

MCCAIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. His commitment to our Nation's heroes is unfailing, which is why, amidst his own battles, Chairman MCCAIN has returned to the Senate to manage this bill and see it through passage. We are all proud to have him with us now.

As we begin considering this bipartisan defense authorization, Members from both sides will have opportunities to work with Senator MCCAIN and to offer amendments. Ultimately, we will keep working to find consensus so that we can pass this critical defense legislation without further delay.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 16 years ago today, my city, our country, changed forever. On September 11, 2001, our country was attacked; the World Trade Center towers fell; the Pentagon was in flames; and the smoke rising from an empty field in Pennsylvania reminded us that as cataclysmic as the attack was, the conspirators had planned even greater destruction.

It was a day of fear and helplessness, of phones ringing endlessly—when they worked—husbands calling wives, wives calling husbands, folks in search of brothers, sisters, neighbors, and colleagues.

I will never forget the next day. President Bush provided a plane so that Senator Clinton and I could fly back to New York. The smell of death was in the air. Lined up outside before you entered into the grounds where the Twin Towers were, were hundreds of people with little signs with pictures: Have you seen my father Jim? Have you seen my daughter Mary? That will stay with me forever.

More than 3,000 souls were taken from us—a guy I had played basketball with in high school, a businessman who had helped me on my way up, a firefighter with whom I had done blood drives. It was one of the bloodiest days on American soil since the Civil War.

On September 12, 2001, I called on Americans to wear the flag in a sign of solidarity. Every day since, I have worn this flag in remembrance of those who were lost and those brave souls who died rushing to the towers to find those who still might be alive. God willing, I will wear it every day of my life for the rest of my life.

September 11 was one of those before-and-after moments. Nothing has been the same since. We awakened to a new manner of evil that had previously been beyond our imagination.

But on this day, as we solemnly remember those who were taken from us, let us also remember what that day revealed about us. "On a normal day, we value heroism because it is uncommon,"

wrote Nancy Gibbs of Time Magazine 3 days after the attack. "On Sept. 11, we valued heroism because it was everywhere."

Firefighters and police and union workers searched, undaunted, through dust and smoke, through fire and ash, for citizens who might still be alive, trapped in the rubble. Average Americans pulled the wounded to safety. Folks from coast to coast lined up for blood drives and pooled their money for donations.

I will never forget the picture of a man who owned a shoe store two blocks north of the towers and was giving out shoes to everyone because they didn't have theirs on as they rushed to get out of the towers—just a small act of charity and selflessness. It was repeated over and over again because those kinds of acts are deep in the American soul.

This morning I came from the 9/11 Memorial in New York City. Where once there were mighty towers, now there are two deep scars in the Earth. But all around the memorial, New York City is alive and thriving.

In the days after, they wrote it off. They said that no one would live south of Canal or Chamber Street, companies would flee, and New York's greatest days were over. But we New Yorkers are a tough breed. We rebuilt. We came back stronger.

On this day, we should always remember that beside our distinctive spirit of independence, resilience, and uncommon heroism are essential parts of the American character.

I do have to say how proud I am of my city. Downtown is bustling, and 50,000 people live there who didn't live there before. Businesses have relocated. It is a new "in" area. Bin Laden is gone. The evil men with him are gone. We thrive.

God bless America.

#### HURRICANE IRMA DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as Hurricane Irma continues to buffet Florida, our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Florida and the rest of the Southeast that is in the storm's path. The Democratic caucus and I stand ready to work with the majority leader and his caucus, members of the administration, and officials in Florida to provide them with the resources and aid they need.

Just as we were able to speedily pass an aid package after Harvey, I expect we will come together to support rescue and recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Irma and in some of the other disasters, particularly the fires out west.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week we will begin consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act, as

we do each year. As usual, there are hundreds of amendments that have already been filed and a whole lot of tough issues to consider. We Democrats want to work in a constructive and productive manner to process as many of these amendments as possible and work through even the most difficult of issues.

I know that Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED have an excellent working relationship, as well as a great deal of respect for one another. I hope they can build a strong managers' package that will be acceptable to both sides.

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.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2810, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 175, H.R. 2810, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, when we finish this period of morning business, which is open to speeches and statements on many different topics, we will then go to the Defense authorization bill. Our process in the Senate is to authorize spending and then to appropriate the money for the actual spending. Occasionally, those two things are in sync, but many times they are not. I am afraid that what we face today is uncertainty.

