

We are now close trading partners. We don't agree with them on every single thing, but they like us a lot. We have much more of a relationship than we have ever had in the past, and it is a much better economic relationship than we have ever had in the past.

The reason I mention Vietnam is that there are some corollaries here with Iran. In 1978, that was when some will recall—the pages are too young to remember this. But in 1978, Iranians, led by their religious leader, captured, took control of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. They held our folks for a year or two as part of their cultural revolution or religious revolution.

When they did that, do you know what we did? We seized a lot of their assets in this country, in other countries as best we could. And that was not just a couple of dollars, not just a couple million dollars; it was hundreds of millions of dollars, and, man, maybe even more. Maybe it was even billions of dollars.

We held those assets, and we kept the Iranians from reclaiming those assets for, gosh, over 30 years—maybe close to 40 years. They have litigated in court. They say that they feel they should have access to what is theirs, what was theirs.

We are told by lawyers—I am not a lawyer—but we are told by some pretty smart lawyers on our side and others that they had a very good chance of getting all that and more in court if we didn't settle.

What we did, at the end of the day, when the Iranians agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreement, which was reached with not just the United States but with the Germans, the French, the Brits, the Chinese, and the Russians—the idea was to make sure that Iran didn't have a quick path, a fast track to continuing their development of nuclear weapons. They were clearly wanting to do it, and we wanted them not to do that.

So we ended up negotiating this agreement. Part of the agreement was to settle these claims from almost 40 years ago, financial claims, valuable assets that we basically seized and refused to return.

It turns out, we have to mention how highly the Vietnamese people think of us today. As it turns out, Vietnam is a very young country, very young. So is Iran.

Iran has about 80 million people. In Iran, the majority of the people are under the age of 25. They like this country a lot, but they have people over there who are more in line with the old regime, who don't like us. The Revolutionary Guard, some of the military leadership—they don't like us.

They have newly elected leadership from 4 years ago, President Rouhani, Foreign Minister Zarif, and others who, frankly, want to be able to work with us, if they can. They are willing to agree to what I think is a very harsh agreement to ensure that they don't move forward on developing weapons

and developing nuclear weapons. If they do, then we are going to impose these really stringent sanctions on them, shut down their economy—double-digit rates of inflation, economy in the tank. Finally, they said: OK, uncle. We will agree to this agreement.

Since then, the Iranians have done what the Vietnamese did a year ago; they have a more abundant civilian air fleet. Their civilian aircraft are old, decrepit, and they need new ones. They are doing what the Vietnamese have already done: buying a lot of American-made aircraft, passenger aircraft by Boeing. We are not talking about just a couple billion dollars' worth but certainly more than \$10 billion worth.

I think they have already taken orders on one and have made one of the very first ones, and there is more to come. I think they are also going to buy a bunch of airbuses. I think more than half of the airbuses have components made in America, and that is another boost to our economy.

I don't remember who said it, but a Chinese military leader once said: The greatest victory of all is the one that we win without firing a shot. That is what he said: The greatest victory of all is the one we win without firing a shot.

Well, for a Navy guy who has seen some time in a combat area and the Presiding Officer, who knows a little bit about this stuff as well—I think he probably agrees with me that if you can win one without shooting anybody or getting anybody killed, I think that is worth doing.

The other thing I would say is, that doesn't mean we just trust Iran that they are going to do what they said they are going to do in the deal. There is an agency—I think it is called the International Atomic Energy Agency. They are all over them in terms of monitoring the deal and making sure that what the Iranians agreed to do, they actually do. What is it, trust but verify? That is really what the Iranian deal is all about: trust but verify. We will see how it all works out.

Color me hopeful. A lot of times when we vote on stuff, we vote our hopes as opposed to our fears. Sometimes we vote our fears, as opposed to our hopes. On the Iran deal, I voted my hopes. We will see how it goes, and I am hopeful.

#### BORDER WALL

Mr. President, that is not why I came to the floor. There is a lot of talk about a wall. I heard a song by Pink Floyd the other day: "All in all it was just a brick in the wall."

The President wants us to build a wall on our southern border with Mexico. It is about 2,000 miles between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf Coast. I have been down there any number of times as the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee and still as the senior Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee. The ranking member is CLAIRE McCASKILL of Missouri.

