an essential professional discipline nurtured early on largely because of the forethought of Norwich University personnel. I am confident this trend of success will continue.

The faculty and staff at Norwich help produce highly motivated, well-trained graduates who are simply eager to serve. Their role as educators and mentors creates connections that last throughout the military and civilian careers of graduates and, in turn, fosters a powerful alumni connection that brings even more experience and wisdom to the next generation of students.

Vermonters take great pride in their educational institutions, and Norwich University is no exception. Students arrive from around the Nation to study in both corps of cadets and traditional capacities. They develop essential academic and professional skills often while simultaneously fulfilling ROTC obligations that prepare them for future military service. Norwich, like the 274 other institutions supporting ROTC programs, demands and develops excellence in its commissioning-track student body.

I would like to recognize Norwich University, the birthplace of the ROTC, for its role in initiating a program that has enjoyed a century of success. I am confident that Alden Partridge's dream will continue to be realized at colleges and universities throughout the Nation as future generations of ROTC officers are produced and charged with the task of ensuring our Nation's success.

SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SESSION ON INNOVATION AGENDA

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks at the Senate Health Committee's third executive session on its biomedical innovation agenda be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SESSION ON INNOVATION AGENDA

This is our third and final markup of legislation that is part of our innovation, or "cures," agenda—that is, our effort to take advantage of this exciting time in science and enable safe treatments, drugs, and devices to reach patients more quickly.

Today's markup completes action on about 50 bipartisan proposals this committee has been working on for more than a year—with 10 hearings, five staff working groups that have held more than 100 meetings. When we are finished today, these proposals will together form a companion to 21st Century Cures Act, which passed the House 344–77 last year, and a vehicle for the president's Precision Medicine Initiative and Cancer Moonshot.

If we succeed, this will be the most important bill signed into law this year.

Why do I say that?

Here's one reason: 6-year-old Californian Rylie Rahall, diagnosed with a genetic disorder called Ataxia-Telangiectasia or A-T, so rare—according to NIH—that it affects between 1 out of 40,000 and 1 out of 100,000.

A bill we're voting on today will support the president's Precision Medicine Initiative to map 1 million genomes to help researchers tailor treatments to genetic variations and find cures for diseases, including rare diseases like A-T, and help children like Rylie.

Rylie's mom, Erica, says:

"At the time Rylie was diagnosed, I felt more helpless than hopeful. . . . There are no drugs. There is no cure. There is nothing to stop this disease and nothing you can do to save your child. . . . Five years later all of that is changing. There is more research than ever happening. We are closer than ever to clinical trials. . . . Hopeful."

Here's another reason:

In a floor speech in 2013, Senator Isakson talked about battling a superbug, an infection that runs out of control and resists treatment by common antibiotics. We are voting today on a bill by senators Hatch and Bennet to shorten the development of treatments for superbugs.

And another reason: A 2012 bill sponsored by Senators Burr, Bennet, and Hatch to expedite the FDA review process for breakthrough drugs has been very successful, leading to 118 drugs designated as breakthrough, including 39 approvals, including the first drug ever to actually cure some forms of Cystic Fibrosis. This committee passed similar legislation in March for breakthrough devices.

One more reason: we've heard from doctors that they spend half their time on paperwork, and from patients who lug boxes of medical records from appointment to appointment. This committee unanimously passed legislation to reduce the documentation burden and improve the flow of information so doctors can spend more time with patients, and patients can have easier access to their health information.

This committee has passed—by voice vote or with overwhelming support—14 bills made up of 30 bipartisan proposals; bills that will mean better pacemakers for Americans with heart conditions, better rehabilitation for stroke victims, more young researchers entering the medical field, and better access for doctors to their patients' medical records.

By the time we finish today, 16 of this committee's 22 members will have sponsored one of these bills. Some have sponsored several.

Today we are voting on five bills:

A bill by Senator Murray and myself to help the FDA and the NIH attract and retain top talent, which Dr. Collins and Dr. Califff say is their top priority.

The bill by Sens. Hatch and Bennet to shorten the development time for superbug treatments.

The bill by Senator Murray and myself to support the president's Precision Medicine Initiative, to map 1 million genomes and make the information available to researchers who will share their research.

A bill by Senator Collins, Kirk, Baldwin, Murray, and myself that requires NIH to submit a strategic plan to Congress; and ensures that scientists are including women and minorities in their research.

A bill by Senator Murray and myself to allow NIH researchers to spend more time finding lifesaving treatments and cures and less time on paperwork.

I look forward to moving these bills to the floor.

Senator Murray and I are making progress on an "NIH Innovation Fund" to provide a