Senator MCCAIN, who is the chairman of the defense authorization committee, will bring his proposal to the floor, but it is at a spending level that is not allowed by current law. The Budget Control Act will not allow Senator MCCAIN or the Senate to spend at

the level at which he wants to spend. I can make a good argument that the statutory level we are required to hold to is inadequate to our national defense. If we are honest about taking care of the problem, we not only have to pass this authorization bill, but we have to change the Budget Control Act so that we can put more money into our national defense. That debate will get started this week. It is near and dear to Senator MCCAIN's heart. He works hard on it each year with Senator JACK REED, a Democrat from Rhode Island.

There will be many amendments considered, I am sure, during the course of this week on Defense authorization.

DACA

Mr. President, what I come to the floor to speak to as in morning business is not that issue; it is the issue of DACA and the Dreamers. It was just 6 days ago that the announcement was made by Attorney General Jeff Sessions that he was going to rescind the DACA Program.

A quick history. Sixteen years ago, I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was written to take care of young people who, by their parents, were brought to the United States as infants and toddlers and young boys and girls and who grew up in this country. They did not get into trouble with the law. They finished school and always thought that they were going to be Americans and that they would use their education and their skills to build lives in this country. However, because their parents either came here undocumented or did not file the appropriate papers, these young people are literally without a country. The country they grew up in does not accept them under the law. So 16 years ago I introduced the DREAM Act and said: Let's take care of this problem. These young people, as it was through no fault of their own, should be given a chance to stay in this country and be part of its future.

I passed it in the Senate, and I have seen it passed in the House. We have never quite been able to bring it together in any one year and have it pass both Chambers, so it is not the law of the land. Sixteen years ago, I introduced it, and it is still not the law of the land.

In the meantime, Senator Obama, my colleague in the Senate, cosponsored the DREAM Act and then got a promotion. As President of the United States, I asked him: Can you do something to protect these young people from being deported?

He said that he would, so by Executive order, he created something known as DACA, the DACA Program, by which young people come forward, turn themselves in, register with the United States, pay a filing fee to cover all of the costs of the process, and go through a criminal background check. If they are approved and cleared, for 2 years, they can stay in the United States without having the fear of being

deported, and they are allowed to work. Then, 2 years later, it is renewable. Over the years President Obama had done that, 780,000 young people signed up, went through the background check, and were approved under DACA.

Last week, President Trump, through his Attorney General, announced that he was going to rescind the DACA Program. So the 780,000 young people have their futures in doubt. They do not know which way they are going to turn. This creates serious problems, as you might imagine. The young people who are affected by it are affected emotionally—I would be, too—because they do not know what is going to happen next. They do not know whether they are going to be allowed to stay in this country, whether they will be deported from this country, or whether they will be able to work legally. They are waiting for Congress to give the answer, and the President says he is waiting for Congress to give the answer.

Last Friday, I went back to Chicago, which I am honored to represent in the Senate, and I visited Loyola University's School of Medicine. It is known as the Stritch School of Medicine.

At the outset, let me say how proud I am to represent the city and especially to represent Loyola University.

Here is what they did in their medical school when President Obama created DACA. They said: We will open up competition for our medical school to include those who are protected by DACA. We will not give them special slots, and we will not give them a quota. They can compete with everybody else who wants to go to our medical school.

Do you know what happened? At the end of the day, 32 of those DACA applicants scored so high that they were accepted at Loyola's Stritch School of Medicine. They are now in 2 or 3 different years of classes. It is amazing. Many of them, from all over the United States, grew up without having legal citizenship status and always dreamed of being doctors, but it was impossible. They knew that no medical school would accept them. And Loyola said: We will accept you, and they got their chance—32 of them.

There is more to the story, as these young people do not qualify for any government assistance from the Federal Government. Because they are undocumented, they do not qualify for Pell grants, and they do not qualify for Federal Government loans. Medical school is expensive. How are they going to do it? They worked their way through college, paying out of their own pockets. How are they going to pay for medical school? Our State, the State of Illinois, under Governor Pat Quinn and renewed under Governor Rauner, created a loan program for them from which they could borrow money from the State. But there was a catch: For every year they borrowed money to go to medical school at Loyola, they had to pledge that they would

give 1 year of service, of their lives, as doctors in underserved communities in our State. They did it. Thirty-two of them signed up for it. I am very proud to say that the program has been a terrific success in our State. They are just extraordinary, along with the other students at the medical school.

They are special people. They come from all over the world, and they are all in this similar predicament, but until last week, they were protected by DACA. What happens when you take away the DACA Executive order, which President Trump said he will do over the next 6 months? There is a special challenge here. After they finish 4 years of medical school, these students apply for residencies, whereby they pursue their specialties, whatever they might be. A residency is work experience for all of these medical students. Through some university, they will be working as residents at hospitals, working long hours while pursuing their dreams of being doctors and specialists.