I have not been on every square mile of the border with Mexico, but I can

tell you that there are some places on the border where a wall makes some sense, and there are frankly a lot of places where it doesn't, including where you have hundreds of miles of river where it doesn't make any sense.

Also, I have heard from folks from Yuma down there, where the Border Patrol told me—where they had an area where they had some wall. I think the wall was maybe 15 feet high, and they kept finding like 18-, 19-foot ladders on the other side of the wall, where people would come up with a ladder to the wall and go over and above the wall. So you can go over a wall. You can even go over a high wall with a ladder that is high enough. A lot of that has been done.

You can go under a wall, tunnel under. A lot of people tried to get out of Mexico into the United States by tunneling under the wall.

As it turns out, walls in some places make sense. Fences in some places make sense. Boats in some places, like on the river that happens to be our border, the Rio Grande border with Mexico—boats make sense. Sometimes fast boats, really fast boats make sense. Sometimes it makes sense to build a ramp so you can get boats into the water in different places. Sometimes it makes sense to build a road on our side of the border to give us mobility. Sometimes it makes sense to put surveillance equipment in drones. Sometimes it makes sense to put surveillance equipment in helicopters. Sometimes it makes sense to put surveillance equipment in fixed-wing aircraft and also not just binoculars to try to find people.

There is something called VADER. It is an acronym for Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar, to find people. It is very highly sophisticated surveillance equipment to go on our drones, go on our helicopters, and go on our fixed-wing aircraft.

What is so special about this? It can see at night. It allows us to see dozens of miles into Mexico at night—through fog, through rain. We have a system and if we need to, rather than just send out aircraft or drones or whatever without that kind of surveillance equipment, let's put the surveillance equipment on it. That makes far more sense than building a 2,000-mile wall.

Other things that make sense are surveillance towers. We have to go 100 feet up in the air, 200, 300 feet. Some of them are mobile. Some of them are stationary. We have motion detectors. In some places, that makes a lot of sense.

There is no shortage of ideas that make sense. What I like to do to try to figure out what to do is I ask people like the Border Patrol: What do you think makes sense? And what they pretty much say is an "all of the above" approach.

We have an "all of the above" approach in energy. If we are smart about securing our border with Mexico, I think we have gotten smarter as we

have gone on. We certainly have a lot more people down there than we had before that. We have 20,000 people, our men and women in the Border Patrol. They work hard and do a good job.

It is an “all of the above” approach. So I wanted to get that off my chest.

Does it make sense to spend \$25 billion to build a wall that we may need less than 100 miles? Probably not. Absolutely not.

The people who are coming across our border with Mexico are not Mexicans. They used to be. There are more Mexicans going back into Mexico from the United States than are coming into the United States from Mexico. The places where a lot of illegal immigration is coming from are three countries: Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

Here is why they come. It is because they live lives of desperation. They live lives without economic hope, economic opportunity, murder, mayhem, some of the highest murder rates in the world. I think El Salvador—I don’t know if we have the numbers here. They have a number of different routes they take from the three countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, mostly coming into the United States right here. They don’t so much go over to El Paso. They certainly don’t head over here on land to get in on the western side of our border. Some try to come by air, but mostly they come by—it used to be by train, now mostly it is by land, and they are dangerous missions. The reason they come is because there is not much hope there.

Frankly, the reason there is not much hope there, in part, is because of us. There used to be a comic strip called “Pogo.” The Presiding Officer remembers “Pogo.” One of the lines from “Pogo” is, “I found the enemy, and it is me.”

We are the enemy. The chairman of the Homeland Security Committee said many times, the root cause of what is going on down there is our addiction to drugs in this country. The drugs are trafficked through here, they come into the United States, are sold, and the money from the drugs goes back there along with guns. When we deport the bad guys, what do we do? We take the bad guys who were selling the drugs, and we put them right back down here. It is a toxic mix of guns, weapons, and bad guys. They make life down here miserable for people.

As it turns out, Colombia, a few years ago, was a miserable place to live too. One time, about 20 years ago, a bunch of gunmen in Colombia rounded up the supreme court justices of the Colombian supreme court, took them into a room and shot them to death—shot them to death.

