

upfront of \$600 million. We want this added to the national debt—which is already \$19 trillion.

I think the Senator from Alaska, the bill manager, made a very reasonable suggestion: Let the State and the city get started with the money that has been appropriated by the State, together with the tens of millions of dollars the Obama administration is making available to the State of Michigan that can then be available to the city of Flint to get started, to do the infrastructure integrity study, to come up with a plan. Then the Senators can come back to Congress—hopefully during the regular appropriations process—and come up with a responsible, shared plan for this local government, for the State government, and for the Federal Government to help the poor people of Flint out of this terrible crisis.

Instead, what we seem to have found happening is, in the immortal words of Rahm Emanuel—now the mayor of Chicago, formerly chief of Staff of the White House—never let a crisis go to waste. That is what is happening here. It is not responsible. It is not reasonable. And I think Senator MURKOWSKI's counteroffer to the demands of the Senators from Michigan demonstrates it is not even a good-faith effort to try to solve the problem. It is just trying to put on a show vote and embarrass people.

We also need to understand that the Environmental Protection Agency bears significant responsibility. The Obama administration's Environmental Protection Agency failed the people of Flint when they didn't act sooner. We heard that one Agency director has already resigned.

But let me be clear. There is no disagreement that we all want to work together to help the people of Flint find a solution once we have more information about the needs of the city and the State of Michigan and they know exactly what kind of help they need and in what amount. What we disagree on is that this bipartisan Energy bill should be held hostage until we know the solution. Frankly, that is beyond frustrating. It is disappointing. It is not serving our constituents and the American people the way we should, in a responsible, commonsense, bipartisan way. This is all about gamesmanship. This is all about "gotcha." In other words, this is all about the things the American people have come to loathe and hate about the political process in Washington, DC.

We can do better. We must do better. And I share the majority leader's wish that negotiations continue and that cooler, more sensible minds come together on solutions that we can perhaps agree to.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, this is the fourth time I have come to the floor urging Senator CRUZ to remove his hold on these very important nominees for two of our best allies, the countries of Sweden and Norway.

Norway has been without a confirmed ambassador for 860 days. As we know, the first nominee withdrew, but many of these days have been filled up by the second nominee, who is not controversial—Sam Heins from the State of Minnesota—who made it through the committee without objection. In the case of Sweden, it has been 469 days since the President nominated Azita Raji to be ambassador.

There is no issue with these nominees. In fact, in the words of Senator COTTON from Arkansas, my Republican colleague, "I believe both [nominees] are qualified . . . and we have significant interests in Scandinavia. My hope is that both nominees receive a vote in the Senate sooner than later." We know we have the support of Senator CORKER, the head of the Foreign Relations Committee. We thank Senator CARDIN for his support. We thank Majority Leader MCCONNELL. We thank Senator REID.

This vote is not a controversial vote. Senator CRUZ is not here to object. We understand Senator LEE is here on his behalf. But I would like to know why Senator CRUZ isn't here to object. I think I know why he isn't here to object—because he is in the State of my colleague Senator SHAHEEN.

We cannot hold up the business of the Senate like this. We have two nominees for two countries, the 11th and 12th biggest investors in the United States of America, Sweden and Norway. The country of Norway is the purchaser of 52 Lockheed fighter planes, 22 just ordered at \$200 million apiece, all made in Fort Worth, TX, the home State of Senator CRUZ.

These are allies who are taking in refugees by the thousands. These are allies who are at our side in the fight against Russia to stand up against their aggression in Ukraine. They have stood with us in the fight against Islamic extremism. They have stood with us in the fight against ISIS. And what do we say to them? You can have ambassadors from Russia or from China, you can have ambassadors from every country but not from the United States of America.

I ask Senator CRUZ and I ask his colleagues—or perhaps his staff to ask him—why every other European nation of any major size has an ambassador and why not these two Scandinavian countries.

So it is my hope—and the reasons for these holds are completely unrelated. They are varied. They are many. They change every day. I am hopeful that we are able to negotiate something because Senator SHAHEEN and I have pledged to come to the floor nearly every single day when the Senate is in

session to continue asking, and his colleagues are going to have to come and object on his behalf.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Samuel Heins to be Ambassador to the country of Norway, Calendar No. 263; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, on behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Azita Raji to be Ambassador to the country of Sweden, Calendar No. 148; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, on behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I see the Senator from New Hampshire is here. She is a leader on the Foreign Relations Committee. I know she has a few things to say. But, again, we are simply asking for a vote. Senator CRUZ can choose to be here or not. He can choose to vote or not. He can choose to vote no if he wants. We know these two nominees would pass because they are not controversial. I am tired of hearing from people in America and people who represent and live in these countries: What is wrong with America? Why are you "dissing" us when we stand by your side every day? This has to stop.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am joining my colleague, Senator KLOBUCHAR, to talk not just about these two positions of Ambassadors to Sweden and Norway but also about some of the other 27 nominees who deal with national security issues.

