

Federal Government's own security standards. According to TIGTA, three different Federal agencies have data security requirements for the Federal Government, and the IRS data system doesn't fully comply with any of them. This could be fixed. It should be fixed immediately.

Coordinating between agencies is something I have been talking about over and over again. The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. Social Security disability doesn't know about Social Security retirement payments and the unemployment insurance disability being paid. There is a lack of communication between agencies within the Federal Government.

The Government Accountability Office, GAO, testified at the Senate Finance Committee in April that there are nearly 100 recommendations that the GAO has made to the IRS to improve their data security. So the government agency charged with looking at how efficient or inefficient an agency is has the opportunity to make recommendations to that agency, and hopefully they will be complied with, but because of our lack of oversight in the U.S. Congress, we are not following up with enough pressure on those agencies to actually employ those recommendations. As a consequence, we are standing down here on the floor talking about this waste that goes on and on. Yet we don't go after the agencies to get those recommendations in place.

We learned that GAO's 100 recommendations have not been fully implemented, and worse, more than half of these recommendations are over 1 year old.

Imagine how the American people would react if a private company had so many persistent holes in its data system that it wrongfully paid criminals \$23 billion of their money.

Another way to prevent fraud suggested by the IRS watchdogs is to first receive the W-2 forms before issuing refunds. Here is what happens: employers issue the W-2s showing how much you earn and we attach those to our tax returns. The problem is, the tax returns that go to the government and the returns that come in from the taxpayer are not coordinated, and so there is a gap that potentially exists. The 2017 tax-filing season will be the first year this accelerated system is implemented to address this particular issue because the legislation that was passed in 2015, which I supported, has accelerated the issuance of W-2s from the IRS so the IRS can verify the validity of the return.

In the meantime, I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate as long as I am here to keep the pressure on the IRS to ensure it meets Federal data security requirements and fulfills the other unimplemented security recommendations.

So adding to our chart, which we thought when we started we might be

able to reach \$100 billion—we weren't sure—but it just keeps coming in. It just keeps pouring in, record after record, examination after examination, by certified nonpartisan government organizations. We added \$23 billion more to the waste of the week thermometer, reaching now well over \$350 billion of waste, fraud, and abuse.

To those who say there are no more cuts we can make in spending to reduce the deficit and the ever-increasing Federal debt or to those who say we need to find ways to address critical needs such as funds to address the spread of the Zika virus or money for cancer research or money to help strengthen our military during this time of conflict and threat to our homeland, I say to them: Let's at least start with what we know are tax dollars that are lost to waste, fraud, and abuse. We owe that to the taxpayers and to future generations. We owe that to our children and grandchildren who will be saddled with this debt. We owe that to our Nation to run an effective, efficient government to retain the trust of the American people that the tax dollars they sent to Washington are wisely spent for necessary purposes that only the Federal Government can accomplish.

We have a duty. We have a duty that rises above politics. We have a duty to make every effort we can to make government efficient and effective on behalf of the taxpayer.

So I am calling on my colleagues to say, yes, we need to look at the long-term impact in our midst. It is critical. It can have negative implications for the future of America. Until we get to that point—and we have made several attempts to do that under this administration, and each one was shut down before it hit the White House or was rejected by the White House—can't we at least look at the \$350 billion of waste, fraud, and abuse that is documented? Can't we at least start there? That is what I am calling on my colleagues to do. We don't have many weeks left in this session, but you can count on me being here each week that we have left, talking yet again about yet another instance of waste, fraud, and abuse.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Arizona.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, here we go again. For the eighth consecutive year, Congress has failed to pass an appropriations bill for the Department of Defense on time, leaving our troops operating on a so-called "continuing resolution."

Now, fresh off an election where the American people were clear that they are fed up with business as usual, that is exactly what we are about to get if Congress adopts another continuing resolution that would cut resources to our troops, hamper the war against ISIL, and delay the cutting-edge equipment and reforms they need.

A continuing resolution would also make the job of managing the government's largest agency even more difficult—and at the worst possible time.

The Presidential transition process currently underway is difficult enough on its own, but no incoming President has ever had to inherit a Department of Defense operating under a continuing resolution—no incoming President—but this is not the time for us to break that streak.

As the name suggests, a continuing resolution is supposed to continue funding the government in situations where the Congress fails to pass a regular appropriations bill. So what is the big deal about continuing last year's funding levels?

Our Nation asks a lot of the men and women serving in uniform. We are asking them to defend our Nation and our interests in real time against rapidly changing threats and adaptive adversaries, but a continuing resolution would lock our military into last year's budgets and last year's priorities. Does anybody believe this year isn't greatly dissimilar from last year on the battlefield?