There was a time when the FARC, the rebel groups, the leftist groups, and the drug gangs were trying to take down the Government of Colombia, and it looked like they could. And some great people in Colombia stood up and

said: Not on my watch. This is not going to happen on my watch. They came up with Plan Colombia in order to make sure this didn’t happen. President Clinton and a guy named Joe Biden, who was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, led an effort to—not for us to fully fund Plan Colombia, but they basically said: This is on you. You can do it like at Home Depot. You can do it. We can help. They did the heavy lifting. They did most of the raising of revenues, and we played our role. We continued to play our role for 20 years and Colombia is a different place today.

The same thing can happen to these three countries down here. Joe Biden was playing a significant role as Vice President. I was helpful, as was Jeh Johnson, former Secretary of Homeland Security, and others as well. These folks, along with these three countries, came up with something they called the Alliance for Prosperity. It is really like Plan Colombia—find out what works, do more of that. Plan Colombia worked, and they are trying an approach like this down here. The idea is to restore the rule of law, to focus on infrastructure, to focus on making good government work and be effective, to really tamp down on the corruption they have there, the obstruction that goes on with small businesses. The idea is to create a safer, better place. Most people don’t want to leave here. I talked to plenty of them. They want to stay there. Some of them want to come up here and work but then go home. This is their country, and they love their country, like we love ours.

Finally, as we have been joined on the floor by one of my colleagues, I ask him to allow me just maybe another minute or two.

#### NAFTA

Mr. President, there has been talk about NAFTA. There has been talk—and I don’t know if these are alternative facts coming out of the White House or what—that the President is going to pull out of NAFTA.

I would just state this. I met with Robert Lighthizer, who is going to be our Trade Rep—and I understand that he will be a good one. He will succeed Michael Froman, who was an excellent Trade Rep for a number of years. When I met with Mr. Lighthizer in my office a couple of months ago, he talked about renegotiating NAFTA. When we negotiated the Trans-Pacific Partnership with 11 other countries around the world—40 percent of the world’s markets—we did that over the last couple of years, we were renegotiating NAFTA. We fixed a lot of things in NAFTA that needed to be fixed, not just in the Mexico part of NAFTA but also Canada.

One of the things that needed to be fixed was in our top market—we raise a lot of chickens in Georgia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and other places. Our top market for poultry is Mexico. Canada doesn’t buy our chickens. They

keep us out. The Trans-Pacific Partnership renegotiated NAFTA, not just for poultry but for a variety of other commodities we want to sell.

So my friendly advice to the President is, before he goes ahead and pulls out of NAFTA, why doesn’t he and the administration take a closer look at what we renegotiated in the Trans-Pacific Partnership when we renegotiated NAFTA. I think we will find a lot of what we need to do, want to do, and what we can agree to do.

#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, I want to talk about healthcare reform. The Republicans came up with a really good idea in 1993. It was introduced by John Chafee, the Senator from Rhode Island, and co-sponsored by 23 Senators. It was an alternative plan to HillaryCare in 1993. The Republicans got the ideas from the Heritage Foundation, and they turned out to be good ideas.

One provision they included was that every State would have an exchange. If people couldn’t get healthcare, they could buy their healthcare coverage as a part of a large purchasing pool called an exchange. The Republican idea from Chafee and others not only had exchanges but had sliding-scale tax credits for buying down the healthcare for lower income folks to buy down the cost of coverage for lower income people. When their income reached a certain level, the tax credit went away. That was in 1993, the alternative plan to HillaryCare, with the individual mandate. Basically, many folks had to be covered, and there would be a fine if they didn’t get coverage. We can’t make people get coverage, but the idea was to get people to get coverage.

The employer mandate was the fourth concept. The fourth concept said employers of a certain size—I think it was employers with 50 to 100 employees—were to provide healthcare to their employees.

The last piece was that insurance companies could not deny coverage to people because of preexisting conditions. That was the 1993 proposal, courtesy of the Heritage Foundation.

When Mitt Romney was Governor of Massachusetts, he took that game plan, lock, stock, and barrel, and established RomneyCare and it worked out pretty well. When we did the Affordable Care Act, we took RomneyCare and built on that.

I will close with this. The piece that needs to be fixed and repaired, not repealed but fixed, out of the original Republican idea is the idea that the insurance companies need a stable insurance pool of healthy people, not just old people and sick people but healthy people and younger people as well. There are some ways we can fix that. It is one of the fixes we need to make. It isn’t all that hard. It isn’t all that hard, and I will talk about that some other day.

I appreciate my friend from one of those Dakotas—South Dakota—for being patient and waiting. Thank you. I yield the floor.