Here is the problem: With DACA's being gone, they no longer have the legal right to work in the United States. What does that mean? They cannot apply for residencies. This is the end of it, the end of their medical education. It stops right there. Whatever their ambitions might be, whether it is surgery or psychiatry, they cannot go forward without DACA.

It really puts a burden on us in Congress to decide what we are going to do, doesn't it? Are we going to pass a law that finally, once and for all, defines the legal status of these young people—not just for these medical students but for hundreds of thousands of others who are working? They are engineers. They are teachers. They are working in so many different areas, and they want to continue being part of this country.

I am encouraged that we have a bipartisan response. My colleague Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican from South Carolina, is my lead cosponsor on this year's version of the Dream Act. We currently have three other Republican Senators who have joined as cosponsors from across the United States—Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, Senator FLAKE from Arizona, and Senator GARDNER from Colorado. We hope others will join them. If we get the critical 60 votes in the Senate—60 sponsors or 60 who will pledge to vote for it—we can pass the Dream Act once and for all and take care of the concerns of the medical students I mentioned and so many others across this country.

I have come to the floor over the last few years and told the stories of the Dreamers. I think these stories have created good impressions in people's minds about who these young people are and what they can do for the future of the United States. I would like to do that again today.

This is Harminder Saini. Harminder was 6 years old when his family moved

to the United States from India. He grew up in Queens in New York City. He was a typical American kid—played sports and went to the park every day. Harminder's dream was to serve his country as a soldier in the U.S. Army. In his words, he simply wanted to give back.

Harminder was a born leader, and in high school, he was active in student government and was ultimately elected class president. He first learned that he did not have legal immigration status when he was in high school and he could not get a driver's license. They explained to him that he did not have the necessary legal documentation to be in this country. He was brought here as a kid and is growing up. He is now a student at Hunter College at the City University of New York and is working toward his bachelor's degree in history.

Thanks to DACA, he is fulfilling his dream. Last year, he was able to enlist in the Army through the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest Program, known as MAVNI. This photo is from his enlistment ceremony.

The MAVNI Program allows immigrants with skills that are vital to our national interests to enlist in the Armed Forces. More than 800 DACA recipients with these skills—the people whom I described earlier—have joined America's military. They really want to be part of our country.

Now, some Trump administration officials claim that DACA recipients are taking away jobs from Americans. But Harminder and hundreds just like him have skills that our military couldn't find in the general population they were recruiting from. Harminder, along with many other Dreamers, is now waiting to ship out for basic training. He continues his undergraduate studies and is working full time while waiting for a chance to volunteer to serve America in the military.

Harminder said:

All I want to do is serve. I want to do my part to give back to this country because it allowed me to serve.

Harminder and other Dreamers have so much to give to America, but without DACA—without the Dream Act—Harminder and hundreds of other immigrants with skills that are really important to our national interests will have to leave the Army. They want nothing more than to serve our country. They are prepared to die for our country. What more can we ask?

But, instead, there are those who would say that they should leave, that they should be deported. One of the President's former staff advisers, in a "60 Minutes" show last night, said those exact words: They should just leave.

I don't think America would be a stronger country if Harminder left. I don't think our military would be stronger without his contribution and service to our country. He should be part of America, and we can do something about it.

A friend of mine recently went to the University of Notre Dame to visit with

the administration there—represented by the Presiding Officer—in the State of Indiana. It is my understanding that they have some 68 DACA recipients at Notre Dame University. There is hardly a university in this country that doesn't have DACA-eligible young people who are going to school there. Remember, they don't qualify for any Federal assistance for education, at all, because they are in an undocumented status, but they are working their way through. They are borrowing the money. They are working jobs to make sure that they reach a point where they have a future.

Now it is up to us. We have to decide what we are going to do. Senator GRAHAM, my cosponsor of the Dream Act, said a week or so ago, when we introduced the bill, that the moment of reckoning is coming. That moment is not only coming. It arrived last Tuesday.

We need Republican leaders to join us to help make the Dream Act the law of the land. Otherwise, what will happen to these young people?

As for this Senator, I have made this a major part of my public career. I feel a special kinship with these young people. Yesterday was Mexican Independence Day in Chicago. What a parade there was. It must have gone on for 2 miles. It felt like it. There were more people than you could imagine coming out with their families—people of Mexican heritage who are now part of Chicago, part of Illinois, and part of the United States. As I was marching down the street, there was a young lady and a couple of her friends walking next to me wearing princess crowns, and I started talking to them. It turned out that two of the young girls were born in the United States. The third was born in Mexico, and she is a DACA recipient. She is going to school. She thanked me for the DACA Program and said: I hope you can make it a reality again.