A continuing resolution would place our troops at greater risk by forcing them to operate under an outdated budget that does not recognize the full extent of the threats they face. Worse still, a continuing resolution doesn't quite live up to its name. A continuing resolution would actually cut funds for our troops. The continuing resolution passed by Congress in September to keep funding through the end of this year cut the military's budget by \$9 billion at annualized levels. Under a potential yearlong continuing resolution, our military would be short \$12 billion.

The incoming and elected President of the United States stated time after time that we needed to spend more money on defense; we are not taking care of the defense needs of this Nation; we are not taking care of the equipment, training, and benefits of men and women who are serving in the military; that we have the smallest Army that we have had since World War II; that we have the smallest Air Force that we have had since the end of the Korean war; that we have the smallest Navy since the end of World War I.

So what are we going to do? What are we going to do in response to all that? As the conditions around the world become more chaotic, we are going to cut defense spending by \$12 billion. Not only would a continuing resolution cut resources, it would leave them with the wrong mix of funding among accounts.

That means the wrong kinds of money is being spent on the wrong programs because we are continuing what we did last year.

Under a continuing resolution, our military would experience shortfalls in some very important areas. Training for our National Guard and Reserve troops would be at risk of falling off-track. As Vladimir Putin's Russia continues to menace our NATO allies, our military would not be able to carry out the expansion of the European Reassurance Initiative, which is essential to deterring Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

Might I add an aside, it didn't seem to get much notice that a Russian aircraft carrier, launching aircraft with airstrikes into Aleppo—my friends, that is the first time in history that Russia, generally regarded as a land power, now has sufficient ships and aircraft capability to launch attacks into Aleppo, Homs, and other parts of Syria. Guess what they are doing. They are slaughtering innocent men, women, and children. They are killing the very people whom we have armed, trained, equipped, and sent into battle. It is atrocious.

A continuing resolution would put our groups at greater risk in Afghanistan and in the fight against ISIL. The President has requested a \$5.8 billion emergency supplemental to cover the costs of additional troops deployed to Afghanistan and expanded operations against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, but a continuing resolution would not include any of these necessary funds which would fill a shortfall that is looming in January.

Put simply, this cockamamie idea, this abrogation of our responsibilities called a continuing resolution would shortchange American troops who are putting their lives on the line in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense could have an excess of as much as \$6 billion in money under a yearlong continuing resolution. However, those funds would be unusable because of restrictions on new procurement, on buying new weapons systems, and other requirements. There are restrictions on that and there is not authorization for increases in production rates.

For example, we are firing off a lot of missiles. We need to replace those missiles. We need to replace the aircraft that are wearing out. We need new parts for them. None of that is possible under what is now being contemplated.

Under a continuing resolution of any duration, our military would have to delay 78 new starts, 89 production increases which would affect critical programs. That includes the Ohio-class submarine replacement program, the KC-46 tanker, the Apache, the helicopters—the Black Hawk helicopters.

A continuing resolution would also delay major research and development initiatives. In short, what we are contemplating—cutting funds for our troops—inhibits their ability to serve

the Nation, and they are putting the men and women who are serving in the military at greater risk.

Why? Why? Because we refuse to act. We who represent them, we who are supposed to be standing for them. We are not going to pass a new appropriations bill. We are just going to kick the can down the road for another 3 months or more. In other words, some may ask: If this continuing resolution delays some programs, can't we just make it up later? For some programs, perhaps, but there is one area where we cannot make up the losses of a continuing resolution, and that is readiness. We are asking our troops to be ready to defend this Nation at a moment's notice. We are asking our troops to be ready to take the fight to ISIL. We are asking our troops to be ready to deter and, if necessary, defeat aggression in Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific. We are asking them to be ready today.

But a continuing resolution would force tradeoffs that undermine readiness. In other words, they will not be able to conduct the training operations, the replacement of parts, the maintenance, all the things that go into making a ready military that is ready to fight. We are impacting them. With a continuing resolution, we are harming their ability to do that. Adding additional readiness funds later in the year would be too little, too late, just papering over our failure to give our troops the resources they need when they need it.

Readiness tomorrow does not replace readiness today. Every senior leader—uniform and nonuniform at the Department of Defense—has warned Congress about the negative impact of a continuing resolution on our men and women who are serving us in the military.

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter has stated that “a continuing resolution is a straitjacket” that “prevents us from fielding a modern, ready force in a balanced way.” Secretary Carter said a continuing resolution “undercuts stable planning and efficient use of taxpayer dollars.”

Commandant of the Marine Corps General Neller warned that a long-term continuing resolution “dramatically increases risk to an already strained fiscal environment and disrupts predictability and our ability to properly plan and execute a budget and a 5-year program.”

Suppose you had a company or a corporation and that company—like most companies and corporations small and large—operate on a year-to-year basis. So you tell that company: Wait a minute. For the first 3 months of next year, you are not going to get any additional funds. You are not going to be able to plan. You are not going to be able to do what is necessary.