As Senator KLOBUCHAR said yesterday when we were on the floor, we said we were going to come down here every day. The Senate is not going to be in session every day, so we won't be here every day, but we will be back as often as possible to point out that we need to confirm these nominees. It is in the country's national security interests.

The Presiding Officer serves with me on the Senate Armed Services Committee, so she understands just how

critical it is that we have a team in place that can be part of the team that protects this Nation.

As Senator KLOBUCHAR said, Azita Raji has been waiting over a year since she was nominated. She went through the Foreign Relations Committee unanimously. Nobody objected. Sam Heins was nominated almost a year ago. He is nominated to be U.S. Ambassador to Norway.

Again, this is not about just these two individuals; this is also about the message we are sending to two of our best partners and allies, Sweden and Norway. Both of these countries have been part of the anti-ISIL coalition fighting with us against the terrorists. Sweden has been on the frontlines of the refugee crisis, taking in thousands of refugees in Europe. As we think about the strains that the European Union is under right now, for us to have failed to put ambassadors in two of our most important allies is unforgivable.

Yesterday I said it was in 1914 that Norway had to scramble their F-16 fighters. We know they didn't have F-16 fighters in 1914. It was 2014. So a little over a year ago, Norway, which is a NATO ally, scrambled its F-16 fighters 74 times to intercept Russian warplanes.

As we think about the threats from Russian aggression, Sweden and Norway are right there. They are on the frontlines. Norway has committed to participate in NATO's missile defense system. So, again, it is very important as we are looking at our efforts to stop Russian aggression.

Yesterday in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee we were talking about the strains on Europe. We had witnesses for both the majority and the minority who confirmed that our failure to move these nominees on the Senate floor is "an enormous issue," a "disastrous policy," and sends the message that Washington does not "care about European security"—both minority and majority witnesses—even arguing that the United States does not have "players on the field."

Not only are there national security implications, but, as the Senator from Minnesota pointed out, vacancies in Sweden and Norway mean that some \$11.3 billion in U.S. exports lack a strong champion in-country.

I hope the Senator from Texas—who is out running for President—will come back or will lift his hold so we can send the message that we should be sending to our European allies about how important they are and how strongly we want to support what is happening in those countries.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to move two other national security nominees.

The first is Ambassador Tom Shannon. He has been nominated to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Again, he has been waiting 136 days since being nominated. He also went through the Foreign Relations

Committee without any opposition. He would be responsible for working with Europeans on the implementation of the Iran agreement, on coordinating the G7 to combat Russian aggression, as well as providing daily oversight and direction to all the Department's regional bureaus. He is a career Foreign Service officer who has served in five administrations, two Democratic and three Republican.

At this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Ambassador Tom Shannon to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Calendar No. 375; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. On behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Again, I am hopeful the junior Senator from Texas is going to do what he should have done all along, which is lift his hold and allow both the Ambassadors to Sweden and Norway and Ambassador Shannon to move forward.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, finally, I want to ask unanimous consent to move Adam Szubin, who has been nominated to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes. He has also been waiting almost a year. He is somebody who Senator SHELBY, chairman of the Banking Committee, has said is eminently qualified, but the Banking Committee still has not voted to move his nomination to the Senate floor.

His position is very critical because he would lead the policy, enforcement, regulatory, and intelligence functions of the Treasury Department. They are aimed at identifying and disrupting the lines of financial support to international terrorist organizations to a whole range of other bad actors.

Next week on the Senate floor we are supposed to take up sanctions on North Korea. How can we in good faith tell the American people we are going to enforce sanctions on North Korea when we haven't been willing to fill the position that is responsible for doing that enforcement? It belies understanding that we are not going to move forward.

Again, this is a position that I know is supported by the Foreign Relations Committee. The Republican chair of the Foreign Relations Committee has been very supportive of moving Adam Szubin's nomination, just as he has been supportive of moving the two Ambassadors, of moving Ambassador Shannon.

This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue about what we are doing to ensure the national security of this country. It is unfortunate we have rules in the Senate that allow one person to hold things up for an indefinite period of time when the national security of the country is at stake.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of PN371, the nomination of Adam Szubin to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes; that the Senate proceed to its consideration and vote without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. On behalf of the senior Senator from Alabama, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Again, it is disappointing that the senior Senator from Alabama isn't here to talk about his concerns about Adam Szubin and why he is still on hold in the Banking Committee and that we haven't heard from the majority leader in the Senate about the importance of moving not only Adam Szubin's nomination but these other nominations that are critical as we make sure we do what we need to, to protect this country.

I am disappointed, but as Senator KLOBUCHAR said, we will be back.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANNUAL NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I want to chronicle for the Senate and to make a part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that nearly 5,000 people gathered this morning for the annual National Prayer Breakfast with the President, members of the Cabinet, members of the Joint Chiefs, most of the Diplomatic Corps, and a lot of the Members of Congress.

The national breakfast is sponsored by the Senate prayer group that meets on Wednesday morning and the House