We have that obligation. We have that responsibility. We need to step up with this broken immigration system and make certain that, at the end of the day, we have done everything in our power to give these young people like Harminder and hundreds of thousands just like him a chance to be part of America's future.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

Mr. President, let me just close with a brief statement. I listened to my colleague and friend Senator SCHUMER speak in very touching terms about this anniversary which we observe today—the 16th anniversary of 9/11. I can recount where I was and what I remember, as I have before on the floor, but I will not. I will just say that it changed America in so many different ways.

As I went through airport security this morning at O'Hare, which I do every single week. I thought to myself that 16 years ago it would have been unthinkable that we would put passengers—every single one of them—

through this kind of security process. But that is the reality of life in a world that is dangerous, life in a world where we want to protect innocent people from the 9/11s of the future that are being plotted and planned by our enemies around the world.

I think of those whose lives were lost on 9/11. I think of those who risked their lives. I think of those whose lives will never be the same because of that day.

It is a reminder to all of us to thank God that we live in this great country, to remember our history well, to honor the men and women in the military, and the men and women in law enforcement and in medicine, who stepped up that day in a heroic way, and to make sure that we do everything in our generation so that no future generation has a similar experience.

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

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

HURRICANE IRMA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as we saw yesterday, Mother Nature once again has crippled part of our Nation. Hurricane Irma made landfall on Sunday, hitting the Lower Keys of Florida and then moving up the State's western coastline. Like Hurricane Harvey in my home State of Texas, the devastation in places like Marco Island and Orange County means tough days and long nights ahead for the residents there.

My prayers, like those of so many others, go out to those who have been impacted by this devastating storm, including those who evacuated safely but will soon travel back to Florida, finding that everything they had is gone as a result of the storm.

As Irma continues to affect Florida and the southeastern United States, we stand ready to support the people in those States just like so many did for us in Texas with Hurricane Harvey.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

Mr. President, on another separate note, as we all have seen and recall, today is the solemn anniversary of a day that has had an even more profound impact on our country than the recent storms. September 11 will always be remembered as the day that never quite goes away, the day that remains a reminder of what can be taken from us in the blink of an eye.

I have always said that it is etched in my memory like only one other event in my lifetime, and that was in 1963 with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. I remember where I was and what I was doing at that time when I first heard about it. Of course, I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing when I learned of the

terrible events of 9/11. I was on the telephone talking to a colleague of mine when my wife said: You need to see what is happening on the television. I turned on the TV just in time to see the second plane hit the towers in Manhattan.

Yes, it was 16 years ago that 19 Islamic terrorists snuck into our country in defiance of our laws and attended flight schools in defiance of all propriety. Sixteen years ago today, they hijacked four commercial planes full of innocent passengers and, at 8:46 a.m. on Tuesday morning, flew the first one directly into one of the tallest buildings in our largest city in the United States.

Seventeen minutes later—the event, which my wife directed my attention to on the TV set—the second plane hit, and shortly thereafter, flight 77 slammed into the western wall of the Pentagon, and Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania. Thanks to the heroic actions of passengers on Flight 93, that plane could have very well headed here to Washington and crashed into the Capitol, taking who knows how many lives along with it.

As it was, 3,000 people were killed that day, and afterward almost 300 million U.S. citizens saw the world anew through fresh eyes. The terrorists must have thought they could bring our Nation down, topple it as they did the twin towers, but they badly miscalculated. They were wrong. An America shocked was an America strengthened. America is sometimes called the slumbering giant which, once awakened, is a fearsome thing to behold, and that is exactly what happened after 9/11. After we all took many deep breaths and thanked God for what was left, we stood up and we fought back, united.

We primarily did that through our military—the core of our national defense—those who took the fight to al-Qaida in places like Afghanistan but also all the rest who surrounded and supported our Armed Forces and intelligence personnel every step of the way.

Sixteen years later, we continue to confront new terrorist threats and adjust to new geopolitical realities. I recall the statement of the former Director of National Intelligence, who said, after 50 years in the intelligence community, he had never seen a more diverse array of threats confronting America than he did at that time, and nothing has changed in that respect, which is why today America must maintain a sense of vigilance, a sense of purpose, and a sense of moral clarity regarding evil in all of its novel forms.

We must also ask if we are still standing behind our Armed Forces the way we committed to do following the terrible events of 9/11. We must make sure our military servicemembers have everything they need because to do otherwise is to shirk our duty and to forget how our national security is ultimately achieved.