They wouldn't stay in business.

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Richardson warned that a continuing resolution would lead to wasted tax-

payer dollars. Under a continuing resolution, the Navy would be forced to break up its contract actions into small pieces. Admiral Richardson warned that as a result, the Navy would not be able to “take advantage of savings from contractors who could better manage their workload and pass on lower costs to the Navy. These redundant efforts drive additional time and cost into the system, for exactly the same output.”

Army Chief of Staff General Milley made a similar warning about waste and inefficiency resulting from budgetary uncertainty. Have no doubt, what a continuing resolution does is causes budgetary uncertainty. It is just a fact. He said:

Things like multiyear contracts, developing long-term relationships with industry where they can count on us and so on—that becomes very difficult. And what ends up happening is the price per unit goes up. So it has built in inefficiency. It has built in cost overruns. It is an un-good situation. It is not good and it needs to end.

General Milley is right. This madness needs to end.

It is time for Congress to do its job. When it comes to doing our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense, there is no call for lazy short-cuts and shortchanging of our troops.

Let's pass a Defense authorization bill as soon as we get back. Let's pass a Defense appropriations bill that gives our troops the resources, predictability, and flexibility they need and deserve.

Next year, with a new President and a new Congress, let's go to work immediately on ending sequestration once and for all and returning to a strategy-driven defense budget. Let's work together on a Defense supplement that will serve as a downpayment on rebuilding military capacity, capability, and readiness that have suffered under years of budget cuts and uncertainty.

This year, this Congress, let's do our jobs and pass Defense authorization and appropriations bills. This is what the American people expect of us, and it is what the men and women who serve and sacrifice on our behalf deserve from us.

Almost everybody I know—except those who don't tell the truth—did not predict the result of this Presidential election. What we are finding out—much to the dismay of some and to the surprise of almost all—is that the American people, particularly in some parts of the country, are very unhappy. One of the reasons of their unhappiness is that they believe they have a Congress that doesn't work for them. They believe their elected representatives no longer have their interests uppermost. When they see continued gridlock in Congress, of course the frustration level goes up and the approval rating goes down. I haven't met anyone who approves of Congress recently who wasn't paid staff or blood relatives.

So the fact is that when we kick the can down the road and do not provide

the fundamental necessities for the most important obligation we have—to defend this Nation and provide the men and women with the training, equipment, readiness, and capabilities they need—then it is no wonder the American people hold us in such low regard.

So I urge my colleagues and I urge our leaders on both sides to take up the Defense authorization bill when we get back, and I think we can do that. Then let's take up the Defense appropriations bill. I have confidence in our appropriators. I don't agree with some of the things they have done, but they have carried out their duties. Why don't we move forward? Instead, for 3 months or more, we are going to put the military in a state of uncertainty—in limbo—and we will harm their ability to defend this Nation. That is not JOHN MCCAIN's view. It is the view of the leaders of the military to whom we entrust our men and women.

So I urge my colleagues to get going. Let's get the Defense authorization bill done. We could get the Defense appropriations bill done in a matter of hours.

Let's get those other appropriations bills done as well—those for the FBI, for the CIA, for our other intelligence agencies, and for those agencies of government that also are entrusted with the security of this Nation. Let's get something for them too. Let's not kick the can down the road. Let's do the people's work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as a longtime member of the Appropriations Committee, I strongly believe that we should have regular, yearlong appropriations, not continuing resolutions. I would like to remind my friend from Arizona that, by tradition, appropriations bills begin in the other body, in the House of Representatives. They have not yet sent over regular appropriations bills.

It was just reported in the last few hours that Donald Trump has told them not to have regular appropriations bills, but to have a continuing resolution until the end of March.

Frankly, the Senator from Arizona is right. I agree with him. We should have appropriations bills on all subjects. I am sorry the President-elect has decided that in his spare time he will also run Congress and will not allow full appropriations bills to be passed.

BANNON APPOINTMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while we are on the subject of the President-elect, he has indicated some of the appointments he will make. Some, of course, will require advice and consent by this body, and I hope we will do that, even though this body has refused to advise and consent on the Supreme Court nomination now pending before it.

There are others he can appoint without being confirmed by the Senate. It

is amazing that the President-elect, having said that he wants to bring the country together, that he wants to be a President for all of us, would then appoint to his inner circle, someone with the ear of the President, Stephen Bannon.

Let me just read part of an editorial in the Chicago Tribune.