One way we uphold that responsibility is through the National Defense

Authorization Act. If passed, this would mark the 55th year it is signed into law. Later today, we will vote to take up this legislation, and I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting that vote.

The Defense authorization bill ensures that crucial Department of Defense programs are continued and establishes how our military funds will be spent. The version of the bill which has been reported out of committee helps reverse the readiness crisis created by the previous administration. In the words of my friend, our colleague from Texas, MAC THORNBERRY, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, “We have too few planes that can fly, too few ships that can sail and too few soldiers who can deploy.” That sums up the situation exactly.

The Defense authorization bill exemplifies our commitment to reverse this downward trend. I don’t know why it is that America tries to cash the peace dividend at every turn when we have no peace, but that is what has happened. Although the hole the previous administration placed us in is deep, this bill authorizes the funds necessary to begin restoring readiness, rebuilding capacity, and modernizing military infrastructure.

I was recently at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, TX, the base which trains half of all Air Force pilots in the country. They told me one of the biggest problems they have is recruiting and retaining pilots for the U.S. Air Force. While people will accept lower wages for military service because they believe in serving the country, if, because of cuts in funding for the Air Force and for the military, they simply can’t fly like they need to in order to be ready for the next fight, many of them get discouraged and are tempted to go to work in the private sector where they can earn more money. So we need to make sure our troops—all of our Armed Forces—have the readiness capability, and we need to fund that appropriately.

This bill will authorize appropriations for personnel and equipment, including aircraft made in my home State—the Osprey, made in Amarillo, TX, and the F-35 made in Fort Worth.

Finally, the Senate version will also authorize critical funding to increase maritime capacity as well. Back in the 1980s, the Navy had about 600 ships; today, we have 277, less than half. It is crucial that we procure ships, aircraft, and munitions, continue to develop our new military technology on our existing platforms and in the evolving cyber domain, and reduce our shortfall in end strength—that we do all of those things. These steps will provide our servicemembers with the training and equipment necessary to defeat ISIS, al-Qaida, and terrorist and state actors that threaten the United States and our way of life.

Perhaps even more significant, in terms of the threat to the United States and world peace, sending a mes-

sage to Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation that America is no longer in retreat, but America can be relied upon as a strong partner, and America’s leadership role in world affairs will be reestablished, will send a very important message of deterrence to the bullies, the tyrants, and the authoritarians around the world; to China, another major threat to international security and peace that is being so aggressive in not only developing arms that allow it to project power to different parts of the Pacific and beyond but threatens maritime transit and safe travel through places like the Strait of Malacca, where so much international trade and national security travel occur.

Our colleagues in the House have passed their version of the Defense authorization, and now it is our job to get it done. By passing a strong defense bill and authorizing the sort of resources our military needs in order for America to maintain its leadership role in the world and provide a credible threat to deter aggression on the part of our adversaries, we will leave our Nation and the world a safer place and better off. It is one small way today that we can honor the memory of those we lost 16 years ago.

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.

Mrs. FISCHER. 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.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11 AND RECOGNIZING STRATCOM

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, 16 years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our Nation unites once again to honor the Americans killed on that horrific day. Our minds are filled with the haunting images of the burning towers, the crumbling structure of the Pentagon, and the smoking field in Pennsylvania. That dark day drastically changed the course of our Nation, and we will always remember where we were when we first heard the news that our country was under attack.

But 9/11 did not change who we are or the values we hold so dear. Amid the heartbreak and devastation, our citizens showed abounding courage, kindness, and love of country. In New York City, Arlington, and the scarred field in Shanksville, American flags were placed atop the rubble as symbols of determination in the face of evil. We will always remember the innocent lives lost in the attacks, and we will forever be grateful for the brave first responders who ran toward danger to help those in need.

We should also remember the significant work of the men and women of the U.S. Strategic Command in Nebraska

during this national emergency. Today, I want to recognize and honor what happened at STRATCOM on 9/11.

On that fateful day, STRATCOM's staff at Offutt Air Force Base, along with military personnel at several other U.S. bases, woke up expecting to strategize a response to a major attack against the United States. Days earlier, they had begun Global Guardian, an annual training exercise performed by the U.S. Strategic Command, the Air Force Space Command, and NORAD. The main purpose of the exercise was to test the military's command and control procedures in the event of nuclear warfare.

Leaders at STRATCOM learned during breakfast that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. When the second plane hit shortly thereafter, they understood that this had not been an accident. America was under attack.

The Global Guardian's fictional exercise was quickly canceled, and the men and women of STRATCOM responded to the day's events happening in the real world. After the FAA ordered every plane in the United States to be grounded, STRATCOM monitored the landings of thousands of civilian aircraft. Using a screen on the wall of the command post, they worked to identify which planes had been hijacked, knowing that finding these dangerous needles in the haystack of America's commercial airline industry could be the difference between safety and catastrophe.

As the day unfolded, STRATCOM leadership received a 30-minute notice that the secure location the President would be using was going to be Offutt Air Force Base. Nebraska was ready to protect the President.

Escorted by two F-15 fighters, Air Force One landed around 1:50 p.m. ADM Richard Mies, in charge of the Strategic Command at the time, picked up President Bush in his car and drove to STRATCOM's underground command post. STRATCOM staff quickly briefed the President and established a secure video link that allowed him to speak with the National Security Council and other senior officials. For 2 hours Nebraska served as the center of America's national defense before President Bush returned to Washington, and we did it well.

Nebraska is honored to host the U.S. Strategic Command Global Operations Center, and we are proud of the excellent work they did during the attacks of 9/11 to protect our country.

Year after year, this day is a reminder of tragedy and tears, but we should also recall the strength and resolve of the citizens of the greatest country on Earth. Though the threats to our way of life have and will continue to evolve, our enduring commitment to defending freedom will never waver.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I will address the Senate on the issue of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today, our Nation commemorates the 16th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that took the lives of thousands of innocent Americans. We all join in solemn remembrance of the victims, and our hearts go out to their families.

September 11 is a fitting day for the Senate to begin the consideration of the Defense authorization bill. The anniversary of those horrific terrorist attacks should serve as a reminder of the reason brave, young Americans are currently deployed around the world, fighting on behalf of freedom. I urge my colleagues to keep in mind the meaning of this day throughout the consideration of this important legislation, which will provide our men and women in uniform the resources, equipment, and support they need to keep our Nation safe.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the majority leader for his willingness to move expeditiously to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 and for his leadership.

I would also like to thank the Armed Services Committee ranking member, the Senator from Rhode Island, for his hard work on the NDAA. I remain appreciative of the thoughtfulness and bipartisan spirit with which he approaches national security issues.

The fact is, the NDAA is a piece of legislation in which this body—Members on both sides of the aisle—can and should take enormous pride. Not only does this legislation provide our men and women in uniform with the resources they need and deserve, but it is a product of an open and bipartisan process that represents the best of the U.S. Senate.

The Senate Armed Services Committee passed the fiscal year 2018 NDAA unanimously by a vote of 27 to 0. I repeat. The Defense authorization bill was passed by a unanimous vote of 27 to 0. That means all 14 Republican members and the 13 Democratic members of the committee voted in favor of this legislation. During the markup, the committee considered and adopted 277 amendments that were offered by both Republicans and Democrats.

Now we hope to consider the legislation under an open amendment process on the floor, which will allow all Senators to have their voices heard. This process, which is exactly how legislation is supposed to make its way through the Senate, has become disappointingly rare. For too long, par-

tisanship and politics have triumphed over principle and policy. This legislation is an opportunity for us to reverse that trend and restore regular order in the U.S. Senate.

The need for this legislation is self-apparent to anyone who is paying attention to today's world. With global terrorist networks, increasing great power competition with Russia and China, malign Iranian influence that is spreading across the Middle East, a North Korean dictator who is racing to acquire missiles that can hit the United States with nuclear weapons, the threats to our national security have not been more complex or daunting than at any time in the past seven decades.

We must also remember that we are a nation at war, with brave young men and women who are deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world. The NDAA is legislation that will deliver to our Armed Forces the resources, equipment, and training they need to meet the increasingly complex challenges of today's world, and it will begin the process of rebuilding our military after years of devastating defense cuts.

Let me point out what happens as a result of these mindless defense cuts, which every military leader has described as devastating to our ability to defend this Nation. Let me just remind you of the hard truth. The state of our military is eroding. We saw disturbing evidence of this reality over the summer as 42 servicemembers tragically perished in accidents during routine—I emphasize routine—training operations.

On June 17, seven sailors were killed when the USS *Fitzgerald* collided with a containership off the coast of Japan. On July 10, a Marine KC-130 crashed in Mississippi and killed all 16 troops on board. On August 21, 10 sailors perished when the USS *McCain* collided with a tanker near Singapore. On August 25, an Army Black Hawk helicopter went missing during a training mission off the coast of Yemen, and one soldier died. Just last week in Nevada, two Air Force A-10 aircraft crashed into each other. Thank God the pilots were safely ejected, but the planes were lost—at a cost of over \$100 million. For the two Pacific Fleet naval collisions, ship repairs are estimated to cost more than a half a billion dollars. The lives lost in each of these incidents were priceless.