"The problem is that Bannon, who will sit at the right hand of a president, also works as a conduit to hate and intolerance. Bannon has said Breitbart is 'the platform for the alt-right.' Yet the 'alt-right' is a repellent, nationalist political movement that breeds racism, anti-Semitism and misogyny. The alt-right miasma 'opposes feminism, diversity, gay rights, globalism, gun control and civil rights,' according to Baruch College professor Thomas Main, who is writing a book on the movement. At the fringes of alt-right is where you will find American neo-Nazis and the Klan, two groups evidently thrilled by Trump's victory."

Those aren't my words. Those are the words from the Chicago Tribune.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed at this point in the RECORD the full editorial.

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

[From the Chicago Tribune, Nov. 17, 2016]

EDITORIAL: STEPHEN BANNON: THE NEXT PRESIDENT'S WHISPERER

With just a week or so under his belt as president-elect, Donald Trump has spoken in public briefly, given a few interviews and bashed out some colorful tweets. Americans still processing his stunning victory will have to wait a bit longer to get a full sense of the next president's priorities.

But already there's this: Trump has named Stephen Bannon, 62, his White House chief strategist.

Bannon, the political equivalent of a shock jock, was little known until he became Trump's campaign chief executive in August. He is a conservative media impresario whose resume includes Georgetown, Harvard, the Pentagon and Goldman Sachs. He's now the executive chairman of Breitbart News, whose popular website dabbles in the swamplands of the far right. A lot of bigoted ugliness swims out there in the so-called alt-right, and Bannon has let it fester on Breitbart.com.

Trump won as a populist insurgent who used bullying and intemperate language to fan his message. The strategy worked but also helped divide the country. Appointing Bannon as consigliere is not a good step toward unity. It agitates the not-my-president slice of the American populace. And it confuses Americans who are trying to give the president-elect a fresh start—but who also need to see evidence that Trump will abide his promise to be "president for all Americans."

When Trump takes office, Bannon—if he's still around—won't be the Treasury secretary or the attorney general or the secretary of state: leaders working largely in public. Bannon instead will play the role David Axelrod played for the nation's last novice president. His will be the whisper in President Trump's ear. His work product won't be what the White House proposes or what Congress passes. His work product will be what the president does. What the president says. What message the president projects to the country and the world.

We get what Trump is trying to do by appointing Bannon. The president-elect made two major picks early this week: He also chose Reince Priebus to be chief of staff, the Oval Office gatekeeper. Priebus, head of the Republican Party, was a shrewd selection. Someone in the White House needs political experience to guide Trump's agenda through Washington's thicket. Priebus is perfectly positioned to be the hour-by-hour liaison to his friend and fellow Wisconsinite, House Speaker Paul Ryan.

Priebus is nobody's bomb thrower. He's a member of the Normal Club. But that also pegs him as an establishment guy, making Trump vulnerable to accusations of being a sell-out. So to assuage the anti-establishment crowd, here comes Bannon, whose website was one of Trump's most vocal cheerleaders.

The problem is that Bannon, who will sit at the right hand of a president, also works as a conduit to hate and intolerance. Bannon has said Breitbart is "the platform for the alt-right." Yet the "alt-right" is a repellent, nationalist political movement that breeds racism, anti-Semitism and misogyny. The alt-right miasma "opposes feminism, diversity, gay rights, globalism, gun control and civil rights," according to Baruch College professor Thomas Main, who is writing a book on the movement. At the fringes of the alt-right is where you find American neo-Nazis and the Klan, two groups evidently thrilled by Trump's victory.

On the issue of Trump's presidency, we want to remain patient as well as vigilant. We've said in prior editorials that presidents get fresh starts and wide latitude to set their agendas. Bannon helped Trump get elected, which makes him more clever than the Democratic operatives who backed Hillary Clinton, the losing presidential candidate. Maybe his primary White House role is to be a sop to supporters and that's all.

But Trump voters aren't the only Americans anxiously waiting for positive signals from the new administration. While Trump will never placate Democrats, there's another crucial group we'll call America's middle third who need to be assuaged. Many of them didn't vote for Trump but they may make the biggest difference in the success of his presidency: They'll either be won over or will bolt to the opposition. Like every president, Trump will calibrate many of his actions according to how far he can go without losing them.

That's always a tough balance. In today's America it's especially tough. By adding someone as notorious as Bannon to his team, the new president has more than sent the wrong signal. He also has risked alienating the vast swath of Americans who will determine whether his presidency succeeds or fails. And he's done it well before even taking the oath of office.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, everybody, whether we supported Donald Trump or not—and, obviously, I did not—wants to give any President a chance to bring this country together. Throughout the country, during this campaign, we have become terribly divided. Even in my own State of Vermont, we heard of some of these divisions.

I feel fortunate that Vermonters re-elected me. I have never run negative campaign ads, and did not this time. I was opposed by somebody who ran a completely negative campaign. I think people reject negativity. There are so many positive aspects to America. We talk about making America great