Over the past 3 years, a total of 185 men and women in uniform have been killed in noncombat accidents. During the same time, 44 servicemembers were killed in combat. The bottom line is, we are killing more of our own people in training than our enemies are in combat, and that did not happen by accident. It is a problem that is caused by this mindless sequestration and a lack, frankly, of appreciation by Members of this body and the other one of what the needs are of the men and women who are serving. It is about time that we started listening to our

military leadership who are saying that if we do not change what we are doing in the next 5 years, our enemies—our adversaries—will catch up with us.

This legislation authorizes a base defense budget that, together with the administration's request of \$8 billion for other defense activities, supports a total defense budget of \$640 billion in funding for the Department of Defense and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. The legislation also authorizes \$60 billion for overseas contingency operations. In total, the NDAA supports a national defense topline of \$700 billion.

This funding is critical to begin addressing the readiness shortfall and modernization crisis caused by the self-inflicted wounds of the Budget Control Act, sequestration, and repeated continuing resolutions. We need look no further than recent headlines, as I mentioned, of fatal incidents during routine training operations for evidence of the deteriorated state of our military.

These ship collisions and aviation accidents are taking the lives of our servicemembers at an alarming rate. In fact, in the last 3 years, we have killed four times as many of our own soldiers in peacetime training operations than our enemies have in combat. While there is plenty of responsibility to go around, we cannot ignore Congress's role. Years of budget cuts have forced our military to try to do too much with too little.

Meanwhile, our adversaries are investing heavily in their own militaries, developing future warfare capabilities intended to erode our military advantage. Simply put, we cannot wait any longer to recapitalize our forces and restore our capabilities.

Another important aspect of the NDAA is that it builds on the reforms this Congress has passed in recent years. By continuing important efforts to reorganize the Department of Defense, spur innovation and defense technology, and improve defense acquisition and business operations, the NDAA seeks to strengthen accountability and streamline the process of getting our warfighters what they need to succeed. At the same time, it prioritizes accountability from the Department and demands the best use of every taxpayer dollar.

The NDAA will also improve the quality of life for our men and women in uniform and those who support them. The legislation authorizes a 2.1-percent pay raise for our troops. It improves military family readiness and supports the civilians and contractors who work together with our Armed Forces to achieve the mission.

Finally, the NDAA provides necessary assistance for our allies and partners around the world who are dedicated to advancing the cause of freedom, deterring the aggression of our adversaries, and defeating the scourge of terrorism.

These are the reasons why this legislation is more vital than ever. Congress's most important constitutional responsibility is providing for the common defense. Consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act each year is one of the ways that we live up to that duty.

I guess we are going to have cloture on this bill. We don't need it. We shouldn't have to have it. We should move immediately to this legislation. Those who want to impose blockades to moving forward, to allowing other Members to have their amendments proposed and voted on, are doing the men and women who are serving our Nation a great disservice. The world is in more turmoil than it has been in 70 years. We cannot waste precious time and effort because one Senator has one amendment and he or she is then willing to block the whole process. Let's not do that this year. We can get around it. But what it does is deprive other Members of their ability to debate and have votes on their issues.

So I hope my colleagues, once we vote for cloture, will agree to move forward with the bill. We can finish in the next couple of days, and we can give the American people and the men and women who defend this Nation a product we can be proud of.

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

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

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 175, H.R. 2810, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

John McCain, David Perdue, Thom Tillis, Deb Fischer, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Ben Sasse, Mike Crapo, Lindsey Graham, John Thune, John Cornyn, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Burr, Mitch McConnell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2810, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the

Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 89, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 193 Leg.]

#### YEAS—89

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Baldwin	Feinstein	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Murphy
Bennet	Franken	Murray
Blumenthal	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Gillibrand	Peters
Booker	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Harris	Reed
Brown	Hassan	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Cantwell	Heinrich	Rounds
Capito	Heitkamp	Sasse
Cardin	Heller	Schatz
Carper	Hirono	Schumer
Casey	Hoeven	Shaheen
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson	Stabenow
Collins	Kaine	Sullivan
Coons	Kennedy	Tester
Corker	King	Thune
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Toomey
Cotton	Leahy	Udall
Crapo	Lee	Van Hollen
Cruz	Manchin	Warner
Daines	Markey	Warren
Donnelly	McCaIn	Whitehouse
Duckworth	McCaskill	Wicker
Durbin	McConnell	Young
Enzi	Merkley	

#### NAYS—3

Paul	Sanders	Wyden
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#### NOT VOTING—8

Flake	Menendez	Scott
Graham	Nelson	Strange
Isakson	Rubio	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 89, the nays are 3.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

CONGRATULATING MISS AMERICA 2018, CARA MUND

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the new Miss America. That is Cara Mund, a former intern in my office up until the end of last year. Last night she made history and became the first Miss North Dakota to win the title of Miss America.



My wife Mikey and I were watching the pageant on TV and cheering for Cara throughout the competition. We, like North Dakotans across our State, were very excited when she was crowned Miss America. The amazing thing is that she had actually tried four times to win the Miss North Dakota pageant. She won the Miss North Dakota pageant on her fourth try, and then she went on to win the Miss America pageant. It is just an amazing story of somebody who decided she were going to accomplish a goal and did so. It is truly amazing and inspirational to anyone who sets out to achieve something really worthwhile, and it shows what determination can do.

Cara is truly impressive, and we are so proud to have her representing North Dakota and, of course, now the entire Nation as Miss America. Following graduation from Brown University with a degree in business, entrepreneurship, and organizations, Cara served as an intern here in my Washington, DC, office. She did a tremendous job. As I say, she was with us for half of last year. So she started about midyear and finished up at the end of the year. Again, she did tremendous work for us, and we are so appreciative of having her with us.

While only 23, she has a long history of public and community service. For the past 10 years, she has organized the annual Make-a-Wish fashion show, which has raised more than \$78,500 to make dreams come true for more than 20 kids who have faced life-altering conditions. It is only fitting that after spending so much of her life making others' dreams come true, Cara's own dreams were made a reality last night. She is so well-deserving of the title, and I know that continued service to others and public service will be part of her life's work.

She is going on to law school at Notre Dame after, of course, taking a year as Miss America and touring around the country and doing what I know will be a fabulous job as Miss America. Then she wants to go on to law school at Notre Dame, where she has already been accepted.

I know she has a real interest in public service and maybe even some day running for Governor or another elective office. I have no doubt that whatever she decides to do, she will be successful, and, more importantly, she will do a great job for others. She will do a great job for many other people. She has such a good heart, and she is such a great young person—exactly the kind of person that we need out there helping face the challenges we face as a nation, setting a great example, and doing things for so many others that makes such a difference in their lives.

She is well-deserving of the title. She represents our State so well, and we have no doubt that she will continue to make us proud as Miss America.

Congratulations, again, to Miss America 2018, Cara Mund. She is fantastic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII, Senator PAUL be given up to 4 hours of postcloture debate on the pending motion to proceed.

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

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, September 12, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 110, the nomination of Kevin Hassett to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. I further ask that there be 20 minutes of debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### REMEMBERING DAVID "TED" EYRE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to one of Utah's great public servants, a loving husband, father, and grandfather and a remarkable leader, David "Ted" Eyre. Sadly, Ted recently lost his battle with cancer. He leaves behind a grieving community that he served for many years as mayor of Murray City.

Ted had a strong, yet kind demeanor that inspired others to work hard and do what was best for their community. As mayor, he made a tremendous impact on the infrastructure and neighborhoods of Murray City, a thriving community tucked into the Salt Lake Valley.

Ted was able to accomplish many important things for the local community, including: improving Murray Park, the heart of the city; acquiring the historic Murray Theater, Murray Chapel, and Murray Mansion that will serve as gathering places for years to come; expanding Fashion Place Mall and the University of Utah Midvalley

Health Center; acquiring properties in the downtown redevelopment area for a new city hall and fire station; and adopting a new general city plan.

Ted had two great passions—aviation and people. Both interests guided him in his decisions throughout his life. He received a degree in aviation science at San Bernardino Valley College. As a young man, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Vietnam war flying a U-21 Ute transport aircraft in the aviation division of the signal corps. After his military service, he continued his love of flying and excelled as an airline pilot for 30 years for Western and later Delta Airlines, serving as captain for much of that time.

On January 7, 2014, Eyre was sworn in as the mayor of Murray City, quickly endearing himself as a capable leader who valued the input of all and who fought hard to prepare the community for the future. Mayor Eyre left an indelible imprint on the city he led and the citizens he served.

Throughout his life, Eyre not only distinguished himself as a talented pilot, courageous soldier, and devoted public servant, he also became a friend to all he came into contact with and was a beloved husband, father, and grandfather. I am grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute to a great man, his life, and the example he leaves behind. His influence will be felt for generations to come.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 193, the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act for 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted yea. •

#### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.